



## STATEMENT BY JAVED ABIDI, CHAIRPERSON OF DISABLED PEOPLE'S INTERNATIONAL (DPI)

AT

### GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF STATE PARTIES TO CRPD

10 JUNE 2014



Disabled People's International (DPI) was formed in 1981 – the International Year of Disabled Persons on the premise of the slogan 'Nothing About Us Without Us'. DPI is a cross-disability organisation in the sense that it represents all persons with disabilities. This idea was so powerful that in no time, it spread to more than 140 countries across Asia-Pacific; Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America and Caribbean. Two regions however were neglected: the Arab region and CIS. I am happy to report that we have recently set up the DPI Arab Region and I have here the Chairperson of our Arab Region, Sylvana Lakkis from Lebanon. I am hopeful that next year when I come back to this Conference, I would be able to report to you the setting up of our CIS region.

DPI congratulates the Bureau and the CRPD Secretariat for its work and for your undiluted support to civil society in an unbiased and fair manner. Many in the global disability movement and international agencies have a lot to learn from you.

2014 is the year of change. That change was reflected today morning when Risnawati Utami took the floor and spoke to all of us on behalf of the civil society, the **entire** civil society. By doing this, Risna put a firm end to the monopoly of a particular



network. She, a woman with disability and from the Global South, represented **all** of us – the entire 1 billion people with disabilities.

DPI is connected to the grassroots. DPI is connected to **all** people with disabilities. DPI is connected to the entire world, to all its Member National Assemblies whether they are in the poorest parts of Western Africa or in the richest nations of Europe and North America. **However, if we have to choose, we will always go on the side of the poorest of the poor nations from the Global South.**

DPI recognises the work of the Open Working Group (OWG) and the fact that disability is mentioned at 5 places but we are not celebrating yet. We still have a process to go through. The next one year is therefore most crucial. Our endeavour is to ensure that voices from disabled people's organisations (and not necessarily civil society organisations), of the Global South countries are not lost. These voices are important and they must be heard.