Statement by IDA Secretary General, Klaus Lachwitz, at the opening of the 13th session of the CRPD Committee, 25 March 2015

My name is Klaus Lachwitz, I am the Secretary-General of the International Disability Alliance and also the President of Inclusion International which is the global federation advocating for the human rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

I would like to congratulate the Chair on her re-election, along with continuing and new members of the bureau, and greet all the Committee members in particular the new and continuing members of the bureau. On behalf of IDA, I also welcome Mr Basharu, Mr Parra Dussan, Mr Pyaneandee, Mr Ruskus and Mr You to the Committee.

We look forward to continuing to create synergies with the Committee and others, including the new mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, in the common goal to uphold the Convention.

Since the Committee’s last session, there have been many milestones on the global agenda of the rights of persons with disabilities:

**World Conference on Disaster & Risk Reduction, Sendai**

Most recently, the World Conference on Disaster and Risk Reduction concluded last week with the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Thanks to very active engagement by DPOs and allies gathered in the Disability Caucus, the new framework reflects strong inclusion of persons with disabilities in terms of participation, data collection and access to information, and calls on persons with disabilities in leading the design, implementation, monitoring and awareness raising of plans, including in response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. We are now engaging in the preparation of the World Humanitarian Summit in coordination with IDDC and UN agencies to continue strengthening the global framework to uphold Article 11 of the CRPD.

**Post-2015 development agenda**

The post 2015 development agenda continues to loom before us with the threat that persons with disabilities will not be fully included. Together with IDDC, we continue our advocacy to ensure that existing references to persons with disabilities are maintained, and for additional references to be added in the targets related to poverty eradication, universal health coverage and empowerment of women with disabilities. And above all for references in the goals and targets to be interpreted in line with the CRPD.

Currently, the discussion is also focused on indicators to ensure implementation and accountability. We are strongly advocating for a global indicator framework which disaggregates data by disability across all goals and targets. In particular, in relation to education, we are calling for the addition of explicit indicators to monitor inclusion by tracking accessibility of school environments, learning resources, and training of teachers on inclusive education.
We hope that the Committee can also continue its engagement in this process; to give guidance on how those global indicators can be strengthened to trigger action which is inclusive of persons with disabilities at the national level.

**Social protection**

One positive aspect of the currently proposed indicators is the express inclusion of persons with disabilities in targets concerning social protection floors. On this subject, IDA, together with ILO, held a technical workshop at the end of January on inclusive social protection for persons with disabilities. Participants included representatives of leading development agencies, the World Bank, UN agencies, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and former rapporteur on extreme poverty, academics and your own secretariat. It was an opportunity to review the key issues to ensure that social protection policies and programmes are CRPD compliant, building on the complementarity between mainstream and disability specific schemes. There is a possibility that an interagency, multi-stakeholder working group emerges to continue the work.

**Treaty bodies and others**

Also on this subject, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted a statement on social protection floors at their last session which mentions persons with disabilities.

We applaud these developments which aim at guaranteeing a basic set of essential social guarantees which facilitate economic and social rights for the most marginalised including persons with disabilities. We hope the Committee will also increasingly engage States in their obligations to establish inclusive social protection.

We would also like to take the opportunity to share our concern with you about the revision of the UN Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners. The final text contravenes the CRPD in many places and will be up for adoption by the UN Crime Commission in May, before being sent to the General Assembly.

We urge the Committee to continue its efforts to reach out to the Crime Commission for discussion and exchange toward increased substantive coherence and consultation with persons with disabilities.

**Day of General Discussion & live webcasting**

We would like to conclude by welcoming the Committee’s day of general discussion on the right to education. It is a long awaited event and we look forward to participating there represented by IDA’s Chair, Maryanne Diamond. In response to a high level of interest by DPOs to engage with the Committee, IDA conducted three webinars between December and February in English, Spanish and Russian to provide insight into the Committee’s jurisprudence on Article 24 and to explain the opportunities to make submissions and to contribute to the development of the General Comment. We are sure these submissions will further enrich the day of general discussion.

IDA will be holding a side event on that same day during the lunch break and we invite you all to join us in that discussion with our members.

In my capacity as President of Inclusion International, I want to thank you for your General Comment on Article 12 (equal recognition before the law). It is an outstanding document and very helpful for our members in 115 countries, to guide States Parties to replace substituted decision making by supported decision making schemes.

Thank you for your attention and we wish you a successful session.