# **Elections 2024**

# **Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

# **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

# **Human Rights Committee (HR Cttee)**

# **Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

Questionnaire for candidates

Six UN Treaty Bodies (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Human Rights Committee (HRCttee), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)) will have elections organised in 2022.

In order to strengthen the treaty bodies, the International Disability Alliance, Child Rights Connect and IWRAW Asia-Pacific – as part of [TB-Net](https://tbnet.org/en/), the NGO network on the UN Treaty Bodies – seek to promote quality, independence and diversity of treaty body membership through transparent and participators nomination and elections processes.

This questionnaire, which is sent to all nominated candidates and is based on the criteria set forth in the relevant treaties and in the General Assembly Resolution 68/268, will enable all States and other stakeholders to better understand the skills, experiences and motivation of running candidates to CRPD, CEDAW, HRCttee, CRC and CESCR in advance of the elections.

The written responses to the questionnaires will be made available on the website [www.untbelections.org](http://www.untbelections.org), while the video responses will be shared on a dedicated [YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3AE1yyjFFbfT9G9lFKAaTQ).

*This initiative does not imply that we support or oppose any individual candidates.*

## Questions for all treaty bodies candidates

1. Name: *Odelia Fitoussi*

2. Nationality: *Israel*

3. *Current position: vice-chair of thr CRPD, Professional Manager of organization for children, youth and adults with physical, medical and sensory disabilities called SIMCHA LAYELED*

4. Are you currently holding, or have you previously held any position on behalf of, or for, your Government (Executive branch) that may compromise your actual or perceived independence and impartiality? If so, please give details:

*No.*

5. Please indicate any current or potential conflict of interest that may prevent you from exercising independence and impartiality in your work as a member of a UN treaty body: *I don't have.*

6. Was the nomination process for your candidacy a transparent and participatory process? Was civil society or other relevant stakeholders involved? *Yes it was.*

7. During your possible mandate as a Committee member, what other positions or professional activities do you intend to engage in?

*With God will, if I will re-elected, I intend to continue the positions I held as a member of the CRPD committee as a member of the working group of the rights for women and girls with disabilities, as a member of the working group on deinstitutionalization and to continue being vice-chair of the working group for writing the General Comment to Article 11 which deals with the rights of persons with disabilities in emergencies and humanitarian crises. I also hope to continue to be part of the bureau team.*

*In addition, it is important to me to promote accessibility by means of transportation, with an emphasis on airplanes and the entire process related to flights. Engage in the promotion of inclusive design with an emphasis on clothing and especially promoting the perception of persons with disabilities as consumers and customers with market power. My last goal is Promoting leadership of persons with disabilities to key positions in local, governmental, social and economic leadership with an emphasis on women with disabilities.*

8. The commitments as a Committee member are very time-consuming during and outside session time. How will you ensure to have the capacity to dedicate the necessary time to the work of the Committee, both in person and online?

*As a committee member I am certainly aware of the many hours dedicated and happily I was able to combine this with my work and other pursuits, I believe I will be successful in the future as well.*

9. What are the current and main challenges that you see for the treaty body system and what are your ideas for improvement?

*There are several challenges that I recognize in the committee's activities. The first of them is the economic challenge. The recent cutbacks at the UN may reduce our work that is so critical for people with disabilities, the lack of manpower in the secretariat, the inability to hold online meetings with all the required accessibility, and also , we only meet twice a year and this creates a delay in processing the countries' reports. I hope as a committee member to be more determined in our demands in front of the decision makers and clarify the prices that persons with disabilities suffer due to these cuts. Another issue is cooperation with committees in order to implement the concept of the CRPD there as well. During the last term as a member of working groups for women and girls as well as a working group for the rights of children with disabilities I took part in two collaborations. I intend to initiate and expand collaborations with committees that may not be obvious, such as the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The last thing I hope is to create more platforms for receiving information from persons with disabilities on various issues concerning their rights.*

10. Given the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and the disruption of in person meetings of treaty bodies, will you be willing to adapt to undertake online work during your mandate, as an increasing way of functioning of the Committees?

*I think that working online with committee members and in general with OPD organizations is a necessity and makes it very easy to carry out and promote various issues, not only as a response to the Covid 19 epidemic which I hope will have already ended in most parts of the world, but as part of the advance. Likewise, we must engage as committee members in the entry of AI as part of the technological measures that may certainly help people with disabilities while taking into account the dangers inherent in this technology.*

Link to your full resume:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:AP:92b45d8c-77dd-4367-bd0e-6d38dc6a844f>

**Questions for candidates to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

*Please provide responses that are as precise as possible and in no more than* ***200 words per question****.*

***Your motivation, experience and qualifications to become a member***

1. What do you think are the core values and key functions of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in protecting and promoting their rights?

*The core values ​​of the committee relate to the full participation of people with disabilities in shaping their future and to promote influence and involvement in legislation and the services provided in each country. We as a committee must make sure that even in our discussions, whether it is a dialogue with a country or writing a GC, people with disabilities must be partners in thinking and in the process itself. Also, the committee should make sure to implement the right to personal autonomy of every person with any type of disability and provide the relevant supports to exercise this right. In addition, the key roles of the committee are to create dialogue and awareness of the values ​​of the CRPD by working with the various committees in the UN and the various UN departments, creating practical tools for the various countries to assimilate them and to be an effective and deterrent response when there is a violation of the values ​​of the convention.*

2.What motivates you to be a member of the CRPD Committee?

*As someone who is seeking to be re-elected for another term, I am aware of the hard work that is required and I still have a desire to be a part of changing and promoting the rights of people with disabilities. As someone who lives with a disability, I would really like to be a partner and contribute to the promotion of a more complete world where people with disabilities are partners and active in all areas of life, according to their preferences and desires.*

3. Do you have lived experience as a person with disability or as a family member or close associate of any person(s) with disabilities?

As I wrote I am a woman with disability, I live with SMA, a kind of muscle disease, I'm using motorized wheelchair. Besides that, My father had a stroke and he was using wheelchair for his last twelve years.

4. Please indicate areas of your expertise and experience relevant to CRPD and the work of the CRPD Committee. What would be particular values that you can add / bring as a member of the Committee? In which areas of the CRPD do you feel you have the strongest understanding or expertise? Please describe. **(video option)**

*I'm a professional manager in organization of children, youth and adults with physical, sensory and medical disabilities- SIMCHA LAYELED. So I have a lot of experience with the barriers and needs of children and adults with disabilities. I am an activist in my country and involved in legislation and creating accessibility to services in the community so I believe that I know how systems works and how to make them cooperate for creating a change. Besides that I am involved in the academic level in focusing on women with disabilities and intersectional identities of persons with disabilities so I aware of the values and services that need to be promoted.*

5. Have you had the opportunity to use or apply the CRPD and/or other human rights instruments in your work? Please describe your experience and direct us to any documents that evidence this application.

*I will share 2 examples from many other. Before I've been a member of the CRPD I lead the first shadow report of the Forum for promoting the CRPD in Israel, it's kind of umbrella of over 30 NGOs which I am the co-manager of it.*

[*https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRPD%2FICO%2FISR%2F42834&Lang=en*](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRPD%2FICO%2FISR%2F42834&Lang=en)

*The second example, After two cases of death and abuse in institutions the Government decided to establish a committee to investigate the situation of persons with disabilities in institutions in my country and I was a member of this committee. To complete our mission who wrote a report that in many levels was based on the guidelines of deinstitutionalization of the CRPD.*

[*https://www.bizchut.org.il/single-post/%D7%93%D7%95%D7%97-%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%AA-%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%D7%9F*](https://www.bizchut.org.il/single-post/%D7%93%D7%95%D7%97-%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%AA-%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%D7%9F)

6. Have you advocated for the adoption and/or implementation of the CRPD or other human rights instruments in your work? Please describe your experience, referring in particular to activities to publicise, defend or strengthen the CRPD implementation at the national, regional or international level.

*The adoption and implementation of the Convention are my guiding principles in every activity in which I take part.*

*In addition to what I wrote in the previous question, in my work I lecture or involve in many round tables or committees and of course wrote some articles and been part in certain researchers considering the rights of persons with disabilities.*

*On the one hand, I do experience significant progress in assimilating rights for persons with disabilities in the various areas of life and the will to improve it.*

*And yet, unfortunately, in many cases the perception is from the perspective of kindness or grace rather than justice.*

*In many cases, the media will show either persons with disabilities who suffer from discrimination or those who "overcame" the disability and the conversation with them will be mainly in relation to their disability as if they have no other identities or interests. Even when legislation or policy which refers the rights of persons with disabilities is promoted is still considered a luxury, as an economic effort when in practice, at least in my view, it is an economic investment for a person with a disability and especially in society as a whole.*

***Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: challenges ahead***

7. What do you think are the major issues and challenges in the implementation of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol, globally as well as in your country/region? **(video option)**

*The CRPD faces several challenges in the global implementation of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol. I will mention only some of them:*

1. *Data collection and monitoring: Many countries struggle to collect accurate data on persons with disabilities, which is essential for monitoring progress and identifying areas that need improvement.*
2. *Lack of awareness and understanding: Many people, including policymakers, may not be fully aware of the rights outlined in the CRPD, leading to a lack of effective implementation and enforcement. In some cases their perspective is of grace and not justice. In other ccases there is no legal harmonizatio that Ensur that national laws are in line with the CRPD and its Optional Protocol.*
3. *Intersectionality: Issues related to intersectionality, such as the experiences of women with disabilities, children with disabilities, or persons with disabilities in conflict zones, may not receive adequate attention in the implementation of the CRPD.*
4. *Participation and empowerment: Ensuring that persons with disabilities are actively involved in decision-making processes that affect them particularly among women, immigrants and refugees with disabilities.*

8. What do you think are the areas where the Committee needs to strengthen its capacity and/or improve its work to advance implementation of the CRPD? What would you say is the biggest challenge the CRPD Committee faces currently?

*The biggest challenge the CRPD Committee currently faces is likely the issue of enforcement and compliance with the CRPD by state parties. While the CRPD sets out clear obligations for states to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, many countries ignore or struggle to fully implement the treaty due to various barriers such as lack of resources, political will, and awareness. Holding states accountable for their obligations under the CRPD and ensuring effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are in place remain significant challenges for the Committee.*

*We need to strengthening partnerships with other committees in the UN that we all speak in the same "language". Also with international organizations, civil society groups, and persons with disabilities themselves to leverage resources, expertise, and advocacy efforts to advance the implementation of the CRPD.*

9. What do you think are the thematic issues or areas of the rights of persons with disabilities, where the Committee should pay more attention and/or provide more guidance e.g. through General Comments?

*Beyond focusing on the implementation of the convention in the various states, and after we finish the general comment on article 11 and article 29, we must promote general comment and the creation of guidelines in article 25 as far as health is concerned. Dealing with covid 19 when it comes to people with disabilities as well as the discrimination that exists in the provision of medical services especially when it comes to clinics that deal with fertility and sexuality taught us that this issue is essential to the lives of persons with disabilities. In addition, the general comment in section 23, which focuses on respect for home and family, should also be promoted. In fulfilling my duties as a reporter for various countries, I became aware of the many gaps in legislation and policy implementation that constitute barriers to parents of children with disabilities as well as parents with disabilities. In many cases, persons and children with disabilities find themselves in institutional settings, especially due to poor policies and failed support systems for families.*

10. How do you envision the role of the CRPD Committee with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals?

*The CRPD Committee plays a crucial role in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities globally. In the context of the SDGs, the CRPD Committee can serve as a key actor in promoting the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in the development agenda:*

1. *Monitoring and accountability: The CRPD Committee can monitor the implementation of the SDGs from a disability rights perspective, ensuring that the specific needs and rights of persons with disabilities are taken into account in the design and implementation of policies and programs related to sustainable development.*
2. *Advocacy and awareness-raising: The Committee can raise awareness about the importance of integrating disability rights into the SDGs and advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of sustainable development efforts.*
3. *Guidance and recommendations: The CRPD Committee can provide guidance and recommendations to states parties on how to align their policies and programs with the principles of the CRPD and ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the SDGs.*
4. *Capacity building: The Committee can support states parties in building their capacity to effectively implement the CRPD and integrate disability rights considerations into their development initiatives, including those related to the SDGs.*

***Interaction with other key stake-holders***

11. Who are the relevant stakeholders, apart from State parties, with whom you think the Committee needs to strengthen its engagement e.g. civil society, NHRIs, UN agencies, members of the Parliament, judicial actors? And how?

*The relationship with civil society is critical in order to receive authentic information about what is being done in the various countries, but moreover, as a committee, we must serve as a role model for states for the significant involvement of persons with disabilities in promoting legislation and policy. To make its happen we must act to provide accessible and available means of communication with the committee. In addition, we needs to do a establish easy and effective website in multilingual to communicate with OPDs. Another focus considering that is to implement the convention by creating online courses for the benefit of people with disabilities who wish to do so in the various countries.*

*We must promote regular dialogue with NHRI agencies for mutual fertilization and dialogue in a common language, demand a meeting with them as part of the dialogue with the state. Last but not least, as I mentioned in the previous questions, the committee have to promote relations with all UN agencies and all the various committees in the UN because there is always the point of view of persons with disabilities in every field and thus it is also possible to promote joint initiatives with a wider resonance. We might do it by be aware of the moves that those agencies promote and share what we are doing and offer our involvement to promote the CRPD as an integral part of their practice.*

12.NGOs, particularly organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), had an important participatory role in the negotiations of the CRPD.

a) What is your experience working within or with the disability rights movement?

b) How do you envision the interaction of civil society with the Committee?

c) How do you think the Committee could work more effectively with civil society?

*As someone who came and is still an integral part of many NGOs in my country, and as I have mentioned many times in my various answers, their partnership with the committee is critical. I only got to know IDA when I started serving as a member of the CRPD committee. As a reporter for various countries, I had the opportunity to be exposed to the amazing work of IDA and their constant commitment to link us as committee members with OPDs and later as partners in writing the guidelines for deinstitutionalization.*

*One of the few things that the Corona period has promoted is the normalization and simplification of video calls from any point on the globe. We must make sure that this means with the language accessibility will continue to be available and an integral part of the committee's work. Also, as I answered above, we must make accessible and simplify the means of communication with the committee.*