

**44th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 30 June – 20 July 2020**

**Panel discussion on the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change**

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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Madame President,

As rightly stated in the report HRC/44/30 “persons with disabilities are at greater risk from the adverse impact of climate change “ and the threats might involve health, food security, housing and many more aspects of the life of persons with disabilities.

Unfortunately, detrimental consequences of climate change will only exacerbate inequalities already present in many societies; if we don’t start from recognizing and acting on them the consequences will be for many people far more dramatic than expected.

As we recognize the importance of a disability-inclusive human rights approach to climate change, we emphasize our support for a disability-inclusive approach to all the policies and all the aspects of life in our societies. Only this approach will allow persons with disabilities to fully realize their rights, including the right to development, and will bring true benefit to the whole society. There is the need for a change of mentality: from a “culture of waste” to a culture of equal dignity, inclusion, participation and opportunities.

The right time for new policies, taking into account the rights of persons with disabilities, has arrived. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven, once more, that in many cases people with disabilities are not considered equally when emergency policies have to be adopted.

There is no time left, we can’t afford to wait for another emergency to finish to start thinking about inclusiveness and disability.

While it is very important to advocate for the full integration of the rights of people with disabilities into climate change policies and actions, it is imperative to start putting in practice at every level in the society full inclusion, non-discrimination and participation.

We would like the panellists to comment on how disability-inclusive policies bring real benefits to the whole society, especially regarding the impacts of climate change.

Thank You!