

UNITAR, UN-Women, The University of Tokyo KOMEX, Global Forum on the Leadership of Women and Girls with Disabilities, EMPOWER Project, UNiTe and STEP

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021

“Building an Inclusive and Accessible Post-COVID-19 World: Leadership and Participation of Persons with Disabilities”

10:00 - 11:30am (EST), 3 December 2021

(Pre-recorded virtual session at <https://voiceofyouth.jp/idpd2021>)

I. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities is commemorated on 3 December every year worldwide. This year, in line with the central theme of “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities in building an inclusive and accessible post-COVID-19 World”, a panel discussion entitled: **“Building an Inclusive and Accessible Post-COVID-19 World: Leadership of Persons with Disabilities”** in a virtual format, on 3 December 2021. The event will be led by persons with disabilities and civil society, supported by UNITAR, UN-Women and The University of Tokyo KOMEX, the Global Forum on the Leadership of Women and Girls with Disabilities, EMPOWER Project, UNiTe, and STEP.

The panel discussion will include expert participants from around the world, including those with expertise and experience in: disability and development, gender equality, diversity and inclusion, humanitarian emergencies and the leadership of disadvantaged groups at the local, national and global levels.

Following up on the UN Expert Group Meeting “Participation and leadership of persons with disabilities in building a disability-inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post-COVID-19 world”, this event is expected to share good practices, lessons learned and practical recommendations to advance the leadership of persons with disabilities and intersection of diversity, at all levels of COVID-19 recovery toward the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

II. Background

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the extent of the marginalization and inequalities faced by persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations. The international and local communities experienced multiple and aggravated barriers related to intersection of diversity, i.e., gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Yet, the current recovery process is rife with opportunities to set new standards and norms, forge partnerships and strengthen efforts to realize inclusive and sustainable world in efforts to build back our world better.

In 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 75/154 on “Inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities” as well as the most recent Assembly resolution adopted by the Third Committee in November 2021 on the “Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Participation of Persons with Disabilities,” calling upon Member States, the UN system and other partners to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in particular through addressing the disability-

inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery and mainstreaming the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities. Those resolutions specifically focus on promoting the participation and perspectives of persons with disabilities in this phase. The UN Secretary-General issued the policy brief, “A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19” (2020) and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (2019), and continues to advance disability inclusion across all pillars of the UN’s work, with key components to render the UN’s COVID-19 response work disability inclusive.

One of the priorities of the disability agenda is to realize the agency and leadership of persons with disabilities based on the principle of “nothing about us without us.” This should apply more directly to those who are furthest left behind, such as women and girls with disabilities and other marginalized populations.

The UN system, Member States, civil society including academia and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) have addressed many of the obstacles created by the COVID-19 crisis to protect the rights and well-being of those left furthest behind in emergency situations. In particular, persons with disabilities and OPDs have played key roles as agents of change in their communities, and been leading many of the community-led initiatives to enable access to fundamental necessities and services, as social systems were disrupted by the pandemic; they have done so by taking both targeted and mainstreaming approaches to disability inclusion through, among others, consultation, data collection and analysis, and support with advocacy and accountability efforts.

III. Objectives

The objective of the panel discussion is to (1) share good practices and lessons learned for enabling the participation/leadership of persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations in COVID-19 response and recovery, as well as in the current process of Building Back Better, with a special attention to intersection of diversity; and (2) share practical recommendations for the implementation of strategies for the promotion of the leadership of persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations in the aforementioned initiatives, with shedding light on transformative and intersectional approaches.

Key questions to panelists:

- What are the good practices and lessons learned related to leadership of persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations among key stakeholders, including the UN system, national governments, national mechanisms and legislative bodies, and
- What are actionable recommendations to realize the leadership of persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations for the inclusive, equitable, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.

IV. Tentative Agenda

Moderator: Prof. Takashi Izutsu, Associate Professor, The University of Tokyo
KOMEX

10:00 pm EST: Opening Remarks

H.E. Minister Luis Gallegos, former Foreign Minister, Republic of Ecuador
Chair, Board of Trustees, UNITAR

10:10pm: Special performance

Ms. Harumi

10:25pm: Outcomes of the UN Expert Group Meeting “Participation and leadership of persons with disabilities in building a disability-inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post-COVID-19 world”

Prof. Nora Groce, UCL

10:35pm: UNDIS and leadership of persons with disabilities and intersection of diversity

TBC

10:45pm: Intersection of leadership of women and persons with disabilities

Mr. Abul Hasnat Monjurul Kabir, Global Adviser for UN Coordination of Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion and Intersectionality for UN Women

10:55pm: Leadership of women and girls with disabilities

Ms. Abia Akram, Global Forum on the Leadership of Women and Girls with Disabilities/STEP

11:05pm: Leadership of persons with mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities

Mr. Yuhei Yamada, Porque

11:15pm: Leadership of young people and intersection of diversity

Mr. Satoshi Iiyama, EMPOWER Project: Ms. Rika Sugata, Voices of Youth JAPAN,
Prof. Atsuro Tsutsumi, Kanazawa University

11:25pm: Closing Remarks

Ms. Akiko Ito, DESA/DISD, UN