



Side Event 14<sup>th</sup> CoSP CRPD

*Youth with disabilities:*  
Opportunities in COVID-19 recovery and onwards to  
the **Youth with Disabilities Summit**

**17 June 2021**

11:30 am - 12:45 pm, New York Time

Register in advance for this webinar:

<https://bit.ly/2Sscaqz>

Simultaneous interpretation in English, Spanish, French and International Sign, and captioning in English



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## **Concept note**

### **Background**

The 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties (CoSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) will take place from 15 to 17 June 2021, in New York, promoting the theme *'Building back better: COVID-19 response and recovery; Meeting the needs, realizing the rights, and addressing the socio-economic impacts on persons with disabilities.'*

The beneficiaries of the society and structures that will be rebuilt will have a large population of youth with disabilities. There are an estimated 180 to 220 million youth with disabilities worldwide, with over 80% living in developing countries<sup>1</sup>. Even prior to the pandemic young persons with disabilities have

<sup>1</sup> [www.un.org/development/desa/youth/youth-with-disabilities.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/youth-with-disabilities.html)

been reported to be disproportionately isolated within their own communities and are far less likely to achieve the same educational, employment and personal outcomes as is seen with their non-disabled peers<sup>2</sup> especially in the Global South.

While the last few years have seen progress in the mainstreaming of youth with disabilities, and the building of leadership among them, the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and related prevention measures have threatened to set this back. Youth with disabilities have experienced disruptions in access to education, trainings, and co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, inability to access essential services related to rehabilitation, assistive devices, and sexual and reproductive health services, healthcare, isolation from having been separated from their friends and colleagues, increased mental health challenges, compromises to independent living and in some cases harassment from family members and others in the immediate surroundings, including sexual violence, with no recourse to support from peers or law enforcement<sup>3</sup>.

## Context and thematic focus

Despite this, innovations by youth with disabilities and organizations led by youth with disabilities have kept up a sense of community<sup>4</sup>, and in many instances, youth with disabilities emerged as leaders to promote inclusion, accessibility and access to basic needs and services to their communities<sup>5</sup> having leveraged opportunities including those presented by technology. Youth from underrepresented groups with disabilities still faced barriers to such opportunities, but the time has come to utilize the experiences and ideas that the diversity of the movement of youth with disabilities have and to provide a platform for their leadership and innovations.

In November 2020 a Call to Action was developed by youth with disabilities at a global consultation for youth organized by the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Children's Emergency Fund, (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the SG's disability inclusion team, and with the support of the Permanent Missions of Finland and Ecuador.

The commitment by both youth with disabilities and UN Agencies on participation and representation is leading to the strengthen and launch of a number of youth with disabilities networks, including IDA's Youth Committee, IDA global listserv and the UN Youth with Disabilities Network, led by youth with disabilities themselves. These networks represent additional platforms for further advocacy and direct engagement of youth with disabilities at both the youth and disabilities agenda.

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<sup>2</sup> UNFPA (2018) *Young persons with disabilities: global study on ending gender-based violence and realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights* p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> PAZA Podcast Episode 4, "Sexual and Gender based violence in the global pandemic: Exploring the experiences of women and girls with disabilities" [www.this-ability.org/paza-episode4/](http://www.this-ability.org/paza-episode4/)

<sup>4</sup> "Vella Panti, an online house party for persons with disabilities" <https://risingflame.org/project/vella-panthi-an-online-house-party-for-persons-with-disabilities/>

<sup>5</sup> UN Office of the Secretary General's Special Envoy on Youth, "Meet 10 leaders who can inspire you to change the world (10th Edition) – Special Edition dedicated to Young People with Disabilities" <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2020/08/meet-10-leaders-who-can-inspire-you-to-change-the-world-10th-edition-special-edition-dedicated-to-young-people-with-disabilities/>

There are several opportunities for the engagement of youth with disabilities, including those underrepresented, at the global level. One such is the [Global Disability Summit \(GDS\)](#) which had its first edition in London<sup>6</sup>, with the objectives to raise global attention and focus on neglected areas, bring in new voices and approaches to broaden engagement, mobilizing new global and national commitments on disability; and, showcasing best practice and evidence from across the world.

In February 2022, the Norwegian Government will co-host the Global Disability Summit with the International Disability Alliance (IDA), Atlas-Alliance and a Government from the Global South. In preparation of the [GDS 2022](#), IDA, IDA members, the Atlas Alliance and partners started to conduct consultations with youth with disabilities to identifying key themes and recommendations for GDS 2022. This is an opportunity for young people with disabilities to express themselves as part of the decision-making process at an international level.

A specific Youth with Disabilities Summit is scheduled to be held in 2022, organized by IDA, IDA members, the Atlas Alliance and their members with the aim of ensuring the mobilization, engagement and participation of youth with disabilities to advocate for the human rights of persons with disabilities, guided by the CRPD and the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs. In the spirit of “*nothing about us, without us*”, there needs to be a widespread consultation ahead the GDS 22 to decide the themes and priorities of this landmark event.

To highlight the issues concerning youth with disabilities in their entire diversity, IDA, IDA members, including the Latin American Union of the Blind (ULAC) and IDA’s Youth Committee, along with the Atlas alliance and its members, particularly the Youth Mental Health Norway (YMHN), as well as the Permanent Mission of Finland in New York, UNICEF, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNFPA, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Office of the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth (OSGEY) are organizing the side event “[Youth with disabilities: Opportunities in COVID-19 recovery and onwards to the youth with disabilities summit](#)”.

The side event will take place on the **17<sup>th</sup> June 2021, at 11.30 am to 12.45 pm**, New York time alongside of the COSP14, with the aim to discuss the current situation of youth with disabilities and propose the possible strategy for engagement to accelerate global action for the rights of youth with disabilities, ensuring that no youth with disability is left behind in the way towards the development milestones that lie ahead for the world.

## Objectives

- To present the experiences of youth with disabilities, including from underrepresented groups, in the COVID-19 period, and highlight the areas of attention required from the international community,
- To present vision of the Global Disability Summit 2022 and the Youth with Disabilities Summit 2022 and to identify key areas for intervention for youth with disabilities, particularly those from the Global South,

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<sup>6</sup> On 24 July 2018, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), along with the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the Government of Kenya, co-hosted the first Global Disability Summit.

- To identify opportunities for linkages and synergies with the mainstream youth movement.

## Speakers

- **Petri Puhakka**, Finnish Ambassador for Disability Inclusion
- **Matías Ferreira**, ULAC President, WBU and IDA
- **Miyeon Kim**, Vice Chair of the CRPD Committee
- **Alagammai Chenthilnathan**, IDA's youth community of practice
- **Daniela Gordon**, UN youth with disabilities network
- A youth representative from Show Abilities Uganda or Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN) or the Youth Committee of the African Union of the Blind (AFUB) (TBD)

Moderated by **Peter Ochiengo**, IDA Youth Fellow

The side event will be held virtually, under a Zoom platform, with the provision of simultaneous interpretation in **English, Spanish, French and International Sign (IS)**, and **captioning in English**.

Register at <https://bit.ly/2Sscqz>.

For further information, kindly contact Rosario Galarza at [rgalarza@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:rgalarza@ida-secretariat.org).

