

## Empowerment of women and girls with disabilities:

### How to better facilitate cross movement building and synergies to ensure meaningful participation of women and girls with disabilities

3 December, 2:00 – 3:30 PM, UN Women, Conference Room 19-20 (19<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
220 East 42nd Street Daily News Building, between Second and Third Avenues

RSVP [here](https://forms.gle/jHJZqBFRddqNFQqD8) (<https://forms.gle/jHJZqBFRddqNFQqD8>) | The presentation will be in English. CART and IS services will be provided.

**Organizers:** Organized by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) Women Enabled International (WEI), the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), International Disability Alliance (IDA), Humanity and Inclusion (HI), CBM, and SightSavers.

It is estimated that more than one billion people in the world experience some form of disability. The average prevalence rate in the female population 18 years and older is 19.2 per cent, compared to 12 per cent for males, representing about 1 in 5 women. Several international, national and regional norms and standards including all human rights treaties and the outcomes of global conferences, implicitly or explicitly call for the inclusion and empowerment of all women and girls with disabilities across the life course. These include [the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#), [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol](#), [the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), [the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Women and girls with disabilities encounter challenges to participation that arise from an array of systemic barriers, including of a legal, physical, informational, communicational and attitudinal nature. To achieve the full and effective implementation of the international, regional and national commitments, and ensure no one is left behind, it is imperative to meaningfully engage women and girls with disabilities in the development and implementation of policies and programmes across the humanitarian–development continuum. Gaps in alliances among women's organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities and organizations/networks of women and girls with disabilities often result in the rights of women and girls with disabilities being overlooked during the development and implementation of policies and programmes and intergovernmental processes.

In the context of the preparatory work towards the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020 and including the Generation Equality Forum, this side event on the “**Empowerment of women and girls with disabilities: How to better facilitate cross movement building and synergies to ensure meaningful participation of women and girls with disabilities**” presents a critical opportunity to recognize the important leadership and agency that women and girls with disabilities play in the development of their communities and societies while also in combating discrimination, promoting inclusion, and defending human rights of all people; and to draw attention to the gaps of implementation of the gender equality commitments that affect particularly women and girls with disabilities. The outcome of this discussion will inform the Beijing + 25 process, including the Generation Equality Forum and its outcome, so to ensure that the voices women and girls with disabilities influence the gender equality agenda forward. The event will draw on the recently launched UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and the theme International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2019 – ‘Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda’.

## Agenda

**Moderators** – Ms. Anastasia Holoboff, Women Enabled International and Ms. Linda Carlton, self-advocate

**A) Opening remarks, UN Women (5 mins)**

**B) Panel Discussion (30 mins)** – How can the UN System provide spaces for women and girls with disabilities to meaningful engage across the humanitarian-development continuum and provide platforms for the mainstream women’s rights movement to engage with organizations and networks of women and girls with disabilities?

### Speakers

- Ms. Lopa Banerjee, UN Women
- Ms. Rosangela Berman Bieler, UNICEF
- Mr. Christian Courtis, OHCHR
- Ms. Raquel Lagunas, UNDP
- Ms. Leyla Sharafi, UNFPA
- Ms. Ola Abu Alghaib, UNPRPD

**C) Interlude (15 mins) - Arts, technology and Artificial Intelligence at the service of empowerment and inclusion.**

Special invitees:

- Ms. Janet Biggs, American artist, known for her immersive work in video and performance, navigates territory between art and science, orchestrating and capturing extreme acts of physical endurance, risk, or expertise
- Mr. Asher Remy-Toledo, Founder and Director of Hyphen Hub, a New York-based non-profit organization that explores, promotes, and presents radical new visions of the future through the integration of art and emerging technologies

**D) Panel Discussion (35 mins)** – How can Member States better support and facilitate meaningful engagement of women with disabilities across the humanitarian-development continuum?

### Speakers

- Mr. Jyrki Terva, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations
- Ms. Sarah Costa, Women’s Refugee Commission
- Ms. Pamela Molina
- Ms. Elizabeth Lockwood, CBM
- Ms. Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Sightsavers

**E) Wrap up and closing (5 mins)**