



## **Financial independence in a time of disruption: ensuring social protections and improving labour force participation for persons with disabilities**

**A Side Event co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**At the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**DATE:** 10 June 2026

**TIME:** 13:15 to 14:30

**LOCATION:** UN Headquarters, Conference Room 12

**LIVE STREAMED:** UN WebTV <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k14/k148po54ci>

### **Overview**

Globally, persons with disabilities continue to face disproportionately high rates of poverty and exclusion from the labour market, despite international commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The current global context of rapid technology change, climate change, and sectoral shifts are reshaping the labour market. Global uncertainty, such as U.S. trade policies and rising protectionism, is also adding economic pressure. These shifts can make it harder for persons with disabilities to attain economic and social inclusion. The 2023 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development culminated in the adoption of a political declaration reaffirming world leaders' commitment to achieving the 17 goals, including Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

This side event will offer the opportunity to explore how income security and employment inclusion can work together to ensure financial independence for persons with disabilities. The side event will showcase international best practices in disability-inclusive social protection and employment policy and identify effective policy tools that reduce poverty, remove disincentives to work, and support sustainable employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

This side event directly supports:

- Implementation of UN CRPD, particularly Articles 27 and 28
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goals 1 and 8
- UN commitments to leaving no one behind and promoting inclusive growth

**Welcome remarks:** Ambassador Michael Gort, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York

**Opening remarks:** Leslie Church, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Persons with Disabilities

**Moderator:** Rupa Bhawal-Montmorency, Director General, Disability Inclusion Accessibility Directorate, Government of Canada

**Panelists:**



- Leslie Church, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Persons with Disabilities
- H.E. Mr. Harish Parvathaneni, Permanent Representative for the Government of India
- Robert Richard, Director General for Social Affairs and Safety of Work in the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Health, and Equality of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt
- Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Ainsley Wood, Canadian Youth Delegate