

PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE AFRICAN REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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United Nations Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism



**Gertrude
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Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



**Prof. Maria Soledad
Cisternas Reyes**
Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility
Opening Remarks



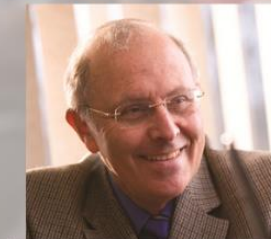
**Idriss Maiga
Alzouma**
President of the African Disability Forum (ADF)
President of the West African Federation of Disabled (WAFOD)



**Alex
Munyambabazi**
Founder and Executive Director of Amputee Self-Help Network Uganda (ASNU)



Javier Vasquez
Senior Advisor to UN Secretary General Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility
Moderator



Prof. Claudio Grossman
Dean Emeritus and Raymond Geraldson Scholar for International and Humanitarian Law AUWCL
Opening Remarks

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW

ACADEMY ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW



OCTOBER 29TH, 2020

10:00 A.M. TO 11:30 A.M. (EST)

RSVP AND EVENT DETAILS:

[HTTP://BIT.LY/AFRICADISABILITYRIGHTS](http://bit.ly/Africadisabilityrights)



WEB SEMINAR “PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE AFRICAN REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC”

October 29, 2020

10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (USA Eastern Time ET)

3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. (West Africa Standard Time)

5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m. (East Africa Time)

4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. (South Africa Standard Time)

Organizers:

Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility
Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, American University Washington College of Law (AUWCL)

Objectives:

- To identify, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, barriers and challenges in addressing the acute and longer-term needs and human rights of persons with disabilities in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- To explore areas of collaboration focused on the economic and social empowerment of persons with disabilities, and based on harnessing synergies and comparative advantages among governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), civil society and private sector entities and other stakeholders; and
- To share experiences and good practices in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic on resuming or continuing the provision of health and education services, as well as identifying existing barriers and challenges in these respects.

Target audience:

- Governmental representatives and associate members, including representatives from ministries of disabilities, social affairs, health, education, human rights, sports, as well as other concerned ministries and departments;
- Multilateral organizations, international agencies and international and regional human rights organs, treaty bodies and UN Special Procedures related to the human rights of persons with disabilities;
- OPDs;
- Other civil society organizations, as well as private sector entities with experience in disability inclusion, disability rights and strategies regarding creative options for the economic and social empowerment of persons with disabilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Persons with diverse disabilities and their families, and supporters with insights regarding types of support required for the economic and social empowerment of persons with disabilities in relation to COVID-19 fallout; and
- Universities and academic institutions.

Background:

Persons with disabilities in the African Region, as in many parts of the world, are one of the most vulnerable groups that are heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to many economic, social, cultural and environmental barriers, discriminatory attitudes and inaccessible infrastructure their level of agency and independence tends to be curtailed.

Persons with disabilities often face heightened protection concerns due to existing medical conditions, the lockdown of social services, inaccessible information, interrupted community structures and challenges to social cohesion. Persons with disabilities may be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 and they may face specific barriers to implementing basic hygiene measures, such as hand washing (e.g. persons may have physical difficulty rubbing their hands together thoroughly).

Sometimes, persons with disabilities need to touch things to obtain information or for physical support. Certain containment measures, including physical distancing and self-isolation, may be difficult. For example, persons with cerebral palsy and persons with muscular dystrophy may need assistance from care attendants to manage the activities of daily living. Persons with intellectual disabilities may require support for meeting their daily needs.

In line with the CRPD, governments have the responsibility to mainstream disability inclusion into pandemic responses to safeguard the health, survival, well-being and all human rights of persons with disabilities. This can include alternative modalities for provision of healthcare, education and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, such as home visitation programs, online health services or distance learning based on the local context. Various stakeholders, including OPDs, as well as local governments can be involved and mobilized to take action to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to information, local services and the support they need to stay healthy and safe during and after COVID-19.

PROGRAM

10:00 a.m.-10:05 a.m. (5 minute presentation)

Welcoming remarks and objectives of the web-seminar

Moderator of the program: Prof. Javier Vásquez

Senior Advisor to the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility

Adjunct Associate Faculty on Global Health Law, American University Washington College of Law (AUWCL)

10:05 a.m.-10:20 a.m. (5 minute presentations)

Opening remarks

- Prof. María Soledad Cisternas Reyes

Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility

- Prof. Claudio Grossman

Dean Emeritus and Raymond Geraldson Scholar for International and Humanitarian Law,

American University Washington College of Law (AUWCL)

10:20 a.m.-11:00 a.m. (8 minute presentations)

Barriers and challenges in addressing the acute and longer-term needs and human rights of persons with disabilities in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

- Mr. Danlami Basharu

Chair United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- Ms. Ikponwosa Ero
United Nations Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism

- Ms. Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame
United Nations Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Global Advocacy Advisor of Social Inclusion, Sightsavers

- Mr. Idriss Maiga Alzouma
President of the African Disability Forum (ADF)
President of the West African Federation of Disabled (WAFOD)

- Mr. Alex Munyambabazi
Founder and Executive Director of Amputee Self-Help Network Uganda (ASNU)

11:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m. (3 questions from audience)

Questions and Answers (dialogue with participants)

11:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (2 minute proposals)

The way forward and next steps: Specific areas of technical cooperation among governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), civil society, private sector entities, universities and other stakeholders

- Prof. Claudia Martin
Co-Director, Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, American University Washington College of Law (AUWCL)

- Mr. Javier Vasquez

11:30 a.m.

End of program