

[Concept note] 19th UN CRPD COSP Side Event

Disability and Digital Transformation - Ensuring Equitable Digital Futures

Date and Time: Monday, 8 June 2026, 13:15–14:30

Venue: United Nations Headquarters, CR-11

Main host: Rehabilitation International Korea (RI Korea)

Co-organizers: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations , Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF, International Disability Alliance (IDA), Asia-Pacific Disability Forum (APDF), Disability Committee (Sub-Committee of the Development Alliance Korea)

Sponsor: KOICA

Background and Objectives

In line with the theme of the 19th session of the COSP, “CRPD at 20: celebrating and consolidating achievements and shaping the next phase of implementation in a changing world,” the Korean disability community jointly organize a side event on digital transformation, as part of the collaborative activities of the SDG10 (Disability) Sub-Committee under Development Alliance Korea (DAK), whose secretariat is operated by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The event aims at reflecting on the achievements of the CRPD over the past two decades while also examining emerging global challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing world.

The digital transformation and the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are creating new opportunities for persons with disabilities in areas such as access to information and communication, education, employment, mobility, and independent living. Technologies, including AI-based voice recognition, automatic captioning, image description tools, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), and smart assistive devices, have the potential to significantly enhance the independence and social participation of persons with disabilities.

However, technological development without the consideration of accessibility and inclusiveness may create new forms of discrimination and exclusion. Key concerns include algorithmic bias, inaccessible digital platforms, high costs of assistive technologies, digital skills gaps, and risks related to personal data protection and cybersecurity. Given that approximately 1.3 billion persons with disabilities worldwide, about 16 percent of the global population, may be affected by digital transformation, there is an increasing need for policy responses and international cooperation to ensure that digital innovation supports inclusion.

Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes access to information and communication technologies and the digital environment as a fundamental right. In this context, there is a growing need for policy responses and

strengthened international cooperation to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities in the era of digital transformation.

This side event will examine both the opportunities and the risks that digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies present for persons with disabilities. It will also explore ways to advance disability-inclusive digital policies, accessible technology design, and international cooperation to ensure inclusive digital futures for all.

Programme

- Format: Round-table Dialogue, moderated by PT Lim

time	Agenda	Speaker
8min	Welcoming Remarks/ Introduction to Agenda	PT Lim (APDF, Chair)
48min	Global Trends in AI and Digitalisation/Effect on Persons with Disabilities - Key international policies* - Key Strategies and Current Status	Jose Maria Viera (2bc) (IDA, Executive Director)
	Common Questions - Current status of digital inclusion policies by country/region - Enabling factors · Expanding access to information and communication · Expanding educational opportunities · Expanding employment and participation in economic activities · Promotion of independent living within the community - Risk factors · Barriers posed by digital platforms · Deepening of complex and intersectional exclusion due to supply gaps caused by the cost of assistive technology · Cybersecurity issues - International cooperation tasks to promote future implementation of the UN CRPD - Case study: Prospects for the protection of digital rights based on the “Digital Inclusion Act(ROK)”	Rehab Mohammad Boresli (UN CRPD) Alex Coté (UNICEF, Social policy specialist, Disability and SP lead) Glenda Relova (National Council on Disability Affairs, Philippines) Morgon Banks, Lead Editor of the GDIR (LSHTM) Kyeonghee Lee (Korea Disabled People’s Development Institute, President) Seongmin Jo (Secretary General, APDF Secretary General, RI Korea)
5min	Closing Remarks	PT Lim (APDF)

* Global Disability Inclusion Report, Global Digital Compact 2024, EU Accessibility Act, UNESCO Recommendations on Ethics of AI (2021), ILO reports on Digital Employment and AI & Digital Inclusion, etc.