

19th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP19)

SIDE EVENT & RECEPTION

UNDIS 2.0: Celebrating Progress, Accelerating Action on Disability Inclusion across the United Nations

Location: Conference Room 4, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Date and Time: 1:15-2:30pm, Thursday 11 June, 2026

Introduction

This high-level side event, organized jointly by the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa, launches the revised United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS 2.0). It will convene stakeholders from across the United Nations system, Member States, and organizations of persons with disabilities to articulate a shared vision for advancing disability inclusion in the next phase of UNDIS implementation during 2026–2030.

The event will celebrate six years of transformative progress under UNDIS—strengthening accountability and embedding disability inclusion across policies, programmes and operations—while highlighting achievements and the opportunity to go further.

At a time of global transformation and pressure on multilateralism, COSP19 offers a critical moment to renew ambition, reaffirm the principles of dignity, equality and non-discrimination, and position UNDIS 2.0 as a catalyst for stronger, more consistent results—supporting Member States to advance the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Background

Disability inclusion is central to the United Nations' work across human rights, development, humanitarian action and peace and security, rooted in the principles of the United Nations Charter—dignity, equality and non-discrimination. Launched by the Secretary-General in 2019, UNDIS is a commitment at the highest level to drive system-wide change and strengthen the United Nations' capacity to support Member States and advance rights of persons with disabilities.

An independent system-wide evaluation concluded that UNDIS has been a catalyst for progress, while highlighting persistent gaps. It called for a revised UNDIS with greater ambition, clearer standards, stronger accountability, and the enabling conditions needed to deliver more consistent results. UNDIS 2.0 builds on progress made so far and responds to the evaluation recommendations. Endorsed through inter-agency processes, it marks a shift

toward consistent, system-wide results, reinforced partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities, and sustained institutional change.

UNDIS 2.0 (2026–2030) introduces a sharper strategic framework and strengthened accountability architecture, including new areas on resource tracking, digital accessibility and disability data and evidence. It enables a stronger focus on country-level impact, reinforces integration in programming, deepens alignment with other system-wide strategies, and advances learning, sustainable resourcing, and intersectionality, positioning the United Nations to deliver more effectively for persons with disabilities.

Objectives

To launch UNDIS 2.0, this side event aims to

- Celebrate accomplishments achieved thus far, highlighting solutions for disability inclusion across the United Nations system and support for Member States and persons with disabilities
- Showcase how UNDIS 2.0 aims to accelerate implementation and raise ambition
- Mobilize partnerships and collective commitment for the next phase of disability inclusion in the United Nations system and Member State implementation of the CRPD

Relevance to the COSP19 Overarching Theme

This side event aligns with COSP19's theme, "CRPD at 20: celebrating and consolidating achievements and shaping the next phase of implementation in a changing world." It reflects on the system-wide progress made on disability inclusion to date while setting a clear direction for the future—positioning UNDIS 2.0 as a central driver of the United Nations system's continued transformation.

Format and Speakers

The session will feature high-level statements followed by an interactive exchange with participants.

- Representatives of Lesotho and South Africa, opening message
- Deputy Secretary-General, video message
- International Disability Alliance Board Member
- Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations entity (*TBC*)
- United Nations entity (*TBC*)
- Co-sponsor statements and closing

The side event will be followed by a reception bringing together participants for informal discussion and networking. (*TBC*)

Organizers and Co-Sponsors

- Kingdom of Lesotho, co-organizer

- Republic of South Africa, co-organizer
- United Nations, co-organizer
- Finland, co-sponsor
- Poland, co-sponsor
- International Disability Alliance, co-sponsor
- Others to be confirmed

Target Audience

The event will primarily engage Member States, organizations of persons with disabilities and NGOs with participation from United Nations entities and development partners. The event will be accessible and international sign interpretation and closed captions will be provided.