



Convention on the  
Rights of  
Persons with  
Disabilities

20

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## CRPD at 20: The Committee's Journey, Current Challenges and Future Directions

*From Normative Transformation to Substantive Equality in Practice*

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| <b>Date and Time</b> | 27 August 2026, 15.00-18.00                          |
| <b>Duration</b>      | 3 hours                                              |
| <b>Venue</b>         | Tempus, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland      |
| <b>Organizer</b>     | Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| <b>Format</b>        | Public in-person symposium, with live webcast        |

### 1. Background

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The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 marked a fundamental transformation in international human rights law. It affirmed that persons with disabilities are rights holders entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, rather than recipients of charity, welfare or medical intervention.

Over the past 20 years, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has contributed to the implementation and interpretation of the Convention through its reviews of States parties, general comments and guidelines, individual communications and inquiry procedures. It has also promoted the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in international human rights monitoring.

The twentieth anniversary provides an opportunity both to recognize these achievements and to critically assess whether the normative transformation established by the Convention has resulted in substantive equality in the everyday lives of persons with disabilities.

The symposium will examine the Committee's institutional and jurisprudential development, the challenges it currently faces and its strategic priorities for the third decade of the Convention. It will bring together current and former Committee members, OHCHR representatives, experts from other treaty bodies and organizations of persons with disabilities.

### 2. Objectives

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The symposium will:

1. Review the Committee's principal institutional and jurisprudential achievements during the first 20 years of the Convention;

2. Examine current challenges affecting the implementation of the Convention and the effectiveness of the Committee's work;
3. Clarify OHCHR's responsibilities for ensuring accessibility, reasonable accommodation and disability inclusion in all aspects of the Committee's activities;
4. Explore practical and intersectional cooperation between the CRPD Committee and other human rights treaty bodies, particularly the CEDAW and CRC Committees; and
5. Identify strategic priorities for the third decade of the Convention.

### 3. Key Messages

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Twenty years after the adoption of the Convention, legal recognition alone is not sufficient. The central task for the next decade is to ensure that the Convention produces concrete, measurable and transformative change in the lives of persons with disabilities.

The Committee must continue to safeguard the human rights model of disability and the paradigm shift established by the Convention while responding to emerging and continuing challenges, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, climate change, institutionalization, intersectional discrimination, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, shrinking civic space and the exclusion of persons with disabilities from decision-making processes.

The Committee's own procedures and working environment must also comply with the Convention. Accessibility, reasonable accommodation and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are legal obligations and essential conditions for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Committee's work.

### 4. Expected Outcomes

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The symposium is expected to:

- Strengthen understanding of the Committee's institutional and jurisprudential contribution;
- Preserve and transmit institutional memory from the Committee's first two decades;
- Identify priority challenges requiring action during the Convention's third decade;
- Obtain clearer commitments concerning accessibility and disability inclusion in the Committee's work;
- Promote practical cooperation with other treaty bodies;
- Facilitate dialogue between current and former Committee members; and
- Connect the Committee's normative work more directly with implementation and lived experience.

### 5. Accessibility and Participation

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The symposium will be organized in accordance with the Convention and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

Subject to available resources, accessibility measures will include:

- An accessible meeting room and physical environment;
- International Sign interpretation;

- Real-time captioning;
- Accessible electronic documents circulated in advance;
- Reasonable accommodation for speakers, participants and Committee members; and
- Meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

Additionally, the symposium will be webcasted on [UN Web TV](#).

## 6. Strategic Significance

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The symposium will serve not only as a commemorative event, but also as a strategic forum for defining the Committee's institutional identity, responsibilities and priorities as the Convention enters its third decade.

It will connect the experience of the Committee's formative first decade, the institutional and jurisprudential development of its first 20 years, the challenges it faces today and the priorities it must pursue in the future.

The symposium should reaffirm that the success of the Convention must ultimately be measured not only by the development of international standards, but by concrete improvements in the dignity, equality, autonomy and participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of life.



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## CRPD at 20: The Committee's Journey, Current Challenges and Future Directions PROGRAMME

Thursday, 27 August 2026, from 15:00 to 18:00 · Tempus, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Moderator: **Ms. Miyeon Kim**, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### 15:00 – 15:35 | Part I — Opening remarks: The Convention at 20

- 15:05** Ms. Awa Dabo, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
- 15:11** Ms. Peggy Hicks, Director, Thematic and Special Procedures Division, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- 15:17** Ms. Mirriam Nthenge, Senior Manager, Global Influence and Research, International Disability Alliance (*on behalf of Dr. Nawaf Kabbara, President of IDA*)
- 15:23** Dr. Paul van Trigt, Assistant Professor of Social History, Leiden University (*pre-recorded video message*)
- 15:29** Dr. Ola Abualghaib, Director of the Secretariat, United Nations Global Disability Fund (*pre-recorded video message*)

### 15:35 – 16:35 | Part II — The CRPD Committee's contribution to the implementation of the Convention

- 15:40** Ms. Theresia Degener, former Chairperson of the Committee (*pre-recorded video message*), *on General Comment No. 1 on equal recognition before the law*
- 15:46** Ms. Silvia Quan, former Vice-Chairperson of the Committee (*pre-recorded video message*), *on General Comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities*
- 15:52** Ms. Laverne Jacobs, Rapporteur of the Committee, *on Guidelines on intersectional discrimination*
- 15:58** Ms. Gerel Dondovdorj, member of the Committee, *on General Comment No. 4 on inclusive education*
- 16:04** Ms. Amalia Gamio Ríos, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, *on General Comment No. 5 and Guidelines on deinstitutionalization*
- 16:11** Mr. Floyd Morris, member of the Committee, *on General Comment No. 7 on Art. 29*
- 16:17** Ms. Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, member and former Chairperson of the Committee, *on General Comment No. 8 on work and employment*

- 16:23** **Ms. Rosemary Kayess**, member and former Chairperson of the Committee, *General Comment on Art. 11*
- 16:29** **Mr. Markus Schefer**, member of the Committee, *on landmark decisions on communications*

**16:35 – 16:40** | Break

**16:40 – 17:00** | **Part III — Crossroads: interaction of the Committee with other mechanisms**

- 16:45** **Mr. Jonas Ruškus**, former member of the CRPD Committee (*pre-recorded video message*)
- 16:50** **Mr. Juan Carlos Ruan**, Director, Implementation Support Unit, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
- 16:55** **Ms. Monica Halil Lövblad**, Head of the Accessible Books Consortium, World Intellectual Property Organization

**17:00 – 17:35** | **Part IV — Partnership**

- 17:05** **H.E. Ms. Seongmee Yoon**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva
- 17:11** **Mr. Juan Ignacio Perez Bello**, Senior Human Rights Adviser, International Disability Alliance
- 17:17** **Ms. Tina Minkowitz**, President, Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry
- 17:23** **Mr. Marco Toscano-Rivalta**, Chief, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (*pre-recorded video message*)
- 17:29** **Ms. Vera Bonvalot**, President, Mecanismo Nacional de Monitorização da Implementação da Convenção sobre os Direitos das Pessoas com Deficiência (Me-CDPD) (*pre-recorded video message*)

**17:35 – 18:00** | **Part V — Closing remarks**

- 17:40** **Ms. Loreley Drees**, Student, University of Washington
- 17:47** **Ms. Céline van Till**, Paralympic medalist and Member of the Grand Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva
- 17:53** **Ms. Miyeon Kim**, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities