



México
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ante la Organización de las
Naciones Unidas



**Global
Disability
Fund**

Concept Note

Side Event at the 18th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Title: “Amplified barriers in diverse contexts: The role of OPDs in understanding and addressing intersectional discrimination against persons with disabilities”

Location: Conference Room 11, United Nations Headquarters, New York, New York

Date and Time: Thursday June 12th, 10:00am – 11:15am

Organizers:

- Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations
- Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations
- International Disability Alliance
- Global Disability Fund

Background and Rationale:

The 18th session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP18) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) offers a timely and critical opportunity to engage with one of the most pressing themes emerging from the UN system: how diverse and complex contexts amplify the barriers faced by persons with disabilities, particularly those subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

In response to General Assembly Resolution 78/195, the Secretary-General is preparing a report for the 80th session of the General Assembly focusing on persons with disabilities in contexts that remain significantly under-addressed in both global policy and practice. These include situations of displacement and forced migration, engagement with the criminal justice system, life in rural and climate-vulnerable areas, and the ongoing use of institutional settings for care. Each of these realities brings with it intensified risks of exclusion, neglect, and rights violations—particularly for persons with disabilities who also face discrimination on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, or Indigenous identity.

To effectively address intersectional discrimination against persons with disabilities, it is also essential to prioritize the collection and use of disaggregated data across all relevant sectors. For persons with disabilities, especially those in vulnerable contexts such as situations of displacement, institutional settings or climate-affected regions, the absence of such data perpetuates invisibility and limits accountability.

This side-event—proposed by the International Disability Alliance (IDA), with the co-sponsorship of the Governments of New Zealand and Mexico—aims to center the critical role of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in understanding, documenting, and addressing the complex realities persons with disabilities face in these settings. Far from being passive recipients of aid or policy, OPDs are often the first to raise alarm, mobilize responses, and propose grounded, rights-based solutions that reflect the lived experiences of their members.

Across crisis settings—whether due to armed conflict, humanitarian emergency, environmental disaster, or the creeping erosion of rights in institutional care—OPDs have consistently shown that without their leadership, inclusion is either tokenistic or entirely absent. And yet, their insights and solutions often go unheard in formal international mechanisms. This side-event seeks to change that.

The International Disability Alliance, as a global network of regional and national OPDs, plays a central role in amplifying these voices. Through sustained advocacy at the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and across UN humanitarian and development frameworks, IDA ensures that those most impacted by exclusion—refugees, Indigenous persons, women and girls, and people in crisis-affected settings—are not left behind. IDA also convenes and supports grassroots OPDs to engage in critical global processes, including at the recent Global Disability Summit (GDS). This COSP 18 side-event will reflect on the outcomes of the GDS process, surfacing urgent issues that demand ambitious, rights-based commitments from states and international partners.

The event will feature OPD leaders from a range of regional and thematic backgrounds who are working in migration and displacement, access to justice, deinstitutionalization, and climate-affected communities. They will share not only their experiences but their strategies for change—what has worked, what has not, and what States, UN actors, and donors must do differently.

In addition to panel discussions and audience dialogue, the event will inform the Secretary-General's forthcoming report to the 80th session. These recommendations will be grounded in the lived realities of persons with disabilities who have long been on the margins of global attention but who have the knowledge, leadership, and vision to guide transformative change.

Finally, the event will be fully accessible to all participants, with international sign interpretation, real-time captioning, and accessible materials provided. It will also serve as a call to action—urging States and multilateral actors to commit, ahead of the Global Disability Summit, to placing OPDs, especially those in conflict-affected, climate-vulnerable, and historically marginalized communities, at the center of inclusive policy and practice.

In these complex times, the CRPD must not be selectively implemented. It must continue to be a tool of systemic transformation in all settings—including those marked by crisis, displacement, and historical injustice, and we must continue to meaningfully engage OPDs as central agents of change. This side-event will help show the path forward.

Objectives:

1. Highlight the diverse and intersecting barriers faced by persons with disabilities in under-addressed contexts such as forced displacement, institutional settings, climate-affected areas, among others.
2. Showcase concrete examples of how OPDs are documenting and responding to intersectional discrimination and systemic exclusion in complex environments.
3. Contribute to the Secretary-General's report to the 80th session of the General Assembly with evidence-based recommendations rooted in lived experiences.
4. Mobilize commitments from States, UN agencies, and donors to center OPDs in global decision-making processes, taking an intersectional approach and invest in sustainable, rights-based solutions.

Speakers:**Moderator**

- Amba Salelkar, Senior Manager, Programs and Impact International Disability Alliance

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- H.E. Alicia Buenrostro Massieu, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations

Panelists

- Prudence Walker, Kaihautū Tika Hauātanga Disability Rights Commissioner, Te Kāhui Tika Tangata New Zealand Human Rights Commission
- Ola Abualghaib, Director of the Technical Secretariat, UN Global Disability Fund
- Sainimili Tawake, CEO, Pacific Disability Forum
- Natalia Guala, Independent Expert of the CRPD Committee
- Elham Youssefian, Director, Disability Inclusion and Accessibility, International Refugee Assistance Project

Presentation of Next Steps and Closing Remarks

- Jarrod Clyne, Deputy Executive Director, International Disability Alliance

Accessibility:

- International Sign, CART