

**STATEMENT BY NGO**

**THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND (SIGHTSAVERS) NO.4391**  
**THE 56<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES'**

**RIGHTS**

**PRESENTED BY GRACE ANTWI-ATSU**

**E-MAIL: [gantwiatsu@sightsavers.org](mailto:gantwiatsu@sightsavers.org)**

**MOBIL: +233 244640264**

**FOCUS: DISABILITY RIGHTS**

Madam Chair, honorable Commissioners, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed.

Sightsavers (The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) was founded in 1950, with the goal to transform the lives of people who were visually impaired in Africa, through education and livelihoods. Since then, the organisation's focus has expanded to include the prevention of blindness, provision of eye services and the elimination of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) as well as the promotion of equality of opportunity for Persons with Disabilities.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Commission for taking on board our concerns to make the processes of the commission's work more disability friendly. We look forward to the mainstreaming of disability in the work of the commission and to this we pledge our continuing collaboration and technical support. We applaud the working group on Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities for the on-going work on the development of the Disability Protocol.

More than one billion people globally live with a disability, of this number, between 110 and 190 million experience very significant difficulties. This equates to about 15 per cent of the global population. Of these, 39 million are blind and a further 246 million are visually impaired. Women and girls account for approximately two-thirds (64 per cent) of the world's blind population. Women, older people and people from the poorest regions have a higher prevalence of disability and there is higher disability prevalence in lower-income than in higher-income countries. In all countries the prevalence of disability is growing, due to population ageing and the rising burden of non-communicable disease.

Persons with disability are found in all the special interest groups in the work of the commission as it is cross cutting, and the rights of persons with disabilities are often abused. They are abducted, trafficked, sexually abused, tortured, suffer inhuman, and degrading treatment and are denied inheritance.

They lack access to opportunities and resources e.g. housing, employment, education, healthcare, civic engagement, voting rights etc, and this pose a challenge and

perpetuate the intergenerational lack of opportunities for persons with disabilities

We therefore urge the commission to call on member states to ensure the following:

1. All national plans, development strategies and/ or mechanisms established to help implement the Disability Protocol to complement and support the national implementation and reporting requirements of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
2. Develop a clear financing framework and commit to mobilising sufficient public and private resources to meet the rights of persons with disabilities, and to 'leave no one behind' in national development efforts.
3. Include disability in all reporting mechanisms, disaggregating data for all targets and indicators according to disabilities as well as gender and age.
4. Finally, we call on the ACHPR to institute a study on the right to accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disability in Africa

Made this day, the 21of April 2015 in Banjul, the Gambia