**55th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities  
  
Theme: Good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of   
persons with disabilities**

*Concept note (as of 7 March 2024)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Monday, 11 March 2024, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**  *(broadcast live and archived at* [*https://webtv.un.org*](https://webtv.un.org)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | This panel discussion will address good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities, under the obligations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereafter “Convention”). The objectives are:   * **To analyse** **and share good practices** in the construction and further implementation of legal, policy and institutional frameworks for support and care systems that are human rights based and ensure community inclusion of persons with disabilities; * **To bring greater understanding** how care and support systems allow persons with disabilities to participate in the community on an equal basis with others and enjoy all their human rights; * **To discuss the role of** cross-cutting implementation measures to ensure comprehensive support and care systems; * **To propose** **strategies** to consolidate gender-, disability-, age- responsive support and care systems. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Moderator:** | **Ms. Heba Hagrass**,Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities |
| **Panellists and themes:** | * **Ms. Fatma Wangare Haji**, Regional Coordinator for Inclusion Africa   *Demands of organizations of persons with disabilities for disability-responsive care and support systems*   * **Ms. Prudence Mooney**, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Care and Support Economy Taskforce at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet of Australia   *Establishing policy, legal and institutional framework of disability, age and gender responsive care and support system*   * **Ms. Jimena Luna Benavides**, Founder and Executive Director at Independent Living Foundation Chile   *Disability-responsive care and support service design and provision* |
| **Outcome:** | The debate builds on the 2023 annual debate on the rights of persons with disabilities, in which a system approach to care and support was described building on existing tendencies under care economy discussions and seeks to bring greater understanding of disability responsive and human rights-based care and support systems for community inclusion of persons with disabilities through representative examples of policies and practices. The debate will highlight “support” as the cross-cutting obligation set out in the Convention and will provide an overview of key elements of support and care systems to achieve community inclusion. In addition, the discussion will also elucidate the links between the emerging transformations in care agendas and the historical demands of persons with disabilities for the provision of support that recognize their dignity and promote their autonomy. |
| **Mandate:** | In its resolution [49/12](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/49/12), the Human Rights Council decided that the annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities to be held at its fifty-fifth session would focus on good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities, and would have international sign interpretation and captioning. The Council requested the OHCHR to prepare the annual study on the rights of persons with disabilities for its fifty-fifth session on good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities, in consultation with States and other relevant stakeholders, regional organizations, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, and national human rights institutions, requiring contributions to be submitted in an accessible format, and requested that such stakeholder contributions, the study and an easy-to-read-version of it, be made available on the website of the Office, in an accessible format, prior to the session.  To this end, OHCHR invited States and all the aforementioned stakeholders to provide responses to a set of questions concerning existing good practices on care and support systems. OHCHR received 30 responses from States, 2 from intergovernmental organizations and 19 responses from civil society organizations.[[1]](#footnote-2) OHCHR also conducted online consultations from 28 September to 6 October 2023, involving civil society representatives from eight regions, twenty-seven countries, and diverse demographic groups. These responses informed the report of OHCHR on good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities ([A/HRC/55/34](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/55/34)). |
| **Format:** | The annual debate will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including 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 14 States or observers, 2 national human rights institutions and 4 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have 1.5 minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Panellists will respond to questions and comments during the remaining time available.  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 unable 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, the interactive debate will be webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast during the debate. Participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>) during the event itself. Hearing loops are available for collection from the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in *The accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities* (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/accessibility>). |
| **Background:** | Human rights-based support and care systems are necessary preconditions for persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, with autonomy, choice, and control. These systems, structured under disability-inclusive policies, include a network of services, people and products that enable persons with disabilities to carry out activities of daily living and actively participate in their communities.  They enable persons with disabilities, for example, to attend school, work and participate in family and community activities. For those with high support needs, support and care systems are an indispensable pre-condition to carry out activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing and getting in and out of bed. Without these systems, persons with disabilities are at risk of falling into poverty and exclusion, violence, exploitation and abuse; living in isolation or being institutionalized. When such systems are gender- and age-responsive, they also reduce gender inequalities and ageism as well as combat stereotypes related to care and support roles and gender assumptions.  Access to support and care systems is entrenched in international human rights law. It is an obligation arising from various rights recognized in human rights treaties. In particular, the Convention provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of support and care systems by articulating a range of specific obligations related to support. Support is part of several rights in the Convention, including equal recognition before the law (article 12); access to justice (article 13); freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (article 16); living independently in the community (article 19); personal mobility (article 20); freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (article 21); respect for home and the family (article 23); education (article 24); habilitation and rehabilitation (art 26); work and employment (article 27); adequate standard of living and social protection (article 28); and participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (article 30).  The establishment of adequate legal, policy, and institutional frameworks for support and care, as well as ensuring meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of support and care systems is key for implementing care and support systems. Ongoing conversations on the reconfiguration of traditional care models create a momentum and space to do it, but human rights as well as disability, age, and gender responsive, approaches must guide these processes to ensure that care and support systems respect autonomy, agency, and independence of persons with disabilities and ensure community inclusion.  To this end, States, United Nations entities, civil society and international development partners must ensure both the meaningful inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in care and support economy and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, older persons, children and youth and all rights-holders in the construction of new care and support systems. |
| **Background documents:** | * [Human Rights Council resolution 49/12](http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/49/12) of 31 March 2022 on participation of persons with disabilities in sport, and statistics and data collection. * Report of OHCHR on support systems to ensure community inclusion of persons with disabilities, including as a means of building forward better after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic ([A/HRC/52/52](http://undocs.org/A/HRC/52/52)) and an easy-to-read version in English. * Report of OHCHR on good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities ([A/HRC/55/34](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/55/34)). * Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities [(A/HRC/52/32)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5232-transformation-services-persons-disabilities). * [Video recording of the panel discussion on the rights of persons with disabilities on the support systems to ensure the community inclusion of persons with disabilities, including as a means of building forward better after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic held during the 52nd regular session of the Human Rights Council.](https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1f/k1fzr9i5uu) * OHCHR web page with [studies, reports and papers on the rights of persons with disabilities](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/Pages/StudiesReportsPapers.aspx) |

1. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5534-good-practices-support-systems-enabling-community-inclusion> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)