**Civil Society Forum of the 16th Session of the**

**Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD)**

***12 June 2023 | United Nations Headquarters, New York***

**Background**

The International Disability Alliance is helping to organize a meeting called the Civil Society Forum.

It's part of a bigger conference called the Conference of States Parties (COSP) where people from different countries talk about the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

**Who is Civil Society?**

Civil Society is people and organizations that are not part of the government or businesses. Civil Society works together to make changes and help others. They work on the human rights of people with disabilities.

Civil Society groups include non-governmental organisations, community groups, and other organisations that speak up for causes they care about.

Civil Society is important because they help create a fairer society.

**What happens at the Civil Society Forum?**

The Civil Society Forum is a chance for people from Civil Society to share their ideas and talk about what they think is important.

This year, the Civil Society Forum will happen in person for the first time since the pandemic. It is an important time because world leaders are trying to figure out how to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would make the world a better place by 2030.

The Civil Society Forum will happen on June 12th, 2023 at 10am New York, USA time.

**Who organises the Civil Society Forum?**

In 2016, some groups got together to help people with disabilities take part in the Conference of State Parties (COSP). This group is called the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism (CSCM).

The group is made up of people with disabilities, their organizations, and other groups that want to help. They work together to make sure that people with disabilities have a say in how the Conference of State Parties (COSP) is run.

**What are the aims of the Civil Society Forum?**

The Civil Society Forum wants to do three main things during the 16th Conference of States Parties (COSP):

* Let groups of people with disabilities share their experiences and ideas about the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).
* Talk about issues that are still a problem for people with disabilities, like emergencies, climate change, and access to enough food.
* Talk about how well the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) is being put into action and how it is connected to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that countries have.

**Who can come to the Civil Society Forum?**

Anyone who is taking part in the Conference of States Parties (COSP) can take part in the Civil Society Forum.

**Agenda for the Civil Society Forum**

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| **Time** | **Agenda Item** |
| **10.00 - 10.30** | **Opening of the meeting*** **Ruth Warick** from the International Disability Alliance will lead this session and will talk about what we hope to achieve through the discussions of the day.
* **Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame,** Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities will talk about some of the key challenges that persons with disabilities are facing today.
* **Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic**, Director Social Rights & Inclusion from the European Commissionwill talk about the steps that can be taken by the United Nations and governments.
* **Rose Umutesi,** from Pan African Network of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities and International Disability and Development Consortium representative will talk about how to better include persons from under-represented groups
* **Esma Gumberidze,** European Network on Independent Living Youth representative will talk about how to make sure that youth with disabilities can be part of the work.
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| **10.30 – 12.00** | **Session 1****Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD): What is the current state of play?**This session will talk about how the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) has been put into action over the last 15 years. Some things have gotten better for people with disabilities, but there are still some things that need to improve. The COVID-19 pandemic has made things worse for people with disabilities in some ways. In this session we will talk about the things we should be working on now to help inclusion happen. **Jose Viera** from the International Disability Alliance will lead this session. This conversation will focus on the questions:* What have we achieved for people with disabilities since the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) was agreed?
* Who has been left behind?
* What will be some ongoing issues for people with disabilities?

The speakers who will answer these questions are: * **Bhargavi Davar,** from Transforming Communities for Inclusion
* **Nawaf Kabbara,** from the Arab Organisation of Disabled Persons
* **Dominique Kantor,** from Fundación Visibilia, Argentina
* **Gopal Mitra,** from UNICEF

After we hear from speakers and then everyone taking part in the meeting can join in a discussion.  |
| **12.00 – 12.15** | **Break** |
| **12.15 – 1.45** | **Session 2****Towards a disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals Summit & Our Common Agenda**The world still faces many problems like inequality, poverty, and climate change. The Secretary-General of the United Nations did a report in 2021 called "Our Common Agenda" to help solve these problems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In September 2023, world leaders will meet at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit to talk about their commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).It's important that people with disabilities are included in the discussions that happen at the summit. In this session, we will talk about how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have included or excluded people with disabilities We will talk about what is important to the disability community and what we would like to tell world leaders. **Diana Dalton** from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom will lead the session There will be a discussion on the questions: * Where have the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) failed us?
* What more needs to be done?
* What are the next steps?

The speakers are: * **Mohammad Loutfy** from G3ict: The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information Communication Technology & Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities
* **Gunta Anca** from European Disability Forum,
* **Jean Pierre Sibomana** from the Disability Rights Fund in Rwanda
* **Diane Bergeron** of the World Blind Union

After we hear from speakers and then everyone taking part in the meeting can join in a discussion. At the end, we will hear special remarks on this session from: * **Guy Ryder,** Under-Secretary-General for Policy

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| **1.45 – 2.00** | **Closing of the meeting** * **Tarek Ladeb**, the Ambassador to the Mission of Tunisia, Chair, Conference of States Parties (COSP) Bureau will let everyone know what to expect from the Conference of State Parties which will be starting the next day.
* **Olivia Sidhu** from Down Syndrome Australia will ask everyone to think about accessibility and how to make sure people with different disability groups are included in work that the United Nations do.
* **Marc Workman**, member of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism (CSCM) will thank everyone for taking part and close the meeting.
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