



Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide

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## **RI Global Newsletter, September 2018: Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Societies**

### **The 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly opened on 18 September 2018**

The seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 73) opened on 18 September 2018 at the UN Headquarters in New York, under the theme, “Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies.” The high-level General Debate, where heads of States and Government and ministerial delegations convene, took place from 25 September to 1 October.

On the opening day of the current session, H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, the newly-elected President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly committed herself and her good office to “Making the United Nations relevant to all people”. She outlined seven priority issues to address during her presidency, including, “to continue to raise awareness around issues relating to persons with disabilities and deepen political and social commitment to this underserved population which represents the world’s largest minority.” A General Assembly high-level event will also be organized on Accessibility for Inclusion, focusing on disability data collection, assistive technologies and devices, rehabilitation and women and children with disabilities.



*The Opening of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly*

Furthermore, during the current session, the General Assembly will consider two documents pertaining the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely, 1) the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Inclusive development for persons with disabilities” ([A/73/211](#)), and 2) note of the Secretariat entitled “UN Flagship Report on disability and development” ([A/73/220](#)).

During the first week of the UNGA73, a number of high-level meetings were held at the UN Headquarters, highlighting the urgency to make the United Nations relevant to all people and reiterating the global commitment to peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies.

On Monday, 24 September, a high-level plenary meeting on global peace in honor of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, known as the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit (mandated by [UNGA resolution 72/243](#)) was held. Governments and the Civil Society praised Mandela for living by the principles that underpin the UN, and for representing the values of peace, solidarity, cooperation, equality and respect for all human beings. A political declaration was also adopted at the plenary, where nearly 100 Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Member States and representatives of civil society committed to redoubling efforts to build a just, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and fair world, as they paid tribute to the late South African President’s celebrated qualities and service to humanity.

On Wednesday, 26 September, the UNGA dedicated [a high-level event](#) to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR) this year,

discussing how respect for human rights in societies can help advance peace and sustainable development. Describing it “revolutionary impact”, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the UNHR “has permeated policies and constitutions, from the global level to national and regional frameworks.” He added that the Declaration had unleashed to power of women’s full participation and spurred the fight against discrimination and intolerance.

For more detailed information about the agenda and events of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the UNGA, please visit: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/73/agenda/>

### **RI awards grants to five member-organizations**

Rehabilitation International has selected five of its member-organizations as the first set of recipients of funding support from RI’s Global Disability Development Fund (GDDF) and Africa Fund (AF). A priority initiative of RI President Haidi Zhang is to support initiatives of RI members in improving the lives of persons with disabilities, the recipients of the grants are all working in the grassroots level in developing countries. They are: Brasil Saude e Acao Association which received a grant of \$145,125 for its project “Women’s Voices – Network of Women with Disabilities in Brazil”; Child Welfare Scheme of Nepal with a grant of \$145,125 for its project “Facilitating Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities”; the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped with \$150,000 for its project “Education for All – A Model of Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in Lebanon” and the Vision Community Based Rehabilitation Association which will receive a grant of \$105,028 in support of its project “Promoting Center Based Rehabilitation, Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion Interventions for Persons with Disabilities in Oromiya Region in Ethiopia”. All four projects are funded by RI’s GDDF. The recipient in the first round of grants under the Africa Fund is the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities South Africa which will received a \$30,000 grant to support its project “Inclusive Employment”.

Meanwhile, applications for the second round of both GDDF and AF will be accepted until October 15, 2018. Projects in the fields of rehabilitation, education, empowerment and poverty alleviation carried out by RI members and organizations in collaboration with RI members are encouraged to apply. More detailed information is available at <http://www.riglobal.org/ri-opens-round-2-of-grants-applications/>

### **Equality in the Asia Pacific: Progress and Challenges**

[The Conference on Equality in the Asia Pacific](#), jointly organized by the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and Asia Pacific Forum, was held during 20 to 21 September 2018 in Hong Kong. Over 270 participants from Governments, National Human Rights Institutes (NHRIs), NGOs and academic institutions from Hong Kong and around the Asia-Pacific region gathered together, examining the progress and challenges of advancing equality in the region, especially in relation to women, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities.

“The Conference is set to provide a platform for discussing the progress made on local and regional levels, ongoing and future challenges, as well as best practices and policies in eliminating discrimination and inequality,” according to Professor Chan Cheung-ming, the Chairperson of EOC, “we are hopeful that the experience and knowledge shared can have a positive impact on the equality landscape of the region.”

During the two-day conference, presentations on the progress and challenges in advancing equality for persons with disabilities and a panel discussion focusing on challenges faced by persons with disabilities in an ageing society were organized. Ar. Joseph Kwan, Rehabilitation International’s Deputy Vice-President for Asia Pacific, joined the panel discussion on behalf of RI Global, sharing the work of RI and his expertise on disability and accessibility issues in an ageing society. The panel discussion also put forward a set of conclusion and recommendations for addressing the challenges in the region.



*Ar. Joseph Kwan, Deputy Vice-president Asia Pacific of RI spoke at the Panel Discussion on challenges faced by persons with disabilities.*

## **RI Global: Around the World**

### **U.S. annual business accessibility campaign: National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of October marks the beginning of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in the U.S. Each year the disability and business community come together to advance disability employment. This year, the NDEAM theme is “Empowering All: America’s Workforce”. To learn more how disability inclusion drives business success, please visit: <https://disabilityin.org/business/>

### **RI Global President continues to lead CDPF’s efforts in promoting the well-beings of persons with disabilities in China**

RI Global President, Madam Haidi Zhang, was re-elected as chairperson of the China Disabled Persons’ Federation (CDPF) at the organization’s seventh national congress on September 16, 2018, in Beijing, China. “More than 5 million disabled people were lifted out of extreme poverty, and 1.7 million households with disabled members have had their unsafe houses renovated,” Haidi

Zhang said, “the task remains arduous, with more than 2.8 million disabled people nationwide still living below the poverty line.” The organization will strengthen its efforts in promoting the well beings of persons with disabilities, especially in the areas of education, employment and public services; as well as in deepening international cooperation and exchange on disability issues.



*Haidi Zhang, as the Chairperson of the CDPF, made a work report to the organization’s seventh national congress.*

**Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA): Joint statement on Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse and Neglect of People with Disability**

Disabled People’s Organizations Australia (DPO Australia) and Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), on 19 September, released a joint statement, calling for a specific Royal Commission into violence and abuse against people with disabilities. The statement reiterated that the violence is interpersonal, structural and institutional, and occurs in a range of settings including education, the justice system, residential housing, prisons, hospitals, mental health facilities, group homes, detention centres, aged care, and in the community. It emphasized

the fact that people with disability have a right to justice and “only a targeted disability Royal Commission will deliver the change we need to stop the violence.” (Full statement is available [here](#).)

### **Eden Social Welfare Foundation: 2018 Touching Life Festival**

The Eden Social Welfare Foundation will hold the 2018 Touching Life Festival in Taichung, Taiwan. This year, the festival will include a range of activities, from hiking to fair and picnics, which aim to engage children, persons with disabilities and their families. From 28 September to 13 October, Eden welcomes everyone to participate in “Touching Life” Festival to advocate [Accessible Living Campaign](#).



*The Press Conference for the 2018 Touching Life Festival*

### **RI Global News to Use**

#### **UN DESA: Report of the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD published**

The eleventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held at the UN Headquarters in New York from 12 to 14 June 2018. Six meetings, two rounds of elections, and three roundtables were held. The full report is published, now available at: <http://undocs.org/CRPD/CSP/2018/5>

**UNFPA: Global study on ending gender-based violence and realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights for young persons with disabilities launched**

On 24 September, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched its latest report titled “Young Persons with Disabilities: Global Study on Ending Gender-based Violence and Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights”. The study provides an analysis on the situation of young persons with disabilities concerning discrimination and gender-based violence, including the impact on their sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also provides an assessment of legal, policy and programming developments and specific good practices in service delivery as well as best-standard prevention and protection measures. The full study is available for download at: <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/young-persons-disabilities>

**RI Global: Mark Your Calendar**

[14-17 October 2018, Vancouver, Canada, The International Forum on Disability Management \(IFDM\) 2018 by Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Science](#)

The International Forum on Disability Management will build on the history of innovation, leadership and best practice solutions through 78 stimulating workshop sessions and 3 plenary panel presentations with representatives from 20 countries. The three plenary panels will discuss critical challenges in workers compensation systems, disability and poverty and mental health in today’s workplace.

[4 November 2018, Berlin, Germany, Advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities worldwide](#)

The RI Commission on Policy and Services will hold a meeting to advance the work of RI Global through reviewing the progress made in advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities through the policy and services contributed by RI Global, and discuss on the way forward through more collaboration with other RI Commissions, as well as other stakeholders and experts.

[6-8 November 2018, Strasbourg, France, 35th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#)



The Congress will hold its 35<sup>th</sup> session in the Hemicycle of the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. The theme of this session is "Integrity and ethical behavior of local and regional elected representatives" with debates on the revision of the European Code of Conduct for all persons involved in local and regional governance, conflicts of interest and transparency and open government. It will also celebrate 30 years of the European Charter on Local Self-Government.

[8-12 November 2018, New Delhi, India, 2018 Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities](#)

The Korean Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (KSRPD) has been spreading awareness and policies on IT and persons with disabilities at regional and national levels, in close collaboration with the Korean government, RI Global and international organizations since 2011. This year, the 2018 GITC will be held in New Delhi, India, which has performed an exemplary role both as an IT powerhouse and using IT to solve various disability issues both domestically and internationally. In particular, the Government of India has pledged to implement its role and responsibility as a co-host country by supporting accommodation and event venue for all participants. The four-day event will be an exceptional forum for youth with disabilities to demonstrate their leadership and knowledge in the IT industry, and for experts and practitioners from governments and international organizations to explore policy options to reduce the digital gap for persons with disabilities as well as to promote ICT policies and networks inclusive of persons with disabilities.

[12-15 November 2018, Taipei, Taiwan, 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons](#)

The 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons, organized by Eden Social Welfare Foundation, invites researchers, practitioners, policy makers,

and advocates to contribute to the discussion on accessible transportation.



### [26-28 June 2019, Macau, RI Asia and Pacific Regional Conference 2019](#)

Under the main theme “ Together, leaving no one behind, in disability inclusive and rights-based progress” the 2018 RI Asia and Pacific Regional Conference will organize plenary sessions focused on key issues including disability inclusive disaster risk reduction and post disaster rehabilitation, gender and disabilities, education, work, employment and social enterprise, and accessibility as well as international frameworks such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Incheon Strategy adopted for the Asia and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### **Registration for RI Meetings in Berlin is still open.**

RI members are reminded that the RI Executive Board meeting, the 2018 General Assembly and other meetings, will take place in Berlin, Germany from 2 -6 November this year. For more detailed information on registration for your participation and hotel bookings, please email the host-organization at [ri2018@dvfr.de](mailto:ri2018@dvfr.de). Please note that the deadline to avail of discounted hotel rates negotiated by local organizers was August 8, 2018. After that date, regular hotel rates will apply.