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Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide



July 2016 Newsletter: Pride in Persons of "All Abilities"

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Cha In-Hong, known as the 'Maestro in a Wheelchair' plays Jules Massenet's 'Meditation from Thais' at the 'Beautiful Concert in Celebration of the CRPD' during CoSP9.

The Annual CoSP: Ten Years of the Convention

Before a particularly emotional concert honoring 10 years of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the United Nations last month, Victor Calise, the Commissioner of the City of New York's Office for People with Disabilities, said he only saw people of "all abilities" gathered before him, not those with disabilities.

The 9th annual Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) on the CRPD only illuminated Calise's observation, as hundreds of communed to challenge, change and celebrate the document that grants status and rights for the nearly one billion people with disabilities around the world. The RI Global Secretariat also helped the UN ring in the Convention's 10-year anniversary with an awards presentation, a co-sponsored panel and lots of member advocacy.

During the sessions, RI Global made an intervention on the floor of the General Assembly to endorse and support the [Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities \(PwDs\) in Humanitarian Action](#), which lifts barriers that persons with disabilities face in accessing relief, protection and recovery support, as well as ensures their participation in the development, planning and implementation of humanitarian programmes. President Monsbakken also made an intervention stressing on the need for building inclusive societies in which everyone can participate and enjoy equal human rights.

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capped off the week with a presentation of the Presidential Award to outgoing CoSP President [H.E. Ambassador Oh Joon](#), Permanent Representative of the Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, with a Presidential Plaque in appreciation of Oh's exemplary dedication to disability and rehabilitation. Before Oh presented the program of the evening "Beautiful Concert: Celebration of CRPD 10", he thanked RI Global for its "95 years of working with the United Nations to constantly put disability rights on docket of nations around the world".

With all its engagements during the CoSP, RI Global proved its capacity as a major player in international disability and rehabilitation. Read more (and see more) about the CoSP on the [From the Field](#) section of the new website, as well as the outcome of the [elections](#) for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to replace members whose terms expire in December 2016.



United Nations marchers at New York's first Disability Pride. RI Global Secretary-General, Venus Ilagan, will march in the second on 10 July.

Disability Pride to Mark Achievements of All Abled

Last summer, in the middle of pride parade season in New York, people from around the world gathered in Union Square before striding up Broadway in New York's first Disability Pride march. On 10 July, several thousand are expected for the second annual parade, during which RI Secretary-General, Venus Ilagan, will join the

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Founded by renowned jazz pianist, Mike LaDonne, whose daughter suffers from [Prader-Willi](#) syndrome, a genetic disorder that has rendered her without speech, legally blind and mostly wheelchair-bound, Disability Pride was designed to help "break the stereotypes and show people that these people are not to be pitied," he told the *New York Times*.

The parade will begin and end with rallies that will include entertainment and speakers. Vendors and informational kiosks will line the half-mile route, on which people of all disabilities are welcome to walk. Disability Pride, coincides with the 25th anniversary of the signing of the American's with Disability Act (ADA) in 1990 by President George HW Bush. So far, only Chicago and Philadelphia have sustained annual disability marches, with the first one taking place in Boston in 1990. To watch or join in, visit: www.disabilitypridenyc.org



New Xbox wheelchair avatars, which should be available in the Xbox upgrade coming out this fall.

NEWS TO USE

Microsoft Adds Wheelchair Option for Xbox Avatars

In a move to make Xbox accessible to all, Phil Spencer, the head of the Microsoft's Xbox Division revealed that Microsoft will soon launch wheelchair [avatars](#) for Xbox Live. During a surprise Twitter conversation suggesting a petition for wheelchairs, Spencer replied that the wheelchair additions were not "far off", and Microsoft gave fans a "sneak peak" showing two avatars using Xbox-themed wheelchairs.

Many other game and social sites, including Yahoo and Second Life have offered

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Microsoft's new avatars represent an industry trend in creating online characters that are more inclusive of the general population. Although there only exists anecdotal data on disabled gamers, 14 percent of the Americans are disabled, with more and more, including the war-wounded, turning to online games as for community and connection.

Assist-Mi – An App for the Disabled Person On-the Go

Coventry, England – a small city in the in the West Midlands – has moved to the top in the running for the most disabled accessible city in the United Kingdom, thanks to the launch of a revolutionary new app. The [assist-Mi app](#), which allows people with disabilities to communicate their specific needs before arriving at a wide range of destinations, recently chose Coventry as its first locale to test the integrated service.

"People with disabilities are all different and there is no such thing as a typical disability or a typical daily routine," said assist-Mi's co-founder Gary McFarlane. "The assist-Mi app allows users to communicate their needs to wherever they happen to be going, removing many of the obstacles some people face every day."

Through the assist-Mi Profile™ users create a characterization of their accessibility needs, allowing service providers to tailor assistance to the individual, while assist-Mi® Messenger provides real-time communication. Active Smartphone GPS alerts a service provider to the users' imminent arrival and specially enhanced accessibility features provide intuitive app navigation. Recently, assist-Mi also announced a partnership with taxi app Gett, which makes accessible licensed taxis available to disabled users in Coventry.

McFarlane expects other cities to adopt the app as word spreads among the disabled in the UK, who contribute £212bn to the UK economy every year. "Many people are put off from using services or visiting certain businesses because they know they will struggle to get the help they need - and that is a lot of valuable business not coming through the door," he said.

"So organisations and service providers can really benefit by signing up to the assist-Mi app, and win business from people with additional needs."

Global Disability Rights Now!

Across the world, people with disabilities have a critical role to play in the growth and development of strong communities. However, individuals with disabilities are too often excluded from contributing, as discrimination and inaccessibility persist, in spite of laws and policies due to lack of effective implementation, monitoring and enforcement.

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and policies that protect the rights of people with disabilities. The site covers such topics as: practical tools, legal analysis, case studies and strategies, principles behind landmark disability rights legislation, information and referral service. GlobalDisabilityRightsNow! generally draws on U.S. experience and actions to inform international disabled people's organizations (DPOs), government personnel, legislators, and civil society organizations, especially RightsNow! partners in Armenia, Kenya, Mexico, and Vietnam.

GlobalDisabilityRightsNow.org is managed by Mobility International USA (MIUSA) through the *RightsNow!: Strong Communities through Enforcing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* project and in collaboration with the RightsNow! U.S. Consortium.



Members of SESOBEL, a disabled children's organisation in Lebanon, participate in the annual Beirut Marathon.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

SESOBEL (Service Social pour le Bienetre de l'Enfant au Liban – Social Service for the Well-Being of the Child in Lebanon)

In 1975, at the very beginning of the 20-year Lebanese civil war, Yvonne Chami returned to Beirut after spending six years as a nurse in Vietnam. After accepting a position in the pediatric section of a hospital in Beirut, she discovered a disturbing reality: children who were affected with preventable disabilities; their families who were left without support; and a country without resources to help. With friend, colleague, and co-founder Fadia Safi, Chami formed [SESOBEL](http://SESOBEL.org) to support disabled children, from birth until death, thus allowing

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early as infancy. In addition to a day-school and summer camp facility with diagnostic, rehabilitative, therapeutic, medical, physiological, social, and academic services all a part of the core curriculum, SESOBEL offers family workshops, as well as continuing education in the latest available methods of treatment, especially concerning Autism, Down Syndrome, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, and other similar disabilities. For families, SESOBEL aims to reduce the family burden of disability and its requirements, and helps them discover the art of living in tandem and to overcome difficulties with joy and hope.

SESOBEL depends on donations to cover a 13 percent gap between government funding and parental expenses. For more information on helping, visit [Friends of SESOBEL](#).



The 2016 U.S. Paralympics Cycling Team will compete at the Paralympics -- the third most-watched sport -- from 7-18 September in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Upcoming UN and Other Conferences

[ECOSOC High Level Segment](#)

18-22 July: UN Headquarters, New York

With the aim of "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results", the ECOSOC HLS will include a thematic discussion on "Infrastructure for sustainable development for all".

[2016 Paralympic Games](#)

7-18 September: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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<http://eepurl.com/b8Vf99>[DESA Forum on Accessible and Disability Inclusive Urban Development](#)**16 October: Quito, Ecuador**

About 6.25 billion people, 15 per cent of them with disabilities, are predicted to be living in urban centres by 2050. Depending on how they are planned and built, urban environments, can impede or enable access, participation and inclusion. DESA will spend a day with civil society forums discussing the inclusion of disabled persons in cities before UN Habitat III.

[Habitat III, UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development](#)**17-20 October: Quito, Ecuador**

At Habitat III, attendees will think urban: how to mobilise the global community and focus all levels of human settlements for demographic and economic growth; and to systematise the alignment between cities and national planning objectives in their role as drivers of social development.

[23rd Rehabilitation International \(RI\) World Congress](#)**25-27 October: Edinburgh, UK**

More than 1,000 of the world's leading disability researchers, advocates, government agencies, politicians and practitioners will help RI Global create practical solutions for PwDs through inspirational projects and programmes.

[International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)**3 December: RI Global Secretariat, New York**

Taking place every year on 3 December, the International Day of Disabled Persons aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. The day also features the [United Nations Enable Film Festival](#) (UNEFF) and the [UN Enable Photo Exhibition](#).

[Rehacare International Trade Fair](#): The international rehabilitation and care sector will meet again this year at Rehacare International 2016, Trade Fair with Congress & Forums, held from 28 September to 1 October at the fairgrounds in Düsseldorf, Germany. Some 950 exhibitors from 34 countries will present innovative products and services for self-determined living for people with disabilities or requiring care. In addition to its core segment of mobility and everyday aids, aids for care and communication equipment, the trade fair will present a large array of vehicles and sports activities for the disabled as well as ideas for accessible homes, leisure and travel. For further information on visiting or exhibiting at Rehacare International 2016, contact Messe Düsseldorf North America, at info@mdna.com or visit the web site www.mdna.com.

[ECOSOC, DESA and the SDGs](#): The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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[Assistant Secretary-General](#) for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, invites the online community to join him in a Twitter chat on 8 July from 8:30 to 9:30 am EDT to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). What must be done to achieve these goals? How can we make sure that everyone is included? Join the chat and post questions using [#SDGsChat](#)!

[IDA Elects New Board Members](#): On 1 July, Colin Allen, a leading advocate for persons with disabilities globally, including as President of the World Federation of the Deaf since 2011, assumed the position of Chair of the International Disability Alliance (IDA), from Australia; he is the second deaf person to serve as the Chair of IDA, of which the World Federation of the Deaf is a founding member. Mr. Allen succeeded Ms. Maryanne Diamond, AO, Immediate-Past President of the World Blind Union, and IDA Chair from July 2014 to June 2016. "During the past five years WFD has seen IDA grow from a loose network of DPOs into a significant, professionally led organisation with paid staff. I am thrilled that I have been given the opportunity to lead the work of IDA" Allen said.

Under Allen's leadership, IDA will take on an advanced mission to ensure that the UN upholds the unifying principle of the disability movement: 'nothing about us without us'. This will include implementing standards on full participation of persons with disabilities, as well as guiding IDA's engagement with the UN System and other international human rights organizations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that capacity, Allen is leading IDA's strategic planning to ensure awareness raising, capacity building and the participation of persons with disabilities in the preparatory processes towards national reviews.



RI WORLD CONGRESS

Fellowship Deadline Extended

A limited amount of funding donated by Mr. MB Lee of Hong Kong on behalf of Asia Trust has been made available to support the participation of RI Global members from low-income countries to the 23rd World Congress of Rehabilitation International scheduled for 25-27 October 2016 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

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- Must have capability to share lessons learned from the congress and use the learning to strengthen ongoing initiatives of the organization
- Must have ability to provide or mobilize counterpart funding to support costs not provided for by the RI Congress fund
- Must be 18-45 years of age
- Must be able to understand English

The RI fund will cover costs for air travel (most direct and most economical round-trip to Edinburgh), a maximum of 4-nights hotel accommodation from 24-28 October 2016 and conference registration for a total maximum amount of U.S. \$1,500. Meals, transit expenses, local transport and visa fees are not included.

Submitted applications will be reviewed and applicant will be notified of result including next steps for travel and hotel arrangements within two weeks upon receipt.

- Visit the [website for application materials](#)
- Email completed application to RI Secretariat office in New York c/o the Secretary General: venusmilagan@yahoo.com
- Deadline is 31 July 2016

For 3 days, every 4 years, 1,000 of the world's leading disability experts unite, committed to creating a more inclusive and accessible world for all.

Day 1: Employment, education and skills: Examines policy and practice for people with disabilities to access and succeed in work, education and training

Day 2: Independent living: Explores policy and practical approaches to promote independent living for people with disabilities and impairments

Day 3: International development and partnerships: Looks at approaches and ideas from around the world to create a more inclusive and accessible world

Prices

Full event standard rate (all 3 days): £450

One day standard rate (single day attendance): £200

Read more about the 2016 [RI World Congress](#).



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