



58th Session of the HRC

Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities

Geneva, 10th March 2025

Speaker: Beatrice Sala

Oral statement submitted by
**VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for
Women, Education and Development**

And co-signed by
IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di don Bosco

IIMA and VIDES welcome this Annual Debate on the Rights of persons with disabilities and digital technologies.

While the internet offers opportunities, it also presents significant risks. Cyberbullying particularly affects **adolescents and young persons** with disabilities, hindering their right to live free from such harm in digital spaces. Among them, **girls and young women** are even more exposed to online threats, including sexual abuse.

Assistive technologies are essential to ensure that persons with disabilities fully enjoy their right to education. Yet, access to **digital education remains inequitable and not inclusive**. Many online platforms are not designed with accessibility in mind, creating barriers for students with disabilities. The digital divide is even more pronounced for young persons with disabilities in **rural areas**, where unstable internet access and a lack of assistive devices hinder their learning and future prospects.

IIMA and VIDES recommend Member States to:

- 1. Effectively implement existing laws to prevent and address cyberbullying and online threats, especially for girls and young women with disabilities, ensuring that victims receive adequate support.**
- 2. Develop policies to ensure that digital education platforms are fully accessible, inclusive and safe for young persons with disabilities.**
- 3. Provide accessible, affordable and high-quality assistive and digital technologies as fundamental elements of disability-responsive, human rights-based care and support systems.**

Thank you.