

UN Convention on

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol

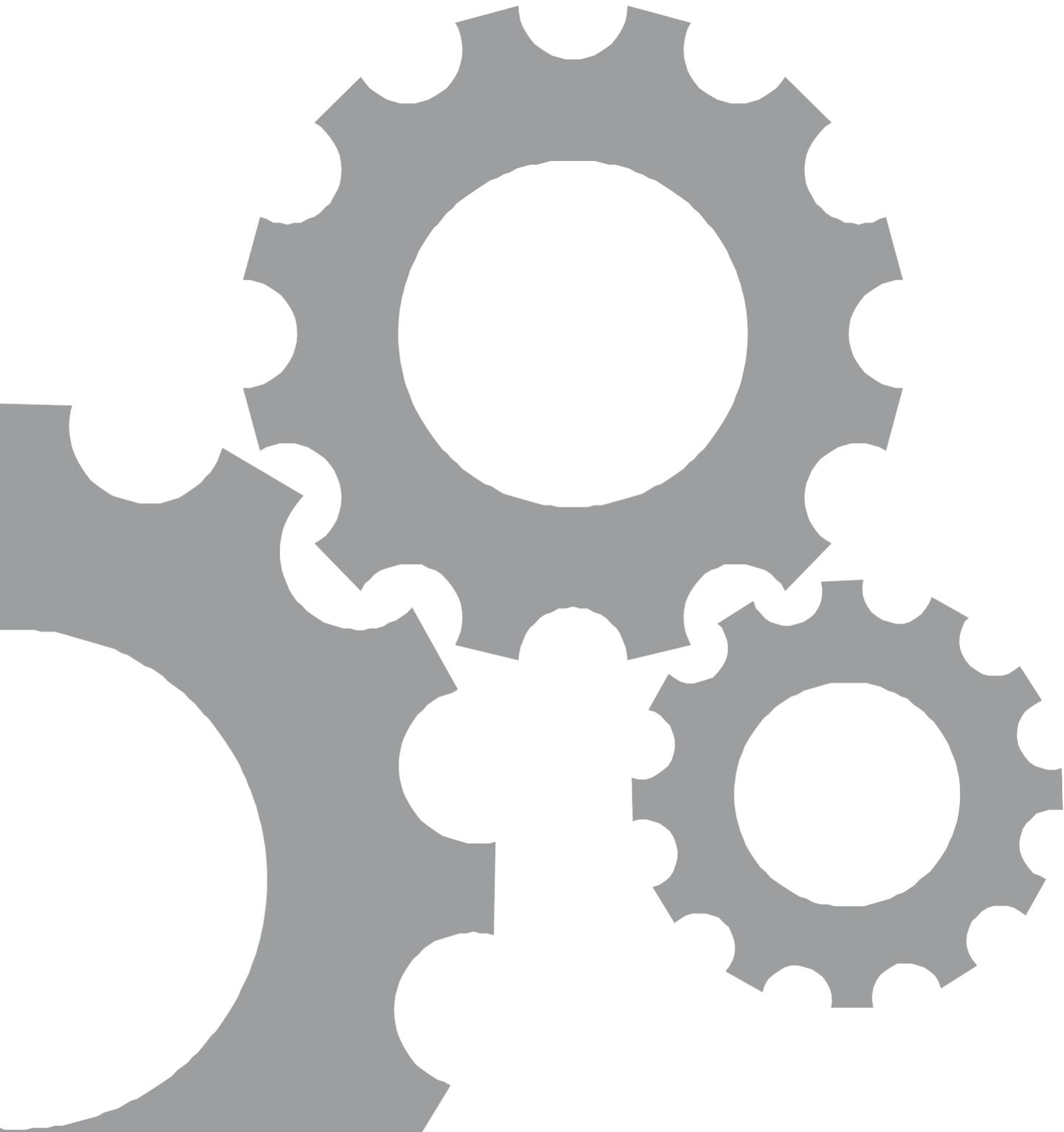


A plain language version



CRPD
Independent Mechanism
for Northern Ireland
Promote | Protect | Monitor

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol



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Foreword

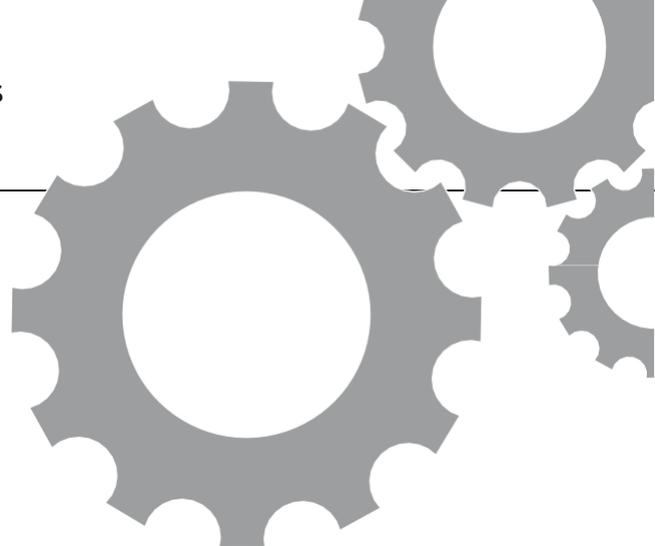
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an agreement between many countries about how to protect the rights of disabled people. We want to use this to make life better for disabled people in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland have been asked to help in making the Convention work well.

At the United Nations, a Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will look at how our Government protects, respects and fulfils the rights in the Convention. The Committee will get reports from the Government on what they have done, and say whether it could do better. The Committee will also get reports from the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission, and reports and complaints from disabled people and disabled people's organisations.

The Convention can help people with disabilities in Northern Ireland because:

- Government and public bodies will have to work in ways that take account of disabled people's rights.
- The Convention shows everyone that disabled people's human rights are important.
- The Convention could be used to challenge or change the law.
- Sometimes, people in Northern Ireland will be able to make complaints to the UN Committee if they think that their rights under the Convention are not being protected.
- The UN Committee will try to make sure that disabled people's rights are being properly looked after.



We hope you find this booklet interesting. We thank the Office for Disability Issues for helping us to publish it.

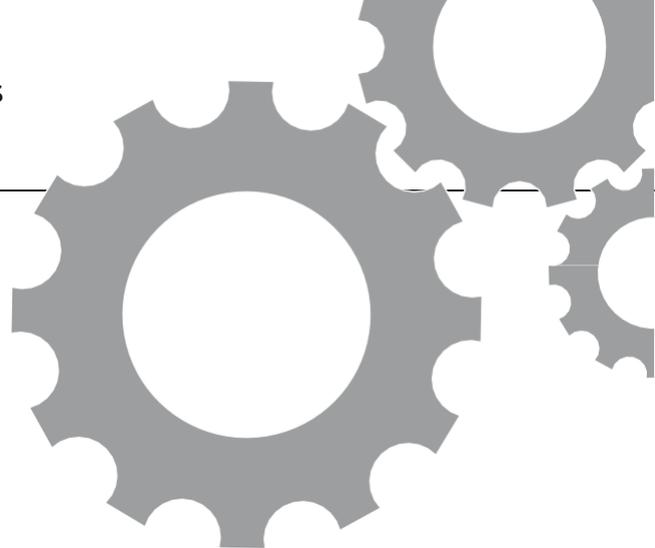
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Chief Commissioner
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Chief Commissioner
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

CRPD in Plain Language

Preamble

- a. The founding documents of the UN say that we are all equal and we are all members of the human family which is important for freedom, fairness and peace in the world,
- b. We are all equal and all of us have human rights,
- c. We agree that people with disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms and they must not be discriminated against,
- d. There are seven other international agreements that promote and protect human rights,
- e. We understand that disability is something that changes all the time and it is the environment and people's attitudes that create disability,
- f. It is important to keep in mind what the Standard Rules and the World Programme of Action are trying to achieve when trying to make laws, rules, decisions, programmes and practice better for people with disabilities,
- g. It is very important to make sure that the situation of people with disabilities is always equally taken into consideration when governments and international organizations make plans about a country's growth, for example, about how to get people out of poverty, or get them jobs,
- h. We understand that when someone discriminates against people with disabilities, he or she takes away their dignity and value as human beings,
- i. We also understand that there are many differences among people with disabilities and there are many types of disabilities,
- j. We also understand that all people with disabilities must have their rights, including people with disabilities who need extra support,



- k. We are worried that the rights of people with disabilities are still being taken away, even though there are agreements that protect their rights,
- l. We understand that it is important that countries work with one another to make life better for people with disabilities, especially in poor countries,
- m. We understand that people with disabilities help make countries better if they are fully included and their rights enjoyed,
- n. We understand that it is very important that people with disabilities are free to make their own decisions,
- o. We believe that people with disabilities should be included in the making of policies and programmes, especially those that are directly related to them,
- p. We are worried because people with disabilities are not only discriminated because of their disabilities, but also because of race, sex, or for many other reasons,
- q. We understand that many times, women and girls with disabilities are more often abused, beaten, injured or taken advantage of,
- r. We understand that children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children, and that the international agreement on children's rights also applies to them,
- s. It is very important to make sure that both women's situation and men's situation are taken into account in everything that the country does for human rights of people with disabilities,
- t. It is also very important to remember that most people with disabilities are poor, and it is necessary to find out what consequences that has for them,
- u. We keep in mind that we must have peace and security to make sure people with disabilities can have their rights, especially when they live in war zones or in countries that are not run by their own government,

- v. We understand how important it is for people with disabilities to be able to enjoy all areas of life, to have good health care, to go to school, to have the information they need, so that they can use their rights,
- w. We understand that each of us also has the duty to make sure everyone else enjoys his/her rights,
- x. We believe that the family is the main group in a society and that people with disabilities and their families should get the protection and help they need to be able to work for their human rights,
- y. We believe that an Agreement that covers all areas of life will be very helpful in making lives of people with disabilities better and in making sure that people with disabilities are treated equally and equally included in all areas of life, and in poor and richer countries. Because of all the things listed, countries that decide to be part of the Agreement agree:

Article 1 Purpose

The reason why this Agreement is made is to make sure that the countries that agree to this Agreement (called “countries” in this document) will make sure that:

- All human rights and freedoms of all people with disabilities are enjoyed, promoted and protected;
- The dignity of people with disabilities is respected.

People with disabilities include those who have long-term impairments, for example, physical, psycho-social, intellectual and who cannot get involved in society because of different reasons, such as attitudes, language, laws, stairs and other physical barriers which prevent people with disabilities from being included in society.

Article 2 Definitions

“Communication” – Means all ways of communicating, so that all people can communicate. For example, spoken language, sign language, text, Braille, touch, large print, written, audio, plain language, human reader and other ways that people with disabilities communicate.

“Language” – means all kinds of languages, spoken, signed, and other types of language that is not spoken.

“Discrimination on the basis of disability” – when people are excluded, shut out or prevented from doing things because of their disability. This can be in all areas of life.

“Reasonable accommodation” – means that a person may need to have changes made, for example, to their home, or where they work, so they are able to enjoy their rights. If this is too expensive or too difficult then the changes may not be able to be made.

“Universal design” – means that things are made, programmes created and places adapted so that they can be used by all people. Sometimes someone with a particular type of disability may need something specially made so they can enjoy their rights.

Article 3 General principles

This Agreement is about:

- Dignity
- Ability to choose
- Independence
- Non-discrimination
- Participation
- Full inclusion
- Respect for difference
- Acceptance of disability as part of everyday life
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility
- Equality of men and women
- Respect for children.

Article 4 General obligations

- I. The countries promise to make sure that all human rights apply to all people, without discrimination because of disability. To fulfill this promise, they will:
 - a. Do what it takes to make sure that the rights from this Agreement are put into laws, policies, and practice in their country;
 - b. Take action: for example, adopt new laws and rules, change old rules and laws where necessary, and get rid of other laws and stop actions that discriminate against people with disabilities;
 - c. Make sure that the human rights of people with disabilities are included in all policies and programmes;
 - d. Not do things that do not support the Agreement, and make sure others respect the Agreement;

- e. Take action to stop individuals, organizations or businesses from discriminating because of a person's disability;
 - f. Work on and encourage the use of goods, services, equipment and facilities that can be used by all people with disabilities all over the world, at the smallest possible cost to the person;
 - g. Work on and encourage new technologies in all aspects of life that are useful for people with disabilities, especially those that are low cost;
 - h. Provide information about all types of assistance, including technologies, and other forms of assistance, in a way that can be understood by people with disabilities;
 - i. Promote trainings about the rights in this Agreement for those who work with people with disabilities to make sure they can work better with people with disabilities.
2. For economic, social and cultural rights, the countries will put into practice the laws and rules that relate to these rights as much as they can with resources they have. If need be, they can cooperate with other countries to put into practice these rights. All other rights must be put into practice right away.
 3. When making laws and rules about this Agreement, the countries will talk to and involve people with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through the organizations that represent them.
 4. This Agreement will not affect any laws or rules that are better for the rights of people with disabilities. Countries must not use the Agreement as an excuse to not put into practice human rights that already exist.
 5. The Agreement will apply to the country as a whole.

Article 5 Equality and non- discrimination

1. The countries agree that all people with disabilities are equal before the law and protected by the law without any discrimination.
2. The countries agree that discrimination because of a disability will not be allowed and that people will be protected if there is such discrimination.
3. The countries will take action to make sure that if a person with a disability needs changes made to his/her environment to enjoy his/her rights, then those changes will be made.

4. Special actions, or actions that are needed for people with disabilities to become equal to others, are allowed. This type of special treatment is not discriminatory to people without disabilities.

Article 6 Women with disabilities

The countries agree that:

1. Women and girls with disabilities face all types of discrimination. Countries will make sure girls and women enjoy full and equal human rights and freedoms.
2. They will take action to support the growth and empowerment of women and guarantee that women with disabilities enjoy their rights.

Article 7 Children with disabilities

The countries will:

1. Make sure that children with disabilities have the same rights as other children.
2. Make sure that what is best for the child is a priority whenever they do anything that concerns children.
3. Make sure that children with disabilities have the right to tell their opinion and that their opinion is taken into account. Make sure that children with disabilities get the help they need to tell their opinions.

Article 8 Awareness- raising

1. The countries agree that, without delay, they will:
 - a. Help families and all people in society be more aware of the issues facing people with disabilities. They will work to make sure that rights and dignity of people with disabilities are respected;
 - b. Fight against stereotypes and prejudices about people with disabilities; Stereotypes are general and incorrect beliefs that some people have about people with disabilities. These beliefs are often damaging which leads to discrimination against people with disabilities.
 - c. Help people in society be aware of the capabilities of people with disabilities and how they can help the country grow.

2. The countries will also:
 - a. Make public campaigns about the rights of people with disabilities that:
 - i. Show that people with disabilities have the same rights as all people;
 - ii. Highlight disability in the community and change misunderstandings about disability;
 - iii. Show how people with disabilities help improve the workplace.
 - b. Make sure that schools and other places of learning teach respect for the rights of people with disabilities;
 - c. Encourage media (i.e. radio, television, newspapers and magazines) to show images of people with disabilities that promote the rights of people with disabilities;
 - d. Promote training programmes that will help people be aware of rights of people with disabilities.

Article 9 Accessibility

1. The countries will eliminate barriers that people with disabilities face in buildings, the outdoors, transport, information, communication and services, in both cities and the countryside. This way people with disabilities can live independently and fully live their lives. They will make rules and put them into practice for:
 - a. Buildings, roads, transportation, indoor and outdoor objects, for example, schools, housing, hospitals, health centres, and workplaces;
 - b. Information, communications, and other things, for example, electronic services and emergency services.
2. The countries will also take action to:
 - a. Make, put in place, and oversee minimum standards for accessibility for places and services that are open to public;
 - b. Make sure that private businesses and organizations that are open to the public are accessible for people with disabilities;
 - c. Train people who are involved in accessibility issues on what people with disabilities need when it comes to accessibility;

- d. Have Braille signs and easy to read and understand information in buildings open to the public;
- e. Provide help, such as readers, sign language interpreters and guides, so people with disabilities can access buildings open to the public;
- f. Provide other types of help as needed so people with disabilities can get access to information;
- g. Promote access to new technologies for people with disabilities;
- h. When looking for, and creating new technology, make sure that accessibility is taken into account early on, so that this technology can be made accessible at the smallest cost.

Article 10 Right to life

The countries agree that all people with disabilities have the right to life and will take action to make sure people with disabilities can use this right.

Article 11 Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

The countries agree that they will respect all other agreements they have entered into about war or human rights.

The countries will take action to make sure that in the case of war, natural catastrophes or other emergencies, people with disabilities are protected.

Article 12 Equal recognition as a person before the law

The countries:

1. Agree that people with disabilities have the right to be recognised as people before the law.
2. Agree that people with disabilities are capable like all other people on legal issues in all areas of their lives.
3. Will take action to make sure that people with disabilities can get and use support if they need it to work on legal issues.

4. Agree that where people with disabilities need support on legal or financial issues:
 - They will be protected from abuse;
 - Their rights and their choices will be respected;
 - People who give support will not pressure people with disabilities into making a decision;
 - They get the help they need, only for the time they need it and only as much as they need;
 - The courts will review the support received.
5. Agree and will make sure that people with disabilities:
 - Have the right to own or get property;
 - Have the right to control their money or other financial affairs;
 - Have the same opportunities as other people to get bank loans, mortgages and credit;
 - Cannot have property taken away without a reason.

Article 13 Access to justice

1. The countries will make sure that people with disabilities can access the justice system in their countries just like all other people. They will make sure that any rules which say how things should be done are adapted so that people with disabilities can be productively involved in all stages of legal processes, for example, being a witness.
2. The countries will provide training for people working in the justice system, such as police and prison staff.

Article 14 Liberty and security

- I. The countries will:
 - a. Make sure that people with disabilities have the same right to liberty and security as all other people;
 - b. Make sure that people with disabilities do not have this right taken away from them without a reason, because they have a disability, or in a way that is against the law.

2. The countries will make sure that if a person has had his/her liberty taken, he/she will be protected by law. They will also make sure that changes are made to the individual's environment if they are needed for that person to enjoy his or her human rights.

Article 15 Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

1. Nobody will be tortured, or be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. Nobody will be forced to take part in medical or scientific experiments.
2. The countries agree to pass laws, and take other action to make sure that people with disabilities are protected from torture just like all other people.

Article 16 Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

The countries will:

1. Pass laws, and take other action to make sure people with disabilities are not exploited or abused, both inside and outside their home.
2. Take action to prevent exploitation of people with disabilities by giving help and appropriate information to make sure people with disabilities and their families are protected from abuse.
3. Make sure that institutions and programmes serving people with disabilities are regularly looked at to make sure there is no violence or abuse.
4. Support people with disabilities with their recovery and reintegration into society if they have been victims of violence and abuse.
5. Create laws and policies to investigate and punish people who abuse or mistreat people with disabilities. These laws and policies will make sure that the needs of women and children are included.

Article 17 Protecting integrity

People with disabilities have the same right as everyone else to be respected for their physical and mental whole.

Article 18 Freedom of movement and nationality

1. The countries agree that people with disabilities have the same rights as others to move around in their country or between countries, to choose where they live and to have a nationality like all other people. They will make sure that people with disabilities:
 - a. Have the right to get and to change their nationality and that nobody can take away their nationality without a reason or because of a disability;
 - b. Cannot have their passports or other identification of nationality taken away without a reason, or because of a disability, and that they are allowed to try to move to another country;
 - c. Are free to leave their own country and any other country;
 - d. Cannot be stopped from entering their own country without a reason or because of a disability.
2. Children with disabilities will be registered immediately after they are born. They will have the right to a name, to a nationality and, as much as possible, the right to know their parents, and be raised by their own parents.

Article 19 Living independently and being included in the community

The countries agree that all people with disabilities have the same right as anyone else to live in the community and to be fully included and participating in the community. This includes making sure that people with disabilities:

- a. Have the same opportunities as other people to choose who they live with, where they live, and are not forced to live in institutions or in other living arrangements that they do not like;
- b. Have a range of choices on where and how to live in the community, including personal assistance, to help with inclusion and living in the community and preventing people with disabilities from being isolated;
- c. People with disabilities can use community services that are available to the public, which may need to be adapted to a particular person's needs.

Article 20 Personal mobility

The countries will make sure that people with disabilities can move around with the greatest possible independence, including:

- a. Assisting people to move around in the way they choose and at a cost that they can afford;
- b. Assisting people with disabilities to access mobility aids and technology, including making sure they do not cost a lot;
- c. Providing training in mobility skills for people with disabilities and staff working with them;
- d. Encouraging those that produce mobility aids and technology to take into account all aspects of movement.

Article 21 Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information

The countries will make sure that people with disabilities have the right to say what they think through Braille, sign language or other types of communication that they choose. The countries will make sure people with disabilities have the same right as other people to give and receive information, including:

- a. Providing information intended for the general public to people with disabilities in formats that are adequate for them without extra cost (for example, Braille);
- b. Accepting the use of different ways people with disabilities communicate in official situations;
- c. Encouraging private businesses and organizations that serve the public to make their services more accessible for people with disabilities;
- d. Encouraging the media to make their information accessible to people with disabilities;
- e. Agreeing to, and promoting the use of sign language.

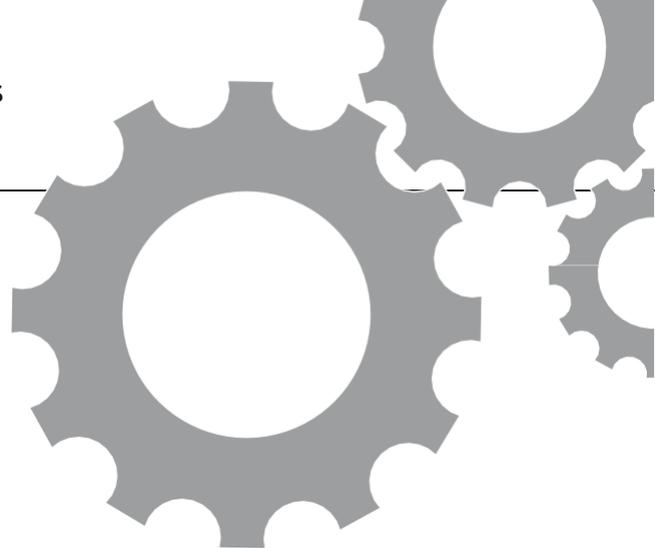
Article 22 Respect for privacy

The countries will:

1. Make sure that nobody gets involved in the private life of people with disabilities without a reason, or in a way that is against the law. They will make sure that nobody illegally attacks the honour and reputation of people with disabilities. People with disabilities have the right to be protected by the law from such attacks.
2. Protect the confidentiality of personal, health and rehabilitation information of people with disabilities, in the same way that other people's information is protected.

Article 23 Respect for home and the family

1. The countries will take action to stop discrimination against people with disabilities when it comes to marriage and family relations, to make sure that:
 - a. People with disabilities have the same right as other people to marry and have a family;
 - b. People with disabilities have the same rights as other people to have children, to decide how many children to have, and when to have them. They should get information and be educated on reproduction and family planning; and they should get help to understand this information;
 - c. People with disabilities have the same right as everyone else to keep their fertility.
2. The countries will make sure that people with disabilities have the rights and responsibilities related to guardianship and adoption of children, with the most important issue being the child(ren)'s interest. They will give support to people with disabilities in accomplishing responsibilities related to raising their children.
3. The countries will make sure children with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else to a family life. From an early stage the countries will provide the information, services and support to children with disabilities and their families.
4. The child must not be taken away from his/her parents against his/her will, unless it is in the best interests of the child and is done legally. The child cannot be separated from parents because of the parent's or the child's disability.
5. Where close family (for example parents, brother or sister) cannot care for a child with a disability, they will look first at the wider family, and then the local community to provide care for the child.



Article 24 Education

1. The countries agree that all people with disabilities have the right to education. They will make sure that the education system, at all levels, includes people with disabilities, and that the educational system:
 - a. Works to make sure everyone develops their human potential, sense of dignity and self worth, and respect for human rights, freedoms and diversity;
 - b. Works to develop the person's personality and talents to their fullest potential;
 - c. Works to make sure all people with disabilities can be involved in society.
2. To do this, the countries will make sure that:
 - a. People with disabilities are not excluded from education because of their disability, and children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary and secondary education because of their disability;
 - b. All people with disabilities can choose education that includes them, is accessible and is in their own community;
 - c. Reasonable changes are made to make sure that people with disabilities get the most out of their education;
 - d. People with disabilities get the help they need to get the most out of their education;
 - e. Help for students with disabilities is given so that their individual needs are met.
3. The countries will make it possible for people with disabilities to learn social and life skills that they need to go to schools and be in the community. They will do this by:
 - a. Arranging that students with disabilities learn Braille or other types of communication, and that they get peer support and mentoring;
 - b. Teaching sign language;
 - c. Making sure that especially children who are blind, deaf or deafblind are educated in the most appropriate types of communication so that they get the most out of their education.

4. To help make sure that these rights are put into practice, the countries will hire teachers who are people with disabilities, teachers who are qualified in Braille and sign languages, and will train teachers and staff at all levels of education on how to give quality education to people with disabilities.
5. Countries will make sure that people with disabilities have equal access to vocational training, study in universities and lifelong learning like all other people, and will make any changes needed to make that happen.

Article 25 Health

The countries recognise that all people with disabilities have the same right to quality health care, without discrimination because of disability. The countries will make sure that health and health-related rehabilitation services are available, including:

- a. Making sure that people with disabilities get the same variety, quality and standard of free and affordable health care as other people;
- b. Making sure that people with disabilities can get services they need because of their disability and to protect them from further disability;
- c. Having health services in people's own communities;
- d. Insisting that health workers give the same quality care to people with disabilities as to others, for example, only if the person agrees and has been told about their rights—achieved through trainings and by making ethical standards for health care;
- e. Stopping discrimination against people with disabilities when it comes to health insurance and life insurance, and making sure that such insurance is provided fairly;
- f. Making sure that people with disabilities will not be discriminated against and denied health care or health services or food and fluids because of their disability.

Article 26 Habilitation and rehabilitation

- I. The countries will take action, for example by promoting peer support, to make it possible for people with disabilities to enjoy maximum independence, full abilities and that they can be fully involved in all aspects of life. To make sure this happens, the countries will make available services that cover all areas of life, both in habilitation and rehabilitation, so that they:
 - a. Begin as early as possible, and are made specifically with strengths and needs of a particular person in mind;

- b. Help people with disabilities participate and be involved in the community;
 - c. Are voluntary and available as close as possible to their communities.
2. The countries will promote training programmes for staff working in habilitation and rehabilitation services.
 3. The countries will promote the use of assistive devices and other types of aid as they relate to habilitation and rehabilitation.

Article 27 Work and employment

- I. The countries agree that people with disabilities have the same right to work as other people. This also means that they have the right to earn a living from work they choose in a work environment that is open and accessible to all people.
The countries will pass laws and take other action needed to:
 - a. Stop discrimination because of disabilities in all situations relating to all kinds of employment. This relates, for example, to situations when people with disabilities are trying to get jobs, are hired, or promoted, or in making sure that the working conditions are safe and healthy;
 - b. Protect the rights of people with disabilities to equal pay for equal work, equal opportunity, safe and healthy working conditions, and the ability to make complaints;
 - c. Make sure that people with disabilities can organize and join labour unions and trade unions like everyone else;
 - d. Make it possible for people with disabilities to get career counselling and vocational trainings;
 - e. Promote employment, career advances, and help people with disabilities to find and keep employment;
 - f. Promote self-employment, business opportunities, and start-up businesses;
 - g. Hire people with disabilities to work for the government;
 - h. Encourage and help employers to hire people with disabilities;
 - i. Make it easy for people with disabilities to be in the work place and work environment by making sure reasonable allowances are made for them;

- j. Work to make sure that people with disabilities can gain work experience in the labour market;
 - k. Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation and programmes to support people with disabilities to return to work and keep their jobs.
2. The countries will make sure that people with disabilities are not held in slavery. They will protect people with disabilities from forced labour as all other people are protected.

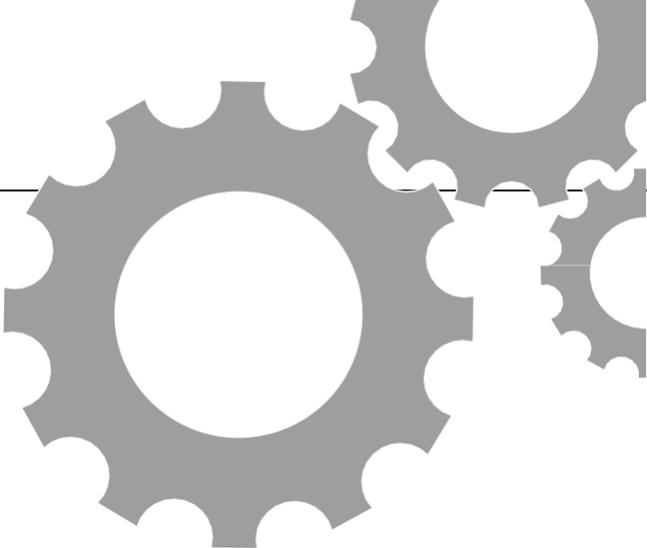
Article 28 Adequate standard of living and social protection

1. The countries recognise the right of people with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families. This includes adequate food, clothing, housing, and to always be improving their living conditions.
2. The countries also recognise the right of people with disabilities to social protection by the government, without discrimination because of their disability. The countries will protect this right, including by making sure that:
- a. People with disabilities can get necessary services, equipment and help for disability related needs;
 - b. People with disabilities have access to social welfare assistance and programmes that help them get out of poverty. This especially applies to women and girls with disabilities and older people with disabilities;
 - c. People with disabilities and their families who live in poverty get help from the government to be able to pay for expenses related to their disability;
 - d. People with disabilities have access to government housing programmes;
 - e. People with disabilities can get pensions.

Article 29 Participation in political and public life

The countries recognise the political rights of people with disabilities without discrimination, and will:

- a. Make sure that people with disabilities can be fully involved in political and public life, for example by having the right to vote and be elected. To do this they should make sure:

- 
- i. That voting is easy to understand and accessible;
 - ii. To protect the right of citizens to vote in secret and to be elected;
 - iii. That citizens with disabilities who want assistance can get help to vote from someone of their choice.
- b. Encourage people with disabilities to be involved in the work of the government and to participate in public affairs, including:
- i. Being involved in non-governmental organizations and associations focused on the activities of political parties and civil society;
 - ii. Forming and joining organizations of people with disabilities to represent people with disabilities, nationally, regionally and locally.

Article 30 Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

1. The countries recognise the right of people with disabilities to take part in cultural life. They will take action to make sure that:
 - a. People with disabilities have access to literature and other writings in formats such as Braille, sign and audio;
 - b. People with disabilities can get television programmes, film, theatre and other cultural activities in a way that they will understand, for example, with captioning and sign language;
 - c. People with disabilities can get to cultural performances and services such as libraries, museums, theatres and sites of national importance.
2. The countries will take action to make it possible for people with disabilities to develop and use their creative, artistic and intellectual potential.
3. The countries will take action to make sure that laws that protect documents and other writings and inventions from forgery or copying do not discriminate against people with disabilities.
4. People with disabilities have the right, just like everyone else, to have their culture and language recognised, for example sign languages and deaf culture.

5. The countries also recognise that people with disabilities have the same right as others to take part in recreation, leisure and sports. The countries will take action to:
 - a. Encourage and promote involvement of people with disabilities in sports with people without disabilities at all levels;
 - b. Make sure that people with disabilities have a chance to organize and participate in sport activities, and to receive the same training and support as other people;
 - c. Make sure that people with disabilities can get to sports and recreation arenas as other people can;
 - d. Make sure that children with disabilities can participate in play and sports at school, like other children;
 - e. Make sure that person with disabilities can get services to help organize recreational and sporting activities.

Article 31 Statistics and data collection

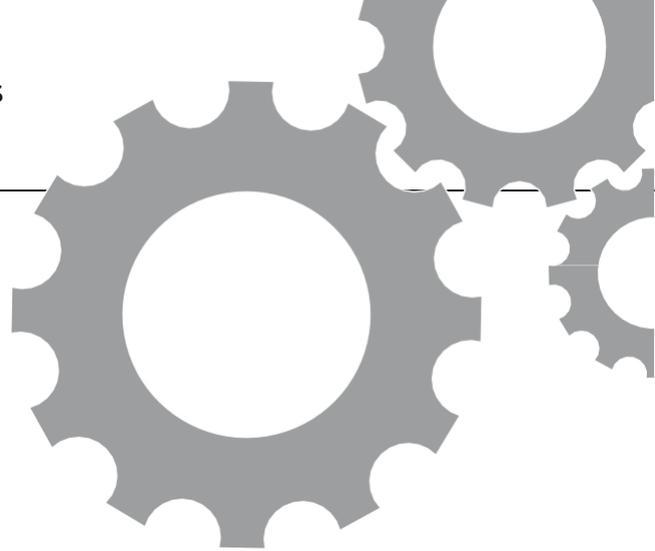
1. The countries will collect and look at statistics and other information to put into practice this Agreement.

In collecting this information they will:

- a. Respect the right to people's privacy. The information should be given only if people agree;
 - b. Respect human rights and ethics when collecting and using the statistics.
2. The information collected will be in categories so that the countries can better understand how to put into practice the Agreement, and to learn more about barriers that exist for people with disabilities.
 3. The countries are responsible for distributing this information and making sure that it is in a format like Braille or easy-to-read, for example, so that people with disabilities can access it.

Article 32 International cooperation

1. The countries agree that it is important that they work together to make sure that each of them can put this Agreement into practice. They will take action to work together, especially with organizations of people with disabilities, to:



- a. Make sure that people with disabilities are included and can access international programmes for development;
 - b. Make sure that they work together to educate people by sharing information, experiences, training programmes and best practices;
 - c. Arrange cooperation in areas of science and technology;
 - d. Give technical and economic help, for example by sharing new technologies.
2. The governments are not allowed to say that because they do not have help from other countries, they cannot put the Agreement into practice.

Article 33 National implementation and monitoring

1. The countries will make sure that there is at least one position in the government that will be responsible for making sure that the Agreement is put into practice.
2. The countries will make sure that within the government, they create an independent institution that will monitor how the Agreement is being put into practice.
3. Non-governmental organizations, especially people with disabilities and their organizations, will be fully involved in overseeing how the country puts the Agreement into practice.

Article 34 Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities

1. The Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities will be created.
2. When the Agreement becomes law, the Committee will have 12 experts. After 60 more countries agree to the Agreement, six experts will be added with a maximum of 18 members.
3. Members of the Committee will serve as individuals. They will be highly ethical and will be experts or have experience with disability.
4. The countries will elect the members of the Committee and will make sure that they are from all over the world, that they have members who are men, women, people with disabilities, and come from different legal systems.

5. When countries meet for a Conference, they will elect the members of the Committee in secret. To be elected, a person must receive the largest number of votes. Also, more than half of people present at the Conference must vote for him/her.
6. The first election will happen within the first six months after the Agreement becomes law. After that, four months before every election, the UN Secretary-General will send a letter to the countries and ask them to nominate people for the Committee. Countries will have two months to do so.
7. Members of the Committee will serve for four years. They can be re-elected once. After the first election, six members of the Committee will serve for only two years.
8. When time comes for the additional six members to be added to the Committee, they will be elected during regular elections.
9. If a member of the Committee dies or leaves, the country that nominated that member will get to nominate another expert to serve for the rest of the term.
10. The Committee will make its own rules of how it will work.
11. The UN Secretary-General will give staff and office space to make sure that the Committee can work effectively.
12. The members of the Committee will get paid for their services and the UN General Assembly will decide how much.
13. The members of the Committee will have the same rights as the other experts of the UN.

Article 35 Reports by States Parties

1. Each country will write a report for the Committee within two years after the Agreement becomes law. The countries will report on how they are putting the Agreement into practice.
2. After that, each country will report to the Committee at least every four years.
3. The Committee will say what should be in the report.
4. After the country writes the first report, it does not have to repeat the same information in later reports. It is recommended that countries write their reports openly and consult with people with disabilities and their organizations.

5. The countries can write in the report what difficulties they had in putting the Agreement into practice.

Article 36 Consideration of reports

1. When a Committee receives the report it will:
 - Review and make comments and recommendations;
 - Give the comments and recommendations to the country that reported;
 - The country may then give more information to the Committee;
 - Ask for more information if needed.
2. If a country is very late with its report, the Committee will:
 - Tell the country that it is late;
 - If after three months, the country still does not report, the Committee will let the country know that it needs to visit the country to examine how it is putting into practice the Agreement.
3. All countries will get each country's report from the UN Secretary-General.
4. The countries will share the report publicly in their countries and will allow comments and suggestions on the report.
5. If needed, the Committee will send the country's report to other agencies within the UN, so that they can help the country with technical issues.

Article 37 Cooperation between States Parties and the Committee

1. Each country will work together with the Committee and help them do their job.
2. When working with the countries, the Committee will also try to find ways to make sure the countries are better equipped to put the Agreement into practice.

Article 38 Relationship of the Committee with other bodies

To make sure that the Agreement is put into practice and to encourage countries to work together:

- a. Agencies can be included in the meetings of the Committee when the Committee is talking about issues that the agency works on. The Committee can invite these agencies to the meetings when their expertise is required. The Committee can also ask these agencies to give their own reports on how countries are putting the Agreement into practice.
- b. There are seven other committees that look at how countries are putting into practice other human rights agreements, for example, agreements on women, children, etc. The Committee will talk to these other committees to make sure that they are not repeating their work, and to make sure that they are consistent when giving advice to countries on how to best put the Agreement into practice.

Article 39 Report of the Committee

The Committee will report to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council every two years. It will make suggestions and recommendations based on the reports they receive.

Article 40 Conference of States Parties

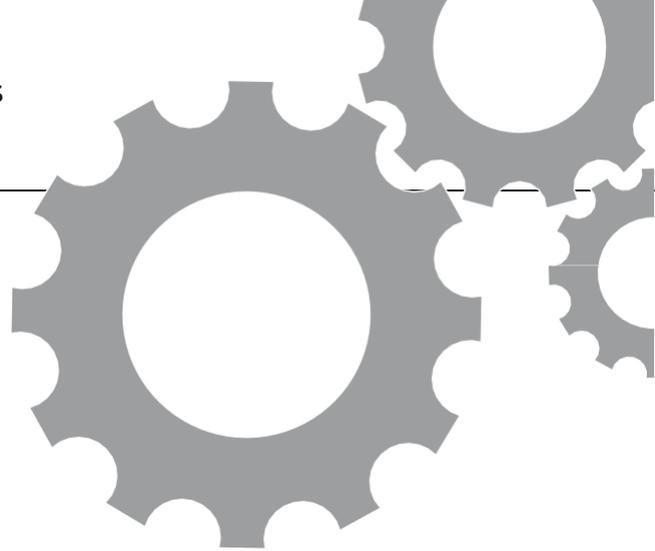
1. The countries will meet regularly to talk about issues relating to putting the Agreement into practice.
2. Within six months after the Agreement becomes law, the UN Secretary-General will organize the first meeting. After that, the meetings will happen every two years or as the countries decide.

Article 41 Depositary

The Agreement will be filed with the UN Secretary-General.

Article 42 Signature

The Agreement will be open for signing by all countries at the main UN building in New York from 30 March 2007.



Article 43 Consent to be bound

The countries that sign the Agreement right away will have to “ratify” it, that is, their national government will have to accept the responsibility to put the Agreement into practice. If the country does not sign the Agreement right away, they will be able to “accede” to the Agreement, meaning that they can join later.

Article 44 Regional integration organizations

1. “Regional integration organization” is an organization made up of a number of countries in the same region that have given that organization the power to deal with issues that are covered in the Agreement.
2. When the Agreement says “countries” it also applies to these organizations.
3. When counting how many countries have signed the Agreement, these organizations do not count.
4. These organizations can vote during the meetings, and will have as many votes as there are countries in the organization. If any of the countries in the organization votes on its own, the organization cannot vote.

Article 45 Entry into force

1. The Agreement will become law on the 30th day after 20 countries ratify or accede to the Agreement.
2. After that, when countries accept the Agreement, it will become law for them 30 days after the acceptance.

Article 46 Reservations

1. The countries can make reservations, meaning that they can say when they are signing the Agreement that they will not put into practice a particular obligation. But, these reservations cannot be against the goal and intent of this Agreement.
2. The reservations can be taken away at any time.

Article 47 Amendments

1. Any country can propose changes to the Agreement with the UN Secretary-General. The Secretary-General will then send the proposed changes to other countries. If, within four months, at least one third of all countries want to meet to adopt the changes, the Secretary-General will organize the meeting. The changes will be adopted if two-thirds of countries that are present at the meeting vote for them. Then the Secretary-General will present it to the UN General Assembly for acceptance.
2. When a change is approved by the General Assembly, it will become law 30 days after two-thirds of all countries accept it. After that, whenever a country accepts the change it will become law for them 30 days after they accept it. The changes will be law only for those countries that accept it.
3. If the proposed change is about the reporting or the Committee, then 30 days after it is accepted by two-thirds of all countries, it will become law for all countries, not only those who accept the change.

Article 48 Denunciation

A country can later go back and say that they will not agree to the Agreement anymore. To do this, they must write it down and send it to the UN Secretary-General. That becomes effective one year after that.

Article 49 Accessible format

The text of the Agreement will be prepared in Braille and other forms, so that all people can read it and understand it.

Article 50 Authentic texts

The Agreement will be equally original in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

All countries that agree to this Protocol agree to:

Article 1

1. Give the power to the Committee to receive and review complaints from individuals or organizations about violations of rights in the Agreement.
2. The Committee will only deal with complaints from countries that agree to this Protocol.

Article 2

The Committee will NOT accept the complaints if:

- a. They do not say who they are from;
- b. They do not match the Agreement;
- c. The same situation has already been investigated or is being investigated by another body;
- d. The people complaining did not use their domestic system to the fullest extent. But, the complaint will be reviewed if the domestic system takes too long;
- e. The complaint is without basis; there is no proof;
- f. The complaint is about something that happened before the Protocol became law.

Article 3

If the complaint is accepted, the Committee will secretly send it to the country in question. The country will respond within six months, and will say what solution they found.

Article 4

1. When the Committee gets a complaint, it can ask the country to take action right away if there is a risk that the victim(s) will be hurt permanently.
2. If the Committee decides to ask the country to take action right away, this does not mean that the case is successful.

Article 5

The Committee will meet in secret when examining complaints. After examining the complaint the Committee may, if needed, give suggestions and recommendations to the country in question and to the person(s) complaining.

Article 6

1. If the Committee gets trustworthy information about serious or widespread violations of rights in the Agreement, it may invite the country in question to participate in the reviewing of the information and to give its opinion on it.
2. After reviewing all the information that it has, the Committee may select one or more of its members to urgently investigate the matter. If the country in question agrees, and if it is needed, it may make a visit to the country to investigate directly.
3. The Committee will give the country in question the results of the investigation and any recommendations it has.
4. The country in question will give its opinion on the results to the Committee within six months.
5. The investigation will be confidential and the country in question will be asked to cooperate throughout the process.

Article 7

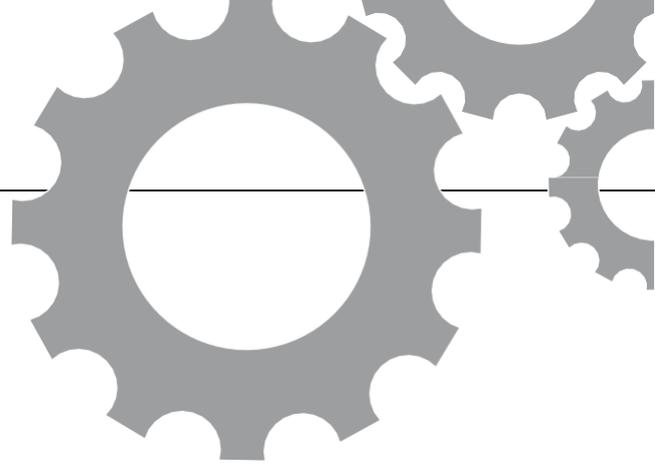
1. The Committee can ask the country in question to include in its report what it did in response to the investigation.
2. If it is needed, the Committee can ask the country in question to give its opinion on the results of the investigation if it has not answered within six months.

Article 8

Each country that agrees to this Protocol is allowed to say that it does not give the power to the Committee for situations discussed in Articles 6 and 7.

Article 9

The Protocol will be filed with the UN Secretary-General.



Article 10

This Protocol will be open for signing at the UN Headquarters in New York from 30 March 2007.

Article 11

The countries that agree to put the Agreement into practice can sign this Protocol and must then ratify it in their home countries.

Article 12

1. “Regional integration organization” is an organization of several countries that have given it (the organization) the power to deal with issues that are covered in the Protocol.
2. When this Protocol says “countries that agree to this Protocol,” it applies also to these organizations.
3. When counting how many countries have signed the Protocol, these organizations do not count.
4. These organizations can vote during the meetings, and will have as many votes as there are countries in the organization. If any of the countries in the organization votes on its own, the organization cannot vote.

Article 13

1. After the Agreement becomes law, this Protocol will become law on the 30th day after 10 countries ratify or accede to the Protocol.
2. After that, when countries accept the Protocol, it will become law for them 30 days after the acceptance.

Article 14

The countries that agree to this Protocol can make reservations. But, these reservations cannot be against the goal and the intent of the Protocol. The reservations can be taken away at any time.

Article 15

1. Any country that agrees to this Protocol can suggest a change to the Protocol with the UN Secretary-General. The Secretary-General will then send the proposed changes to other countries that agreed to this Protocol. If, within four months, at least one third of all countries that agreed to this Protocol want to meet to adopt the changes, the Secretary-General will organize the meeting. At the meeting, the changes will be adopted if two-thirds of countries that are present vote for them. Then the Secretary-General will present them to the General Assembly for acceptance.
2. When the changes are approved by the General Assembly, they will become law 30 days after two-thirds of all countries that agree to this Protocol accept it. After that, whenever a country accepts the changes, they will become law for them 30 days after they accept it. The changes will be law only for those countries that accept them.

Article 16

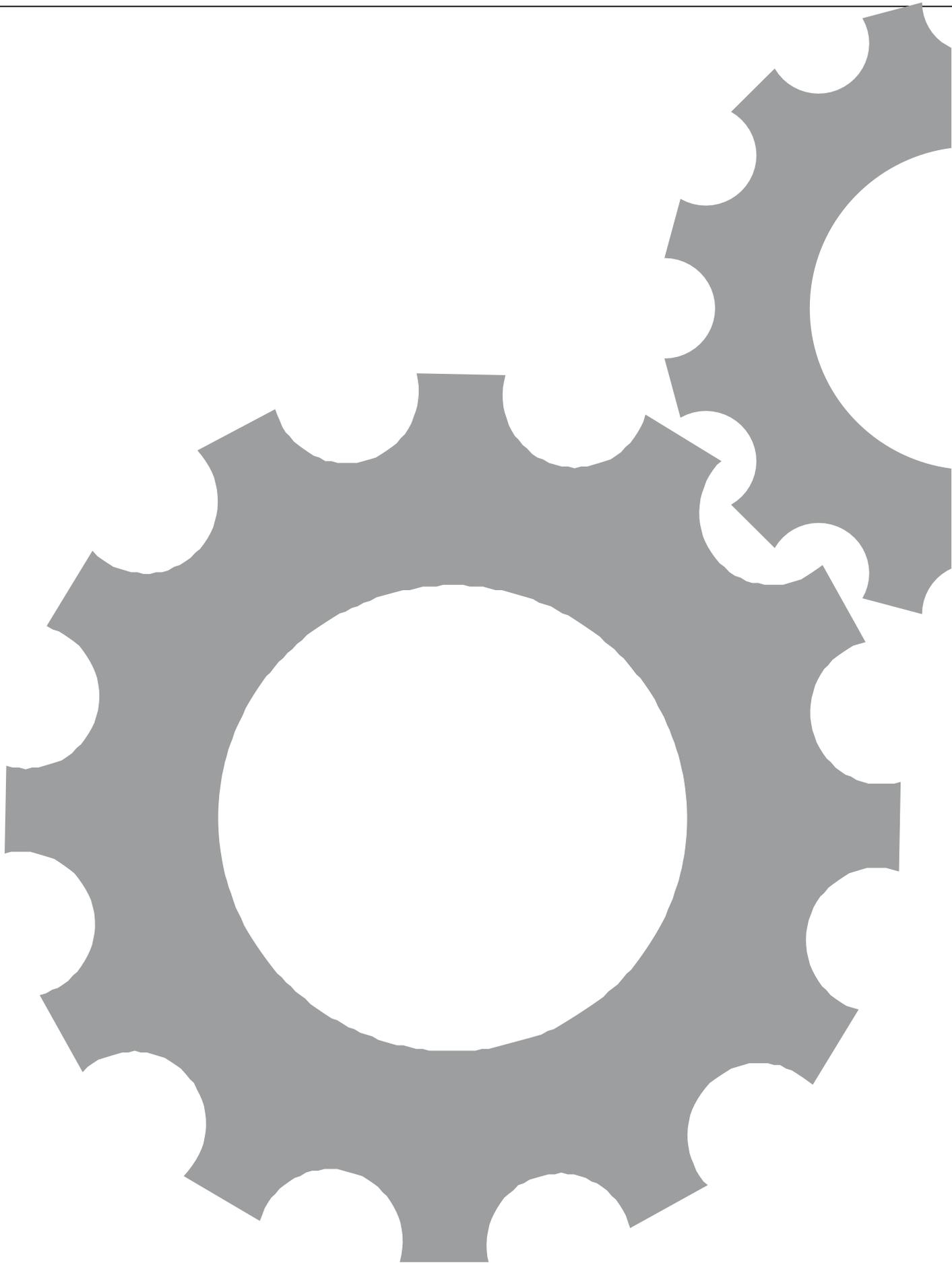
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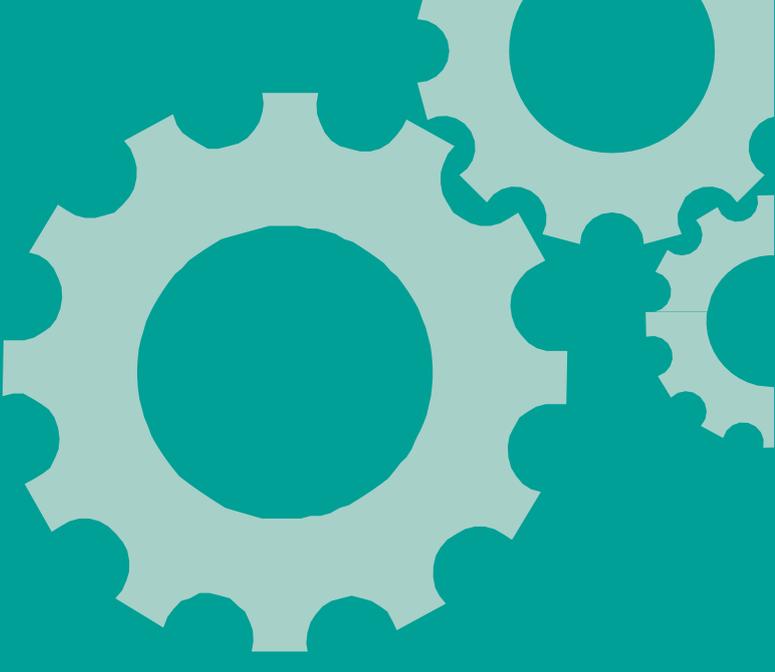
Article 17

The text of the Protocol will be prepared in Braille and other forms, so that all people can read it and understand it.

Article 18

The Protocol will be equally original in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.





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