

12th session of the Conference of State Parties (COSP12) on the Rights of Persons with Disability – 11-13 June 2019

"Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in a changing world through the implementation of the CRPD".



Proposed Side Event

**People with Communication Disabilities Speak Up for Inclusion and Participation:
How the implementation of the CRPD and SDGs can support this right**

GOAL:

Increased awareness, understanding, and acceptance of people with communication disability, that is reflected in approaches to meet the CRPD and SDGs, including strategies to strengthen transnational cooperation to promote inclusion and participation.

OBJECTIVES:

The event will:

- Highlight the lack of visibility and recognition of communication disability.
- Exchange knowledge about needs and barriers faced by people with communication disability to access and exercise human rights in the context of Article 19 (UDHR) and Article 21 (CRPD).
- Highlight the prevalence and impact of communication disability, specifically on poverty, health and education as outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Share context-based solutions to support and promote inclusion and participation for people with communication disability via case studies that demonstrate global approaches.
- Formulate concrete proposals to strengthen effective transnational cooperation to promote participation in cultural life, recreation, and leisure of people with communication disability.
- Share best practices for the use of technology for the empowerment, inclusion and participation of people with communication disability.

DISCUSSION:

- Communication is a fundamental human right and like air, food, or water it is taken for granted. People with communication disability are often denied the right to “freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information” (Article 21 CRPD) and rights and freedoms regarding “communication” and “language” (Article 2 CRPD).
- Article 21 (CRPD) provides important guidance for supporting people with communication disability, especially in relation to the provision of information, technologies, and language [communication] choice. These recommendations

mostly relate to people with secondary communication disabilities (e.g., associated with sensory or physical disabilities); however, many people have a primary communication disability without a known cause, and may not be included in strategies and prevalence estimates.

- This event will be a platform that exemplifies the theme of COSP12: “Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disability in a changing world.” It will raise awareness and explore in depth how to be supportive of people with communication disability who exercise their human rights to communicate effectively and be included equitably in society.
- Participants will discuss communication disability in light of the vision articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of a “just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met” and explore the need to address communication disability as part of international efforts to meet the SDGs, particularly SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere); SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages); and SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).
- Participants will discuss concrete proposals that support achieving explicit recognition of communication rights within existing conventions and treaties. This will include specific strategies within States Parties CRPD implementation plans such as the commissioning of specialist services (including speech-language pathologists) to support the realisation of communication rights and social participation for people with communication disabilities.
- The event will also speak to the COSP12 sub-themes of how technology can support communication accessibility, the importance of effective communication in order to attain a high standard of health (and education), and the need for social inclusion and equal opportunity for participation in cultural life, recreation, and leisure, as well as civil participation.
- Participants will exchange knowledge and perspectives on the specific needs of people with communication disability and the barriers they face in being able to access and exercise human rights in the context of freedom of speech, opinion and expression; expression of informed choices; using the communication and language of choice; and communicating in ways that provide protection from harm and abuse.
- A human rights-based approach to enabling equity of communication inclusion and social participation will be promoted.

- Organizers:** The Speech Pathology Association of Australia Limited [Speech Pathology Australia] (COSP Accredited)
Royal College of Speech Language Therapists (COSP Accredited)
In collaboration with the International Communication Project (ICP) and Humanity and Inclusion, UK.
- Date:** During the CRPD Conference of State Parties – 11-13 June 2018
- Time:** (1.5 hours)
- Venue:** United Nations, New York (Room to be advised)
- Sponsors:** Australian Permanent Mission to the UN (*to be confirmed*)
- Moderator/Chair:** **Ms Gail Mulcair**, CEO, Speech Pathology Australia and International Communication Project representative
- Panelists:** **(Subject to confirmation)**
- **Mr Robert Martin**, MNZM, New Zealand Disability Advocate, UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017–2020), New Zealand
 - **Professor Sharynne McLeod**, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Editor of Special Issue of the International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology “Communication is a Human Right: Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”
 - **Ms Meredith Allen**, President, International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) and a person who uses AAC, Australia
 - **Mr Miles Forma**, Disability Advocate and a person who uses AAC, USA
 - **Ms Julia McGeown**, Lead Inclusive Education and Technical Advisor, Humanity and Inclusion, UK
 - **ICP Representative** (delegate *to be confirmed*), International Communication Project

