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## Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities

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### Side Event to the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties to the CRPD

June 9, 2025, 1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Conference Room 11, United Nations, New York NY

### Co-Sponsored by

Switzerland | Republic of Colombia | Republic of Korea | OHCHR | UNDP | UNICEF | ZRMB  
(Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) Basel, Switzerland

Full and unfettered access to legal proceedings by persons with disabilities plays a pivotal role in recognizing their dignity as human beings. The guarantee of access to justice in Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a unique provision in international human rights law, protecting the right of equal recognition before the law in legal proceedings and incorporating all procedural safeguards guaranteed by international and domestic law. The CRPD Committee has outlined the basic tenets of this guarantee in its individual communications, its concluding observations and in its endorsement of the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities, issued by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2020. Nevertheless, much needs to be done to further refine the content of this guarantee and to raise awareness among persons with disabilities, their representative organizations, personnel in the justice sector and national legislators.

This side event to the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties to the CRPD aims at raising awareness of the particularly strong procedural protections the Convention guarantees to Persons with Disabilities. It highlights that CRPD States Parties need to fundamentally change their traditional structures of legal proceedings to comply with their treaty obligations. This requires adjustments in the legislative framework governing procedures in administrative and judicial bodies and in the jurisprudence of these bodies. And it requires organizations of persons with disabilities to gain the expertise necessary to participate effectively in administrative and judicial procedures.

In this side event, we bring together a wide array of experience and expertise on the requirements of persons with disabilities in legal proceedings. Persons with disabilities will bear witness to their experiences with denials of access to justice, a former Chair of the CRPD Committee will delineate the content of the guarantee, the current Chair of the CRPD Committee and an organization of persons with disabilities will outline ongoing efforts on the domestic and international levels to put Article 13 into practice. Finally, international organizations will report on the insights their programs on access to justice can yield.

The side event will be moderated by Markus Schefer, Member of the CRPD Committee and Co-Director of the ZRMB (Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), Basel, Switzerland.