**Draft Concept Note**

**Side-event on Gender-responsive disability inclusion in conflict and post- context**

**Co-organizers:** United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

**Co-Sponsors (TBC)**: Korea, Australia, Finland, WRC/IDA, MyRights, IFIs (World Bank).

**Venue**: Zoom

**1. OVERVIEW**

The proposed side-event on Gender-responsive disability inclusion in conflict and post-conflict/transition situations is to increase the visibility of the leadership role of women with disabilities in post-conflict and transition context. Participants will make (a) interventions from different organizations to discuss the engagement of women with disabilities in conflict and post-conflict situations and (b) specific recommendations addressed to governments and other key stakeholders for the inclusion and effective participation of women and girls with disabilities.

**2. JUSTIFICATION**

It is estimated that more than a billion persons in the world have some type of disability, representing 15% of the population.[[1]](#footnote-1) Disability is more common among women,[[2]](#footnote-2) older persons and children and adults who are poor. At the same time, it is recognized that women with disabilities experience multiple disadvantages, being excluded due to their gender and disability. Women and girls with disabilities are exposed to multiple barriers for the exercise of their rights.

Emerging from critical race and gender theory, intersectional approaches encourage policymakers and practitioners to move beyond singular categories of identity (such as gender, race, disability or age) and consider the more complex relationships and interactions between all identities and the impact of structures of oppression – including racism, sexism and ableism.[[3]](#endnote-1) The lens of intersectionality, broadly conceived, can better illuminate complex contexts and drivers of exclusion as it pays attention to the relationships between experiences of marginalization, power dynamics and structural inequality.

While an intersectional approach is not yet standard practice, there is growing understanding that these compounded forms of discrimination need to be addressed in order to ensure that individuals with lived experiences of systemic exclusion are not further excluded from the benefits of development. To advance this dialogue, UN Women has initiated and coordínated a research initiative[[4]](#footnote-3) to identify specific trends, gaps and opportunities for the application of intersectionality to policies and programmes in conflict or crisis-affected areas and countries in transition.

During conflict, women and girls experience dangerous situations and unequal situations which are further exacerbated by entrenched societal inequalities and the patriarchal systems. These gender norms are further exploited during conflict to make people’s lives even more difficult. Often, this also means a reversal of advancements made prior to conflict in terms of women’s empowerment and gender equality. The attention given to women and girls with disabilities still suffers from being discussed as one issue among others. However, the discrimination and inequality that women and girls with disabilities face cannot be resolved by a general solution under the umbrella of intersectionality. To recognize the needs and demands of women and girls with disabilities, and to transform these into lived reality, an effectively intersectional approach that involves women and girls with disabilities at all stages of strategizing and implementation is imperative.

Security Council Resolution 1325 recognizes the disproportionate effects of armed conflict on women and children and addresses the necessity for increased and equal participation of women in conflict resolution and the maintenance and promotion of peace. The resolution also realizes the need for mainstreaming gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations and admits to the necessary advantages brought forth by the contribution and participation of women in peacebuilding. The resolution also emphasizes the dire need for protecting women and girls against sexual and gender-based violence, which, especially during conflict, are often used as war weapons. As the framework under which the women, peace and security agenda is organized, SCR1325 plays an important role in the decisions that Member States decide to take—or not to take—as part of their National Action Plans.

In 2019, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2475 on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflict and humanitarian crises. This landmark resolution was agreed to by consensus and focuses on ways to ensure access to services, knowledge as well as meaningful participation and representation of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities.

The focus of emergency relief and recovery plans on the rehabilitation of women and girls with disabilities, although important, is not enough. There can be no fundamental and final change if women with disabilities are not, on an equal basis with others, given the opportunities to participate fully and effectively as decision-makers, leaders, peacebuilders and peacekeepers at the regional, national and international levels.

**3. OBJECTIVES**

**General Objective**

To hold a side-event to explore trends and issues of Gender-responsive disability inclusion in conflict and post- context.

**Specific Objectives**.

* Identifying critical barriers for the inclusion and effective participation of women and girls with disability in fragile/conflict setting;
* Specific recommendations addressed to governments, relevant partners including UN entities for the inclusion and effective participation of women and girls with disability in national governance mechanism, processes (i.e., peacebuilding etc.), public policies and life with a focus on conflict and post-conflict settings.

**4. PARTICIPANTS**

Organizations and networks of women with disabilities, Member States, experts and UN entities.

(TBD)

1. See http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In most OECD countries, it is reported that women have a higher incidence of disability than men (World Disability Report, WHO, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. “Demarginalising the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 14. pp. 138–67. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
4. See https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/brief-addressing-exclusion-through-intersectionality-in-rule-of-law-peace-and-security-context [↑](#footnote-ref-3)