



14th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD
Virtual Side Event

Theme: Impact of Armed Conflict and Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) on Persons with Disabilities -
Prioritizing Mental Illness or PTSD in the Socio-Economic Recovery Strategies
June 16, 2021, from 1:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. EST (New York time)

CONCEPT NOTE

The event "Impact of Armed Conflict and Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) on People with Disabilities - Prioritizing Mental Illness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) through Socio-Economic Recovery Strategies" is built on the previous conference held on the margins of CSW65 with the title "How to ensure the empowerment of women and girls, including people with disabilities, at all stages of their lives? »

It will occur on June 16, 2021, from 1:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. EST (New York time). The aim is to draw attention to mental illness or post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from armed conflicts or situations due to Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). These difficulties and their corollaries on the general population are not prioritized in post-disaster recovery strategies. In addition, people with disabilities are left behind, causing other pathologies: distress, anxiety, and even depression.

Participants will discuss the specific needs and requirements of people with mental illness or post-traumatic stress disorder, including those who have developed such pathologies, especially concerning the current pandemic and armed conflicts. Participants will also draw on specific examples by country.

BACKGROUND

Both armed Conflicts and COVID-19 have severe implications for people with disabilities. The most affected are women, children, young people with disabilities, and vulnerable groups such as the homeless, the prison population, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities residing in institutions for the mentally ill. The victims are also high-risk individuals with chronic pathologies. Women and girls with disabilities experience double violence in this pandemic due to the lack of harmonization of response and prevention systems for violence responses to their specific needs.

There are more than one billion people with disabilities in the world. According to the UN Human Rights, 16% of them are victims of armed conflicts. Women and girls are most affected. Wheelchair-users and the blind are even more vulnerable to all forms of violence and abuse, not to mention sexual abuse. The mental health of people affected during armed conflict could be permanent, with increased risks for girls, children with disabilities, vulnerable groups such as refugees, internally displaced persons, street children, and the homeless.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on people affected by conflicts, with a disastrous effect on people with disabilities. The pandemic has resulted in a range of emotional, physical, and socio-economic hardships. Victims of COVID-19 are exposed to severe forms of disease that can lead to death. Some people witness the suffering or even death of a loved one. Consequent emotional burdens and social isolation frequently resulted in anxiety and depression, which can also cause severe post-traumatic stress disorder.

The number of deaths attributed to COVID-19 surpassed 3.2 million at the beginning of May 2021. As for the number of people infected, it continues to increase. It is an alarming and traumatic situation for the entire world population.

We notice that any disaster can lead to mental disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, or other disorders such as depression, anxiety, and alcohol-related diseases. Consequences include psychosocial disabilities such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Unfortunately, these types of invisible disabilities are not systematically

considered. Some victims do not have access to any form of support. Otherwise, such support is either insufficient or inadequate.

Access to mental health services and infrastructure remains a challenge for many. Some people are institutionalized, but the support is often insufficient. Others live in the community with their families, who are also less equipped to provide them with the necessary support. The third category of people with mental illness or post-traumatic stress disorder end up on the streets and become homeless. Among these are women, young people, and children exposed to all forms of abuse.

The general population may suffer from various levels of traumatic stress linked to armed conflicts and COVID-19, resulting in many mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder. However, people with disabilities are at higher risk because of their precarious socio-economic situation.

Unfortunately, little is offered to protect and to advise persons with disabilities during armed conflicts and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, many of them are in the at-risk group. Participants will focus on actions taken to address the additional risks faced by women and girls.

ORGANIZERS:

Consortium of African Diaspora based in the US for the Social and Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities - CADUS-USA: ERPWDI -Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities International, Inc, Disability Inclusive Development Programs and Services – DIDEPAS, CITA Foundation for the Underprivileged, African-American Higher Education Partnerships – AAHEP, Femmes et Contributions au Développement – FECODEV, Association Française Femmes pour le Dire Femmes pour Agir, Safety Analysis and Business Advice, LLC, FDDA-Disabled Peoples' International, AGIR FINANCE Côte d'Ivoire SA, Enlightening and Empowering People with Disabilities in Africa - EEPD AFRICA, Entreprise Nationale et de la Diaspora pour le Développement Durable – ETNAD3, LLC, Union des Femmes de la Région de la NAWA, ONG Santé-Education-Développement, Association des Jeunes Avocats de Côte d'Ivoire - (FEMICI), Associations des femmes du secteur minier en Côte d'Ivoire et en Afrique (AWIMA), Association Du Côté Des Femmes, Children's Life in Rural Area – CliRA, Essungue Ejuma Foundation for Underprivileged.

CO-SPONSORS:

Assemblée Nationale de Côte d'Ivoire, The International Disability Alliance-IDA

MODERATOR:

- Ms. Jeannette Kah Le Guil, Co-Founder CADUS, Co-Founder Disability Inclusive Development Programs and Services, Inc. (DIDEPAS), CEO of Entreprise Nationale et de la Diaspora pour le Développement Durable, LLC (ETNAD3)
- François Ndengwe, Founder & President African Advisory Board, Femmes d'Afrique Magazine

SPEAKERS:

- Opening Remark by Vladimir Cuk, Executive Director, The International Disability Alliance
- Opening Remark by Honorable Sehi Gaspar, Member of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire
- Dr. Gahe Psychiatrist, Côte d'Ivoire

PANEL DISCUSSION:

1. Binouri Brice MONNOU, Présidente, Femmes et Contributions au Développement, FECODEV, Africa
2. Claire DESAINT, co-Présidente, Association Française Femmes pour le Dire Femmes pour Agir (FDDA - Disabled Peoples' International) France
3. Karen SABA, Co-Founder and Strategic Adviser, Safety Analysis and Business Advice LLC, USA
4. Dr. Olivier MANCERON, co-Président, Association Française Femmes pour le Dire Femmes pour Agir (FDDA-Disabled Peoples' International)
5. Sefakor KOMABU-POMEYIE (Ph.D.) Founder of Enlightening and Empowering People with Disabilities in Africa (EEPd AFRICA) Ghana
6. Vanessa BAH-LEROUX, Attorney Côte d'Ivoire Bar
7. Brigitte Gerber, President of Association Du Côté Des Femmes, France
8. Robert Tia, Founder & President, Children's Life in Rural Area, Central African Republic

CONTACT:

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