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GLOBAL NEWS

• CRPD ratifications reach 130

The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by Iraq on 20 March 2013 brings a total of 130 States Parties to the CRPD, while the Optional Protocol (OP) has 76 ratifications.

The number of signatories to the CRPD is 155 while the OP has 91 signatures. [List of signatories and States Parties](#)

• State Reports submitted to the CRPD Committee

United Arab Emirates has submitted its national report to the CRPD Committee. For the moment, this report is only available in Arabic. All reports presented so far to the CRPD Committee are accessible on the [CRPD Committee website section](#)

• IDA's Human Rights Publication Series

The inaugural edition of [IDA's Human Rights Publication Series](#) was launched in March. IDA's Human Rights Publication Series is a new annual journal dedicated to sharing and gathering information, practices and experiences related to implementation of the CRPD from different sources including DPOs, NGOs, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), United Nations human rights mechanisms and other actors, with a focus on highlighting positive examples of CRPD compliance.

This first edition of the Human Rights Publication Series is devoted to the right to participate in political and public life as enshrined in Article 29 of the CRPD. It was chosen given its relevance for all disability constituencies and the fact that it is linked to some of the core provisions of the Convention. While there continue to be widespread barriers and challenges to upholding non-discrimination and the right of persons with disabilities to political participation, an enormous amount of learning and innovation is emerging on the subject across different countries and regions.

• IDA reaction to the World Report on Disability

During its last Governing Body meeting held in Geneva last January, IDA adopted a comprehensive and coordinated reaction of all its members to the World Report on Disability produced jointly by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank in 2011. [IDA reaction to the World Report on Disability](#)

• Global Consultation on Education in Dakar

The Global Consultation on Education, co-organised by UNESCO and UNICEF, took place from 18 to 19 March 2013 in Dakar, Senegal. The main objectives of the consultation were to: review progress in education since 2000; identify emerging priorities and cross-cutting issues and; outline options for ensuring that education is effectively addressed in the Post-2015 development agenda.

The consultation, which was one of 11 thematic consultations identified as key in the global post-2015 discussion jointly organised by various UN entities and with support from civil society organisations, brought together

representatives of Ministries of Education around the world, as well as education experts, UN agencies and civil society organisations.

IDA was represented in this consultation by Ms Heba Hagrass (Arab Organisation of People with Disabilities, an IDA member). The speeches of Ms Geeta Rao Gupta, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director and Mr Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Secretary-General Special Envoy on youth, included references to persons with disabilities.

The Summary of Outcomes of the meeting includes an important reference to disability in the paragraph on advancing inclusion and equity (page 2).

Related document:

- [Post-2015 Education - Summary of Outcomes](#)

• **Regional High Level Consultations on Disability**

During the next months, a number of regional consultations on disability will take place as part of the preparatory process of the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development, which will take place on 23 September 2013 in New York.

There will be consultations in Brasilia (14-15 May 2013), organised by the Federal Government of Brazil; Thailand (14-15 May 2013), organised by UN ESCAP and financed by Australia and; Brussels (25 April 2013), organised by the European Commission.

• **European Court of Human Rights**

Together with the European Disability Forum, European Network of (ex-) Users and Survi-

vors of Psychiatry and the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, IDA submitted joint written comments to the European Court of Human Rights in two cases in March. The first [written comments concern the case of *Stankov v Bulgaria*](#) (Application no 25820/07) brought by a man with psychosocial disabilities who was deprived of his legal capacity, forcibly placed in successive social care institutions and subjected to ill-treatment on account of the poor living conditions and physical violence. The rights invoked are freedom from torture & ill treatment, right to liberty, access to justice, right to private life, and right to an effective remedy. The second [written comments concern the case of *Korovin v Russia*](#) brought by a man who was arrested for a crime and detained for compulsory psychiatric treatment, the order for which was renewed on several occasions by a court following the finding that the applicant could not be held criminally responsible as it was deemed he was “mentally incapacitated”. He complains of the unlawfulness of his detention, ill-treatment including by being subjected to restraints, unfair trial, and violation of his right to private life covering censorship of his correspondence.

The joint written comments highlight the standards of the CRPD as they relate to right to liberty and security of person, the right to live in the community, freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, equal recognition before the law, and access to justice. For more on IDA’s legal advocacy, visit [IDA’s disability rights litigation page](#).

NEW YORK NEWS

• **Commission on the Status of Women**

The 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place from 4 to 15 March 2013 in New York. The priority theme this year was ‘Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls’. The principal output of the Commission, the agreed conclusions on the priority theme, addressed the situation and vulnerability of women and girls with disabilities. The outcome document calls for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive policies, strategies, programmes and measures in relation of care giving and encourages the equal sharing of responsibilities and chores between men and women including for persons with disabilities. It also condemns and calls for taking action to prevent violence against women and girls in health care settings.

Side Event

UN Women and the International Disability Alliance (IDA), with the co-sponsorship of Australia, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Jordan, Peru and New Zealand and help from other supporting organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Plan, UNICEF, and Women Enabled held a high level side event on violence against women and girls with disabilities during the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of the Women. Ms Bachelet, then Executive Director of UN Women and one of the main panellists, expressed UN Women’s strong commitment to addressing vulnerable groups. Among these, she highlighted the multiple

discrimination and violence faced especially by women and girls with disabilities. In discussing solutions to these problems, she noted a few of the steps that UN Women is currently taking. She further proposed a joint session between the CEDAW and the CRPD Committees to formally reinforce their approaches to better confront the intersection of disability and gender and combat multiple discrimination on those grounds.

Related documents and information:

- [Final text of the Agreed Conclusions](#)
- [IDA Press Release: International Women's Day and UN Women and IDA side event CSW57, 8 March 2013](#)

• **IDA High Level Meetings in New York**

An IDA delegation, comprising the IDA Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Director held, between 24-27 March 2013, a number of high level meetings in New York, with a particular focus on the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development that will take place on 23 September 2013 in the UN headquarters.

Related document:

- [IDA Press Release: High Level Meetings by IDA delegation in New York](#)

GENEVA NEWS

Treaty Bodies

- The list of issues adopted at the **CEDAW Committee's** Pre-sessional working group on Andorra, Benin, Cambodia, Colombia, Republic of Moldova, Seychelles, Tajikistan, and Saint Vincent and

the Grenadines (in the absence of a State report) are now public. Related document:

- [IDA disability analysis of the adopted list of issues](#)

- The **CRC Committee's** three **General Comments** adopted at its session in January have been made public. **General Comment no 15 on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health**, **General Comment no 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights** and **General Comment no 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts**. All General Comments take into account the rights of children with disabilities. Of note, General Comment no 16 calls on States to "establish copyright exceptions which permit reproduction of books and other printed publications in formats that are accessible for children with visual or other impairments" (para 58); and General Comment no 17 in particular has very comprehensive references to children with disabilities and introduces the concept of "inclusive play as both a right and a means of achieving optimum development" (paras 24, 27).

- The **Human Rights Committee** met for its **107th session** from 11- 28 March, in which it examined the reports of Paraguay, Hong Kong, Angola, Peru, Macao and Belize (in the absence of a report and in the absence of a state delegation). It adopted list of issues on Bolivia, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Indonesia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Tajikistan and the US, as well as began its

reading of the **first draft of a General Comment on the right to liberty** (Article 9, ICCPR).

At the closing of the 107th session, the Human Rights Committee announced its clarified position on its interpretation of Article 25 of the ICCPR with respect to "the right to vote for persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities". While it recognised that its **General Comment no 25 on participation in public affairs and the right to vote** (whose para 4 conflicts with the CRPD) may be interpreted differently, it stated that the Committee's view is that it is unnecessary and contrary to its practice to amend its general comment. The Committee's clarified position, as put forward in its Concluding Observations adopted at this session, is that legislation relating to Article 25 on the right to vote, should be revised "to ensure that it does not discriminate against persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities by denying them the right to vote on bases that are disproportionate or that have no reasonable and objective relation to their ability to vote taking account of article 25 of the Covenant, and article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities." The Human Rights Committee stated that this clarification on Article 25 would be highlighted to the CRPD Committee and other interested parties, and encouraged all to publicise the Committee's position.

Public sessions of the Human Rights Committee were webcast live and have been archived on the [treaty body webcast website](#).

Related documents:

- [Disability analysis of the adopted Concluding Observations](#)
- IDA submissions on [Paraguay](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Angola](#) and [Belize](#) focusing on the right to political participation of persons with disabilities.
- [Submission on Peru by a coalition of Peruvian DPOs](#)
- [Disability analysis of the adopted list of issues](#)
- [Joint submission by CHRUSP, WNUSP, IDA and others for the list of issues on the United States](#)
- First draft of General Comment no 35 on Article 9 of the ICCPR in [English](#), [French](#) & [Spanish](#)
- [Joint submission by WNUSP, II, DSI and IDA on General Comment on Article 9, ICCPR](#)

Human Rights Council

The 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) took place from 25 February to 23 March 2013 in Geneva.

Resolutions

During the session, the Council adopted a resolution on the right to work and employment of persons with disabilities (Article 27 CRPD). It calls on States to take measures, including legislative and other measures to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in the workplace; positive action measures; employment of persons with disabilities in public and private sectors; the provision of reasonable accommodation; increased social protection including that to cover disability-specific costs in accessing employment; promoting alternatives to sheltered employment that are consistent with the CRPD; and the establishment of monitoring and complaint mechanisms, among

others.

It set forth the topic for the annual panel next year: the right to education (article 24 CRPD). [Resolution on article 27 of the CRPD](#) (Tabled version)

The Council referred to the rights of persons with disabilities in several other resolutions. [IDA disability analysis of resolutions of the twenty-second session](#)

Annual Discussion on Human Rights and Persons with Disabilities

On 6 March, the HRC held an interactive panel discussion on the rights of persons with disabilities, which focused on the right to work and employment of persons with disabilities (Article 27 of the CRPD). It was opened by Ms Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and was moderated by H.E. Mr Luis Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador), Vice-President of the Human Rights Council.

Mr Yannis Vardakastanis, IDA Chair, represented IDA during this discussion and delivered an oral statement calling for anti-discrimination legislation, implementation of reasonable accommodation, accessibility, necessary resources being made available, and targeted measures for women with disabilities.

Side Events

IDA was active in several side events during the session, on employment, education, and the implementation and post-2015 inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities. The IDA Chair participated in a side event on employment co-organised by Spain and Ecuador with support of other co-sponsors. He also spoke in a side event looking at where we are now and inclusion of the rights of persons with

disabilities in the post-2015 development framework, co-organised with Austria and Finland and with support of other co-sponsors. Mr Pat Clarke, past president of Down Syndrome International, spoke on behalf of IDA in a side event organised by UNICEF and with support of other co-sponsors on inclusive education. For press releases and reports about these side events, click on [IDA's web page for the twenty-second session](#).

High Level Panel on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

On 25 February 2013, Mr Zamir Dhale, a deafblind advocate from Sense International-India, who was nominated by IDA member DPI and with the support of EDF and all other IDA members, spoke on behalf of IDA in a panel commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPa). This panel was the second panel in the Council's history, which was not specifically on the rights of persons with disabilities and which was made accessible to persons with disabilities via the provision of international sign and real-time captioning.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture presented his latest [report focusing on forms of abuse in health-care settings that may be tantamount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#) to the Human Rights Council. The Special Rapporteur called for an absolute ban on all forced and non-consensual medical interventions against persons with disabilities; the revision of legal provisions that allow detention on mental health grounds,

including through guardianship and other substituted decision-making; the abolition of legislation authorising institutionalisation on the grounds of disability without free and informed consent; and the replacement of forced treatment and commitment by services in the community which respect the autonomy, choices, dignity and privacy of the person concerned. In his [oral statement](#) to the Council on 4 March, he made important clarifications on some inconsistencies in the body of his report. The Rapporteur's recommendations, particularly paragraphs 85(e), and 89 (b), (c) and (d) of his report, are a helpful reinforcement of the standards under the CRPD. Related Documents and information:

- [Meeting summary for the annual panel](#) (Press release elaborated by the OHCHR)
- [IDA Contribution to the OHCHR thematic study on work and employment of persons with disabilities](#)
- [Webcast of the panel on the rights of persons with disabilities](#) (IDA statement at 1:46:05)
- [Webcast of the VDP panel](#) (IDA statement at 2:09:17)
- [Adoption of the Resolution on the rights of persons with disabilities in the Council](#) (Webcast)
- [More information on IDA's web page for the twenty-second session](#)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Treaty Bodies

- The [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) will meet for its 9th session from 15-19 April in which it will review the report of Paraguay and adopt

list of issues on Austria, Australia and El Salvador. It will hold a half day of general discussion on women and girls with disabilities on 17 April from 12-6pm. The provisional programme and written submissions received by the Committee for this discussion can be accessed on the Committee's [website](#).

Related documents:

- [Submission on Paraguay by the DPO coalition of Paraguay in Spanish and English](#)
- [Submission on Austria by the DPO coalition of Austria: Parallel report and list of issues](#)
- [Submission on Australia by the DPO & civil society coalition](#)
- [Submission on Australia by Women with Disabilities Australia: report and summary](#)
- [Submission on El Salvador by the DPO coalition of El Salvador](#)
- [IDA submission for the half day of general discussion on women and girls with disabilities](#)
- The [Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) will meet for its 50th session from 29 April to 17 May 2013 in which it will review the reports of Azerbaijan, Denmark, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Rwanda and Togo. Following the tenth ratification of the [Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(OP-ICESCR\)](#), the instrument will enter into force on 5 May 2013. The OP-ICESCR provides for a communications mechanism allowing for individuals and groups of individuals to lodge complaints to the CESCR Committee upon exhaustion of domestic remedies in the State Party to OP-ICESCR, as well as provides for the possibility of the Committee opening an inquiry procedure into grave

and systematic violations of provisions of the ICESCR for those States parties which have recognised this competence under Article 11 of OP-ICESCR.

Related documents:

- [Joint DPOD, EDF & IDA submission on Denmark](#)
- [Submission on Togo by DPOs of Togo](#)
- [Statement by Mr Ivan Simonovic](#), Assistant Secretary-General on the occasion of the deposit of the 10th instrument of ratification of the OP-ICESCR

Universal Periodic Review

The sixteenth session of the UPR will take place in Geneva from 22 April to 3 May 2013. During this session, fourteen countries will be reviewed: Turkmenistan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Tuvalu, Germany, Djibouti, Canada, Bangladesh, Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Cuba. Regarding Bangladesh, the issues and recommendations of a national coalition of organisations of persons with disabilities, who participated in a UPR workshop led by IDA, IDA member DPI, and DPI member Add-Bangladesh, include: legislation, accessibility, education, employment, political participation, violence against women with disabilities and lack of respect in the family, and indigenous persons with disabilities. In addition, the national umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities in Germany has submitted a UPR report for the UPR of Germany. Related documents and information:

- [Report and recommendations on the situation of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh](#)

- Report and recommendations of the German national umbrella DPO
- More information on the sixteenth session of the UPR

About the IDA Disability Rights Bulletin

This bulletin is intended for experts advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities in the UN system. It is prepared by the IDA Secretariat, which also provides support to the Geneva Group of States Friends of the CRPD and to the New York informal network on States Friends of the CRPD.

*For more information about IDA and its member organisations, please visit:
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