# UN Women -International Disability Alliance Meeting

UN Women Arab Regional office

Cairo Egypt

December 6th, 2018

**Summary**

On December 6th, 2018, UN Women Arab Regional office hosted a delegation of women with disabilities and their allies at their office in Cairo, Egypt to discuss upcoming activities to increase the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in UN Women programmes and policies. This meeting builds off of an ongoing partnership between the International Disability Alliance and UN Women, formulized in April 2018 with a Memorandum of Understanding, where different capacity building activities have been planned, including webinars, technical support site visits, and other trainings.

The IDA delegation who leads the Women with Disabilities Task Team within IDA, included representatives from all major regions of the world and a broad spectrum of expertise, backgrounds, and disabilities. The following representatives attended the meeting:

* Ana Lucia Arellano, IDA Chair, President of  [Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/node/68)
* Jahda Abou Khalil General Director of the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD). Beirut
* Maulani Rostinsulu Vice President ASEAN Disability Forum-Indonesia
* Dulamsuren Jijid Board Member World Federation of the Deaf-Mongolia
* Monique Post European Disability Forum - Autism Netherlands Senior Advisor
* Diane Bergeron Vice President of International Engagement World Blind Union (WBU) Canada
* Savina Nongbutu- Deputy Chief Executive Office Pacific Disability Forum-Solomon Islands
* Megan Smith -Gender and Development Officer (NY)
* Dorodi Sharma - Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officer
* Gertrude Fefoeme- CRPD Committee Member Ghana

The representatives from UN Women that hosted the IDA delegation included individuals from both the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and Egypt Country Office (ECO):

* Rachel Dore-Weeks, Deputy Regional Director ai, ROAS
* Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya, Policy Adviser (Women’s Political Participation) Arab States Regional Office
* Heba Zayyan, Head of Gaza Sub-Office, Country Office Palestine
* Yllka Gerdovci – Regional Programme Specialist, Women’s Economic Empowerment, ROAS
* Yerkezhan Tabyldiyeva, Operations Manager, ROAS
* Josephine Moss, Coordination Specialist, ROAS
* Rana Korayem, Programme Analyst, ECO

**Outcomes**

Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya in collaboration with Yllka Gerdovci facilitated the meeting which was structured around five points:

1. Identifying existing or potential DPO partners
2. Understand the role of IDA and the roll-out of the MOU
3. Discuss and agree upon the parameters of the ROAS-IDA capacity building training in Q1 2019
4. Flag possible partnership with LAS and ESCWA on transforming 2014 study into policy
5. Explore feasibility of ROAS conducting the first UN Women disability inclusion audit

The UN Women representatives relayed their programme of work highlighting aspects that either included women and girls with disabilities or needed to be inclusive of women and girls with disabilities.

The key thematic areas that were highlighted as areas of priority for ROAS included:

* Political Participation: A focus was particularly within high level leadership
* Humanitarian Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction: Highlighting the displacement of thousands from civil unrest in Syria and conflict in Palestine
* Economic Empowerment: With particular focus on productive employment and decent work including issues around unpaid work and other gendered aspects to low labour force participation in the region

IDA representatives shared their expertise and the focus of their representative organizations:

**Ana Lucia Arellano, (Ecuador) IDA Chair, President of**[**Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families**](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/node/68) **(RIADIS)** opened the session, welcoming the partnership between IDA and UN Women and UN Women’s initiative in prioritizing the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities. As a representative of RIADIS, Ms. Arellano shared the organizational and personal expertise in representing cross disability issues, as well as issues relating to the families of persons with disabilities. RIADIS has particular expertise in the intersectional issues and priorities of mothers with disabilities and mothers of persons with disabilities.

**Jahda Abou Khalil, (Lebanon) General Director of the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD),** represented the leading regional organization of persons with disabilities in the Arab region and discussed their work regarding women and girls with disabilities in the region, highlighting their third regional conference of the Arab Forum for Women with Disabilities held earlier in the year (April 28-29) under the headline, ‘Cooperation for a safer world without obstacles’. Ms. Khalil specifically spoke about their ongoing work related to increasing women with disabilities political participation and inclusion in humanitarian emergencies. Ms. Kahlil also reiterated the broad network of organizations of persons with disabilities under AOPD, particularly women with disability led organizations, that would be willing to collaborate with UN Women ROAS.

 **Maulani Rostinsulu (Indonesia) Vice President ASEAN Disability Forum**, highlighted the Forums ongoing advocacy work related to migrant and domestic workers with disabilities in Southeast Asia, of whom the majority are women. The ASEAN Disability Forum through their broad networks in Southeast Asia focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development processes, taking a prominent role in the monitoring of regional development related agreements such as the Incheon Strategy and the regional monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ms. Rostinsulu further spoke about the founding of the Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities which focuses on eliminating violence against women and girls with disabilities and how to ensure women and girls with disabilities are included in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response efforts.

**Dulamsuren Jijid (Mongolia), Board Member World Federation of the Deaf,**  relayed the World Federations of the Deaf’s vast global network that represent the priorities of 9 million deaf persons globally. She highlighted a critical focus of WFD’s work is sign language literacy and increasing training and access to quality sign language interpreters. Leading national movements in Mongolia for deaf women and girls, Ms. Jijid stated their advocacy focuses on access to education and employment, particularly those living in rural areas or in nomadic communities.

**Monique Post (Netherlands) represents the European Disability Forum and is the Senior Advisor at Autism Netherlands**. As a member of EDF Women's Committee and a leader in the Female Autism Network Netherlands,  Ms. Post relayed her advocacy work within Europe focused on woman and girls who have non-apparent disabilities, particularly Autism and those affected by chronic pain. EDF as the lead European network of persons with disabilities has prioritized advancing the political participation and leadership of women with disabilities, their work is exemplified by the election of Ms. Ana Palaez (Vice-President of EDF) to the CEDAW Committee this year as the first woman with a disability on the committee

**Diane Bergeron (Canada) as Vice President of International Engagement at the CNIB and who represents the World Blind Union (WBU)** discussed her role in promoting policy change and advocacy within the Canadian government and internationally to promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Representing WBU which represents the estimated 253 million people worldwide who are blind or partially sighted and members in 190 countries, Ms. Bergeron highlighted WBU’s ongoing work to increase educational, employment and accessibility for women and girls with disabilities.

**Savina Nongbutu (Solomon Islands) Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Disability Forum,** relayed PDFs ongoing collaboration with UN Women in the Pacific. Through this partnership, PDF has worked intensively to provide guidelines and recommendations for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction programmes and policies, particularly relating to climate related disasters. Ms. Nongbutu additionally relayed PDF’s advocacy on eliminating the high rate of gender-based violence in the Pacific, particularly as it affects women and girls with disabilities. PDF additionally has completed this last year a in depth report outlining the progress of SDG implementation inclusive of persons with disabilities in the Pacific region.

**Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame (Ghana), Member of the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Policy Adviser at Sightsavers** International. Ms. Fefoeme as a Member of the Committee on the CRPD, discussed her leading role in monitoring the implementation of the CRPD, with a particular focus on highlighting the issues that affect women and girls with disabilities particularly. After running for the Committee in 2016, and the resulting election creating a gender disparity of 17 men and 1 woman serving on the CRPD Committee, Ms. Fefoeme in collaboration with women’s and disability rights organizations launched a campaign for gender parity in the Treaty Bodies. Ms. Fefoeme in addition brings a long history of grassroots activism and advocacy including holding the position of Africa Chair of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment and working closely with governments in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The delegation was additionally supported by Megan Smith, IDA’s Gender and Development Officer based in NY and Dorodi Sharma IDA’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officer.

* In addition to the representatives in the room, IDA’s network also includes other representative organizations with a diversity of expertise including [African Disability Forum](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/african-disability-forum), [Down Syndrome International](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/DSI), [Inclusion International](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/II), [International Federation of Hard of Hearing People](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/IFHOH), [International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/IF), World Federation of Deafblind, and the [World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/WNUSP)

**Next Steps**

In anticipation of a in depth disability inclusion mission to the ROAS in Spring of 2019, the next steps will be taken:

1. IDA will finalize with UN Women Headquarters and Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya the needs assessment survey to disseminate to the ROAS.
2. ROAS will respond to the survey in January 2019
3. Responding to the feedback from the needs assessment, IDA will set up conversations, if needed, with individual staff to gain further information
4. IDA will draft with UN Women Headquarters and Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya a concept note and agenda for the in-country mission responding to the needs assessment and interviews