**47th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women**

**Panel 1: Violence against women and girls with disabilities**

*Concept note (as of 1 July 2021)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date and venue:** | **Monday, 5 July 2021, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online platform (Zoom)** *(will be broadcasted live and archived on* [*http://webtv.un.org*](http://webtv.un.org)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | This panel discussion will provide an opportunity:   * To discuss the violations experienced by women and girls with disabilities; * To consider a ‘gender perspective’ and a ‘disability-rights perspective’ in public policies and programmes; and * To assess good practices in the implementation of prevention mechanisms and response services for gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan**,President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Moderator:** | **Mr. Jarrod Clyne**, Human Rights Advisor, International Disability Alliance |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Ana Peláez Narváez**, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women *(video message)* * **Ms. Gulmira Kazakunova**,Chair of the Union of People with Disabilities “Ravenstvo” (Equality) *(video message)* * **Ms. Maulani Rotinsulu**,Chairperson of the Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities *(video message)* |
| **Outcome:** | A summary report on the discussion will be prepared by OHCHR. |
| **Mandate:** | In its resolution 6/30, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the principle of gender equality and the need for the full implementation of the human rights of women and decided to hold an annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women. The first panel of the 2021 annual discussion will address violence against women and girls with disabilities. |
| **Format:** | The total duration of the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women will be four hours, divided into two panels of two hours each. In this panel, after the opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists, there will be two segments of interventions, followed by conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover the opening statement, panellists’ presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. |
| **Accessibility:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, this panel discussion will be made accessible to persons with disabilities through a voluntary contribution from Canada. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning will be provided and webcast during the debate. Participants can access live English captioning on the website<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG> during the event itself.  The accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities is available for further information (available at  <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>). |
| **Background:** | Women and girls with disabilities continue to face persistent discrimination based on stereotypes and stigma, which puts them at increased risk of gender-based violence. According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, they do not experience this violence as a "homogeneous group, but rather as individuals with multidimensional identities”.[[1]](#footnote-1) Some groups, such as indigenous women, migrant women, older women, or those belonging to ethnic, linguistic, or racial minorities, are even more vulnerable to violence because of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.  According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion persons with disabilities live in the world today, including about 700 million women and girls. The estimated percentage of women with disabilities is at least 10 per cent higher than that of men. This higher rate among women is due to various factors, including the stigma associated with disability, which views them as recipients of charity or benefactors of others' decisions. Similarly, the intersection of gender-based and disability-based discrimination fuels harmful stereotypes that prevent women and girls with disabilities from making autonomous decisions and judgments; this, in turn, increases the risk of violence and prevents them from exercising their rights as outlined in article 16 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, gender stereotypes can restrict women's agency in developing their own abilities, pursuing professional careers and making choices about their lives and life plans.  Gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities can occur in the home or in institutions, at the hands of immediate family members, caregivers, or strangers, in the community, at school, in the world of work, in digital spaces, and in other public and private institutions. Examples are numerous and may include: trafficking; misinformation; abandonment; lack of free and informed consent and legal coercion; neglect, including withholding or denying access to medication; denial of personal mobility and accessibility, for example, by removing or destroying accessibility features such as ramps, assistive devices such as white canes or mobility devices such as wheelchairs.  The threat of violence is particularly high in conflict areas, which is exacerbated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As women and girls make up nearly half of the world's refugee population, they are at high risk of various forms of violence and exploitation, such as sexual abuse, forced impregnation, forced abortion, forced sterilization and other harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.  Despite international commitments by States to respect the rights of persons with disabilities, measures adopted often fail to include the voices, perspectives and needs of women and girls with disabilities in normative and institutional frameworks, including within women's movements.  This may be addressed by ensuring the access of women and girls with disabilities to information and services, including food, water and sanitation, health care, education, social protection, justice and transport. In this regard, accessible information and communication technologies play a role in empowering women and girls with disabilities. Gender responsive and disability inclusive interventions contribute to the respect of their equal right to exercise legal capacity, to maintain control over their sexual and reproductive health, including on the basis of free and informed consent, and to participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles in society. These measures must also consider changing any laws that do not incorporate the rights to equality and non-discrimination or that prevent or discourage women and girls with disabilities from reporting gender-based violence, including in emergencies.  Recognizing the importance and the necessity of respecting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, the Human Rights Council has devoted its attention to various aspects of the topic, through the adoption of resolutions, reports and studies, as well as general comments. The current panel will specifically address the issue of violence against women and girls with disabilities, including prevention and response measures. |
| **Background documents:** | * [Human Rights Council resolution 6/30](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/6/30) of 14 December 2007 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system * [Human Rights Council resolution 31/6](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/31/6) of 23 March 2016 on the rights of persons with disabilities in situation of risk and humanitarian emergencies * Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities ([A/HRC/46/27](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/46/27), January 2021) * Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, on persons with disabilities in the context of internal displacement ([A/HRC/44/41](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/44/41), May 2020) * Thematic study of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability ([A/HRC/20/5](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/20/5), March 2012) * Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [General comment No. 3](https://undocs.org/CRPD/C/GC/3) (2016) on women and girls with disabilities * Committee on the Rights of the Child, [General comment No. 9](https://undocs.org/CRC/C/GC/9) (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities * Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women, [General recommendation No. 18](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CEDAW/GEC/4729&Lang=en) (1991) on disabled women |

1. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 3 (2016), 25 November 2016, paragraph 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)