



## Bid to Conclude Convention to End Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities

**New York, 25 July** – A new convention that would protect the rights of persons with disabilities could be adopted when delegates resume negotiations on the proposed treaty from 14-25 August.

The new round of negotiations could result in the completion of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities—the first human rights treaty of the 21st century—and would mark a major shift in the way the world's 650 million people with disabilities are treated. Presently, discrimination against persons with disabilities is widespread—for example it is estimated that 90 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not go to school.

Persons with disabilities remain among the most marginalized of all populations and are barred by a wide range of physical, legal and social barriers from achieving their full potential. But the convention could lead the way to legislation that reshapes the public's thinking about persons with disabilities, in everything from building and civic design to transportation, education, employment and recreation.

“Only about 45 countries have legislation that deals with persons with disabilities,” says Thomas Schindlmayr of the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “As a result, persons with disabilities are less likely to go to school, get a job or have a shot at pursuing their dreams and potential than other people.”

He added that negotiations for the convention, which began in 2002, have been relatively speedy by international standards, showing that countries recognize that this is an issue they must now address.

Negotiators say there is a strong likelihood that the convention text could be agreed upon during the August meeting and expect that the General Assembly would adopt it during its 61st session. The convention would enter into force when a minimum number of countries ratify it.

By ratifying the convention, and after the treaty comes into force, a country accepts its legal obligations and incorporates them into their own legal mechanisms.

The convention would obligate countries, for instance, to gradually include disability-friendly features into the construction of new facilities, promote and improve access to education and information and introduce measures that eliminate discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities. The convention recognizes that countries will need some time to fully implement the provisions of the convention.

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