

Violence Against Women with Disabilities

57th Session of the
Commission on the Status
of Women

Join IDA and UN Women as our panellists elaborate on the causes, consequences, challenges, and recommendations for action in order to address violence against women and girls with disabilities across the globe.

Friday, March 8, 2013

United Nations

NLB Conference Room 7, 1:15-2:30 P.M.

Co-Organized by: International
Disability Alliance (IDA) and UN Women

Co-Sponsored by: Australia, Bulgaria, El
Salvador, Jordan, New Zealand, Peru

Other supporting organizations: Human
Rights Watch, Plan, UNICEF, Women
Enabled

Panelists

H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet

Executive Director of UN Women

Mr. Aidan Leavy

Plan Ireland

Ms. Stephanie Ortoleva

President, Women Enabled

Ms. Ana Peláez

CRPD Committee member

H.E. Ms. Penny Williams

Global Ambassador for Women and Girls,
Australia

Objective:

To bring to light the intersection of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in order to strengthen efforts to address violence against women with disabilities in all its forms.



International
Disability Alliance



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

Background on Violence Against Women with Disabilities:

Violence against women and girls with disabilities occurs in various spheres, including in the home and the community. Violence is perpetrated and condoned by the State and private actors within the public and private institutions across the globe. The forms of violence to which women and girls with disabilities are subjected are varied and represent intersectional and **multiple discrimination** based on gender and disability.

Women and girls with disabilities are subjected to physical, psychological, sexual and financial violence, neglect, social isolation, trafficking, institutionalization, degradation, detention, denial of health care and forced sterilization and forced psychiatric treatment, among others. They are at **high** risk of gender-based and other forms of **violence** based on social stereotypes and biases that attempt to **dehumanize** them.

Women and girls with disabilities often lack access to legal protection and representation; law enforcement officials and the legal community **are ill-equipped to address the violence**; the testimony of women with disabilities is often not viewed as credible by the justice system and they are not privy to the same information available to women without disabilities.

The intersectionalities of gender and disability could provide opportunities to take on a **common approach** to raising the rights of women and girls with disabilities before States and systematically requesting disaggregated data which addresses the **intersectionality** of gender and disability. It would be a major contribution to both the implementation of the CRPD and CEDAW if concerted efforts are made to exchange and build coherence on substantive and procedural aspects of ensuring the realization of the rights of women and girls with disabilities by States, including the obligation of due diligence. This side event seeks to dive deeper into these topics and address how this common approach might be most effectively taken, and urge the international community to address them.

References:

- Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Report on Violence Against Women with Disabilities, U.N. Doc. A/67/227 (August 3, 2012), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F67%2F227+&Submit=Search&Lang=E.
- Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Disability and Violence, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/20/5, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/docs/A.HRC.20.5.pdf>.
- Contributions to the OHCHR study (responses to the OHCHR questionnaire): [Contributions from Governments](#); [Contributions from National Human Rights Institutions](#); [Contributions from Other Entities](#) (Including a contribution from CRPD Committee member Ms. Ana Peláez, and NGO contributions, including from IDA, from IDA member WNUSP, from Women with Disabilities Australia, and others); [Contributions from UN Agencies](#).
- Ortoleva, Stephanie and Lewis, Hope, Forgotten Sisters- A Report on Violence Against Women with Disabilities: An Overview of its Nature, Scope, Causes and Consequences (August 21, 2012). Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper No. 104-2012, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2133332> and <http://www.WomenEnabled.org> under "news."
- International Network of Women with Disabilities, Violence Against Women with Disabilities, Center for Women's Policy Studies, Barbara Waxman Fiduccia Papers (March 2011.)
- Report by Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/08/24/if-we-weren-t-human>
- Report by Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/10/sterilization-women-and-girls-disabilities>



Meet the Participants:

H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet is the first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, established on 2 July 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly. Under Ms. Bachelet's leadership, UN Women leads, supports and coordinates the work on gender equality and the empowerment of women at global, regional and country levels. Before serving UN Women, Ms. Bachelet most recently served as President of Chile from 2006 to 2010. Ms. Bachelet has also held ministerial portfolios in the Chilean Government as Minister of Defense and Minister of Health. A long-time champion of women's rights, she has advocated for gender equality and women's empowerment throughout her career.

Ms. Maryanne Diamond moderates this event as a representative of the International Disability Alliance (IDA). Ms. Diamond is blind and has been all of her life, was previously the President of the World Blind Union. She is currently employed by Vision Australia as General Manager of International and Stakeholder Relations, and was the inaugural CEO of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations from 2004 - 2007. Prior to that, she spent four years as the Executive Officer of Blind Citizens Australia. Ms. Diamond has held a range of positions on community, local, state, national and international boards and committees for more than 20 years.

Mr. Aidan Leavy, the Business Development Coordinator at Plan Ireland, has extensive experience in disability advocacy and international development. He spent nine years working with grassroots development organizations in Central America, and has also worked with Disabled People's Organizations in South America and West Africa. Between 2009 and 2012, Mr. Leavy chaired the Dóchas Disability and International Development Working Group, an Irish coalition of 22 organizations interested in global disability rights, and in 2011-2012 was Director of the Abara International Disability Film Festival, the first festival of its kind in Ireland.

Ms. Stephanie Ortoleva is an attorney with expertise in international human rights law and U.S. civil rights law. She is a woman with a disability who served until December 2009 as an attorney and, among other responsibilities, as Disability Coordinator at the US Department of State. Ms. Ortoleva now works at BlueLaw International, LLP, where she serves as the Senior Human Rights Legal Advisor and focuses on international disability rights, women's rights, rule of law issues, and human rights education, with concentrations on human rights programming in developing, transition and post-conflict countries.

Ms. Ana Peláez Narváez participated in the official Spanish delegation that took part in the final drafting phase of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and she has been a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since November 2008. Ms. Narváez is currently the Director of International Relations at the Spanish National Organisation of the Blind (ONCE), in addition to participating in high-level positions of multiple other organizations. Ms. Narváez is also active in the European Disability Forum (EDF) Women's Committee. At present, she serves as the member of the EDF Executive Committee and Board in charge of gender issues.

H.E. Ms. Penny Williams, serving as the Global Ambassador for Women and Girls, is responsible for high-level advocacy on activities regarding gender equality and the social, political and economic empowerment of women and girls, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Ms. Williams was appointed Australia's first Global Ambassador for Women and Girls in September 2011. She also holds the position of Executive Director of the Australian Passport Office (APO). Before that, Ms. Williams served as Australia's High Commissioner to Malaysia and has also held various other positions within the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.