



Picture of the Beijing World Conference in 1995. Women leaders with disabilities taking the floor, including Susan Sygall, Annell Joneken, Suad Marcos and Maria Rantho.

Side Event to the 14th CoSP

Nothing about us, without us:

**Amplifying the priorities of women and girls with disabilities
at the CRPD and CEDAW Committees
in the post COVID recovery process**

June 18, 2021

10:00 to 11.15 am, New York Time

Register in advance for this webinar:

<https://bit.ly/3grY5kV>

🗣️ International sign, 🗣️ captioning in English, simultaneous interpretation in 🇺🇸 English, 🇫🇷 French, 🇪🇸 Spanish, 🇸🇦 Arabic, 🇮🇩 Bahasa and 🇰🇪 Swahili



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CONCEPT NOTE

We, women with disabilities, have come here to contribute and to share this conference with all other women. Like all other women we struggle for equal rights and opportunities. Like all other women we can contribute to achieve the goals of equality, development and peace. Women and girls with disabilities have both unique obstacles to overcome and unique strength to provide and to contribute to our societies nationally and internationally.¹

Maria Rantho

Deputy Chairperson, Disabled People International

Official statement at the Beijing World Conference on Women, 1995

¹ Statement presented by Maria Rantho, Deputy Chairperson, Disabled People International www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/conf/ngo/11175142.txt

Background

Women with disabilities worldwide are mobilizing to articulate and amplify the issues that are central to their diverse experiences at the intersection of gender, disability and rights. In recent years, we observed proliferation of views of organizations led by women with disabilities and their allies to address human rights violations, challenge systemic injustices, express political demands and articulate visions of a more just world. Many of them are naming gender and as well as patriarchy and ableism to be the causes of systemic discrimination they are facing.

These injustices are disproportionately affecting women with disabilities, as well as creating specific experiences that have not been traditionally addressed within mainstream women's rights or disability rights advocacy.

The broader engagement with intersectionality framework within the CRPD and CEDAW Committee work, as well as cross-movement building, and advocacy has highlighted those experiences and made it clear that more efforts are needed to centralize the urgent priorities of women with disabilities. This panel aims at acknowledging the efforts made by individuals and organizations advocating for the rights of women with disabilities, learning from their strategies, recognizing diversity, and reflecting on actions that can sustain and amplify their perspectives within the CRPD and CEDAW mechanisms. The need becomes even more urgent with the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women with disabilities experienced worldwide.

Laws and policies addressing women's rights have traditionally ignored women with disabilities and in some cases have included them albeit in a manner inconsistent with human rights. This has, in many cases, perpetuated the situation of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, something seen even within the mainstream women's rights movement and the mainstream disability rights movement. These are factors leading to the reality of women and girls with disabilities being structurally excluded, often amongst the poorest of the poor, with very limited opportunities in life. The intersection of social powers connected to gender and disability and/or other grounds (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, indigenous, migrant status, race, age, etc.) has a disproportionate impact on women and girls with disabilities.

Organizations of women and girls with disabilities face high barriers to participation and have reported to not be effectively involved in decision making processes around development policies and programmes.² Even with regard to processes like parallel reporting, the experience has been that while women with disabilities have participated in processes towards the drafting of reports and presentations, inclusion of gendered perspectives on issues have not been encouraged by larger disability movements in many contexts.

In specific reporting under CEDAW, mainstream women's organizations reporting often does not contain the perspectives of women and girls with disabilities and organizations of women and girls with disabilities often lack the resources to do their own reporting, as funding and comprehensive support remain a challenge. Despite the outstanding reporting and analysis some of gender and disability rights focus groups have presented, this situation considerably restricts the scope of the Treaty Bodies to cognizance of issues and to make concrete recommendations for action. The impact of COVID-19 on organizations of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities

² International Disability Alliance, "Increasingly consulted but not yet participating"
www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida_global_survey_complete_report_final.pdf

including women and girls with disabilities, and their capacities to engage in high level advocacy, is yet to be fully understood.

The expressions of ground realities of women and girls with disabilities, especially from underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities, have not been effectively conveyed before the UN mechanisms, be it the CRPD Committee or the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee). Thus, it is crucial for the disability rights and feminist movements as well as for the UN mechanisms to create strategies that would facilitate centering the diversity and facilitating the lead of the most affected especially in the post COVID recovery phase.

Both the CRPD and the CEDAW provide a legal framework for the respect, protection and fulfillment of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls with disabilities, and despite the limited participation their Treaty Bodies have continually addressed the multiple discrimination faced by women with disabilities, calling to the attention of States Parties and other actors to accelerate their participation in all spheres of life, on an equal basis with others. For instance, in 2018, the two Committees issued a joint statement on guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all women, in particular women with disabilities wherein they noted the impact of States Parties regressing and rolling back on progress with regard to sexual and reproductive health and rights.³ There is much more that both Committees seek to achieve with regard to the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

In light of the work to be done to undo the setbacks to progress experienced in the COVID-19 era, and given the fact that there are just 9 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, there is an important and immediate role for international, regional and national umbrella OPDs, mainstream women's rights organizations, UN Agencies and the CRPD and CEDAW Committees to play in building the capacity of organizations of women and girls with disabilities to advocate at the UN level, and also to prioritize their issues in a systemic manner.

Objectives

The side event ***"Nothing about us, without us: Amplifying the priorities of women and girls with disabilities at the CRPD and CEDAW Committees in the post COVID recovery process"***, co-organised by the African Disability Forum (ADF), IDA, CREA, the Center for Reproductive Rights, Mobility International USA (MIUSA) and the Permanent Mission of Canada in New York, will explore how feminists with disabilities, and their representative organisations and networks can actively influence the work of both the CRPD and the CEDAW Committees as well as other UN monitoring mechanisms ensuring more prominent attention to the discrimination faced with regard to the rights and fundamental freedoms of women with disabilities by States Parties to these binding international instruments.

³ Guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all women, in particular women with disabilities
Joint statement by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 29 August 2018
www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewjgnqaHmuDwAhWQ3jgGHYQRAukQFjABegQIBBAD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbinternet.ohchr.org%2FTreaties%2FCEDAW%2FShared%2520Documents%2F1_Global%2FINT_CEDAW_STA_8744_E.docx&usg=AOvVaw2fJRPxaReOzU-ODmYliGHB

Panelists will also reflect on how organizations and networks of women with disabilities, including the most marginalized groups, but also OPDs and mainstream women organizations, can leverage the UN monitoring mechanisms – through country review processes and other Special Procedures – to draw attention to issues and the rights of women with disabilities and place them higher on the global agenda, especially in the post COVID-19 recovery phase.

Date and format

The side event will be held on **18 June 2021, from 10:00 to 11.15am**, New York time, in a virtual format.

 **International sign**,  **captioning in English**, simultaneous interpretation in  **English**,  **French**,  **Spanish**,  **Arabic**,  **Bahasa** and  **Swahili** will be provided.

Panelists

- **Rose Achayo**, Chairperson, National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda
- **Jeeja Ghosh**, Women with Disabilities India Network and CREA
- **Karine Grigorian**, President and Founder of Agate Rights Defense Center of Women with Disabilities, on behalf of MIUSA
- **Pratima Gurung**, Member of the IPWDGN and NIDWAN
- **Rebeca Brown**, Senior Director of Global Advocacy, Centre for Reproductive Rights
- **Ana Peláez Narváez**, Member, Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- **Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame**, Member, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- **Jeffrey Marder**, Director, Human Rights and Indigenous Affairs Policy division, Global Affairs Canada

Moderated by **Judith Ekaete Umoh**, IDA Gender Task Team member and ADF member.

Register at <https://bit.ly/3grY5kV>

For further information, kindly contact Rosario Galarza rgalarza@ida-secretariat.org.

