**CDPF AT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW) 68 New York, March 2024**

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)68 was held in New York from the 11th to 22nd March 2022. The conference brought together representatives of Commonwealth member states from all regions of the world to engage and discuss the Gender Agenda. The **Priority Theme** for the CSW68 was “*Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective*”. The **Review theme was***Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”*.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Section, headed by Ms. Jennifer organized a National Women’s Machinery side Event. The workshop took place at the Commonwealth Joint Office in New York followed by the first Commonwealth Women’s Forum Event on Women’s Economic Empowerment.

During the side event, Commonwealth Disabled Peoples Forum (CDPF) was given a chance to present on Disability Inclusion and to give strategies on how the achievement of the actualization of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) could be achieved given the short time remaining to its count down. The Disability Inclusion agenda is one of outcomes of the 13th Women Affairs Women’s Meeting (13WAMM) held in Nassau, Bahamas with the theme “Equality towards a Common Future”.

Out of the 2.5 billion people in the 56 Commonwealth, 1.3 billion, who comprise nearly 16 per cent of the global population experience a significant disability and the number is increasing. Not only are women and girls disproportionately represented, with the disability prevalence rate of approximately 19 per cent verses 12 per cent for men. But they also face multiple barriers that may result in a lower economic and social status, increased risk of gender based violence and abuse, including sexual violence, gender based discriminatory practices, limited access to education, health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, information, information, service, access to justice, as well as civic and political participation, and the emerging climate change impacts.

These barriers exacerbate the full realization of the rights of all women and girls with disabilities. The need for meaningful inclusion of disabled people and their representative organizations and more so, women and girls with disabilities for gender equality highlighting the importance of the collection of disaggregated data and adoption of the Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to fast tract the actualization of the CRPD and SDGs is key.

The Chair, CDPF highlighted on disability rights on Education, Work and Employment – Economic Empowerment, Accessibility, Stigma and Discrimination, Political participation, Cross cutting issues on Gender and Age (inter-sectionality), Disaggregated Data by Gender and Disability, Climate Change, Move beyond gender equality to Gender Equity, and the call for the adoption of the Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action during CHOGM 2024.

CDPF will continue to be the unified voice and amplify the voice of disabled people across the commonwealth member states. CDPF is grateful for being involved by the Commonwealth Secretariat and will continue to give its technical support on disabilities rights across board.