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October Newsletter: The World Congress

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Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide



*The Edinburgh International Conference Centre, the location of RI Global's 23rd World Congress is situated at the heart of Scotland's historic capital city.*



# Create a more inclusive world

## RI WORLD CONGRESS 2016 | EDINBURGH

### October 2016 Newsletter: Uniting around Disability and Equality!

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On 26 October, two apprentices from Barclays Bank will speak before dozens of people like them, united to hear their stories, including the challenges and rewards they have faced entering the workforce, as well as the reasons the endeavor was worth the effort. Later that day, attendees of Rehabilitation International's 23rd World Congress will learn how a true partnership approach – a joined up solution to halving the disability employment gap – can improve employment outcomes for disabled people.

From 21-27 October, RI Global will host more than 750 influential disability experts from 58 countries to Edinburgh, Scotland for the World Congress, which is shaping up to be one of the most important disability events of 2016. Of course, attendees will hear from **Penny Mordaunt, Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, UK** and **Princess Anne, Princess Royal** who will serve as the Royal Patron of the 23rd RI World Congress. But they will also attend sessions that provide practical solutions to solve every day problems, such as how rehabilitation works in a variety of societal settings around the world; innovative partnerships with local authorities for increased outcomes for disabled people; and even how young musicians with disabilities can take part in composition and performance using a range of music technologies.

Shaw Trust, RI Global's partner in the World Congress has released the schedule of venues for meetings and the plenary session taking place in Edinburgh. [Click here](#) for the full conference programme. See you in two weeks!

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## [RI GLOBAL at the UN and Across the World](#)



*RI Global Secretary-General addresses a UN DESA panel on refugees days before the High-level meeting on Migrants and the opening of the 71st General Assembly*

## RI Global participates in 71st UN General Assembly

Nawael, a 34-year-old Syrian refugee in a wheelchair who had been staying in a camp near Athens had not been able to wash for weeks. Her husband would carry her to the door of the toilet and once inside, random women helped her use it. “I don’t sleep at night because my body is itchy,” she recently told a researcher with Human Rights Watch. “And I [usually] pray, but given that I haven’t had a shower, I can’t pray.”

Life for a disabled refugee is difficult, at best. Life for a disabled female refugee can, at times, prove a lesson in tenacity beyond the pale, as a group of disability advocates discovered during a UN General Assembly panel discussion *Advancing the rights, well-being and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities* on 16 September. Advocates from RI Global, HRW, the Women’s Refugee Commission,

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governments, humanitarian organizations, and donors to find the way forward in ensuring that the unique needs of people with disabilities were addressed in humanitarian emergencies. The DESA panel took place three days before the UN General Assembly convened a High-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants.

“Stories like this are just one of many that open our eyes to see that it’s not one size fits all when it comes to the conditions of people in the camps,” said Venus Ilagan, the Secretary-General of RI Global. Eight million of some 50 million displaced persons have a disability. Read more about the panel [here](#).



*The three medals of 2016 Olympic Games offset by the medals of the Paralympic games.*

## RI Global travels to the Rio Paralympics

Welcoming the start of the 2016 summer Paralympic Games, which got underway in Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro in mid-September, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the Games not only showcased the extraordinary abilities of athletes living with a disability, but also promoted the rights of all persons with disabilities.

“The Secretary-General believes that Paralympic athletes are change makers and role models, and are symbols of courage and aspiration for us all,” the Secretary-General’s spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, told a news briefing at UN Headquarters in New York. RI Global President Jan Monsbakken witnessed the SG’s predictions as he watched the athletes and change-makers, including Algeria’s Abdellatif Baka, who won the 1,500 meters, gradually blur the lines between able-



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that could have taken his life; Ireland's Jason Smyth's third T13 100m title; and Cuba's Omara Durand topping the Rio podium in the women's T12 100m, 200m and 400m.

There were big worries on the eve of the Paralympics that almost no one would come to watch. However, the first weekend saw record numbers and by the Closing Ceremonies, total numbers of 2.1 million were reported by organizers surpassing the 2008 Beijing Games.



*UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (right) greets participants at a Special Session at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities into Humanitarian Action. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe*

## UNITED NATIONS Events and Conferences

### OHCHR 2016 Social Forum focuses on disabilities

Realizing the right to development of persons with disabilities requires the adoption of a human rights-based approach to disability, states parties to the CRPD agreed to make international development cooperation inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, it was decided at the 2016 Social Forum, an annual three-day meeting convened by the Human Rights Council to promote open and interactive dialogue

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human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities in the context of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was the theme of the 2016 session of the Social Forum. More on the Social Forum, held from 3 to 5 October in Geneva's, *Palais des Nations*, Geneva is [here](#).

## UN Celebrates World Tourism Day with accessible tourism

One billion people around the world living with disability, still face obstacles in accessing fundamentals of travel such as clear and reliable information, efficient transportation and public services, and a physical environment that is easy to navigate. With this in mind, reaching universal accessibility in tourism became the focus of World Tourism Day, which took place on 27 September in Bangkok, Thailand. During the day, breakout sessions focused on the ways in which Accessibility provided an important market opportunity and was central to responsible and sustainable tourism policies and business development strategies. "As the world of travel and tourism is an expanding industry and the number of travelers increases every year, we have to ensure that travelling the world has to be as safe and seamless as possible," explained Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand. Read more about accessible tourism [here](#).

## Upcoming:

### Countdown to HABITAT III

HABITAT III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development takes place in Quito, Ecuador from 17 to 20 October 2016, where governments are expected to adopt the [New Urban Agenda](#) to guide the sustainable and inclusive development of the world's cities for next 20 years.

The day before, UN DESA will hold a High-Level Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development featuring Rehabilitation International will be represented by Treasurer Susan Parker and Joseph Kwan, of the Commission on Technology & Accessibility, who will speak to universal designed housing and environments for all citizens. For HABITAT III and the imminent launch of the New Urban Agenda, DESA in collaboration with the Essl Foundation (Zero Project), have prepared a new publication entitled: [Good practices of accessible urban development](#).

### International Day of Persons with Disabilities: 3 December

Taking place every year on 3 December, the International Day of Disabled Persons (IDPD) aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. The theme for IDPD 2016 is [Achieving 17 Goals for the Future We Want](#), which draws attention to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how these goals can create a more

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*The CRPD and you*, will highlight the positive ways in which the Convention has impacted the lives of people around the world. Deadline for submitting photographs: 31 October.

[UN Enable Film Festival](#)

The Festival presents short disability-related films selected on the basis of their content and message that can help raise awareness of disability issues. Deadline for submitting films: 20 November.



*Researchers at the Qatar Foundation in Doha have released a new Braille App for your Smart Phone.*

## RI GLOBAL NEWS TO USE

### New Braille application helps the vision impaired

Researchers in Qatar have officially launched a new Braille application in Apple's App Store targeting persons who are blind or have low vision. BrailleEasy is a custom keyboard that combines the comfort of one-handed typing with the speed of two-handed Braille-like typing through the use of gestures, and it can be used by both Arabic and English-speaking users. The app has a tutorial mode for the user to

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will be open sourced to allow others to improve it and adapt it to other languages.

## New study shows transit not taking PwDs places

The Mineta Transportation Institute of San Jose State University just released a [study](#) in which researchers from universities in California, New Jersey, Florida and Australia recognized that although buses and trains were accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs), the pathways to those stations and stops were not. The research team also explored strategies to increase access to the built environment surrounding transit facilities in five United States transportation systems. The resulting policy recommendations from the study's authors is a multi-pronged approach toward improving pathways to transit that allows agencies to: understand the needs of their consumers with disabilities through direct outreach to them; pursue partnerships promote connectivity between land use and transit; and think holistically about projects to more closely align transportation services with consumer needs.

## U.S. White House showcases disability design

The White House on 15 September showcased a DIY spirit for disabilities by hosting a Design For All Showcase that celebrated inclusive design, assistive technology, and prosthetics, while also recognizing the work and experiences of designers, engineers and companies striving to help people live happier, healthier lives. Among other innovations, MagnaReady and PVH Corp announced that this fall they will offer Van Heusen dress shirts that incorporate MagnaClick technology, which are powerful magnets that link together for a secure closure, eliminating the need for struggling with buttons. See more [here](#).

## Women's hotline proves effective in curbing abuse

Between January and August 2016 Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) conducted a six-month project to assess the adequacy and accessibility of 1800RESPECT - the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counseling service for people living in Australia. The *1800RESPECT: Improving Service Responses for Women with Disability Experiencing Violence* project identified forty-three recommendations for making 1800RESPECT more inclusive of, and responsive to, the needs of women and girls experiencing all forms of violence and abuse. The *1800RESPECT: Improving Service Responses for Women with Disability Experiencing Violence* found that:

- The Australian Government prioritise, as a matter of urgency, the development of accessible and appropriate information resources and materials on violence against women and girls with disability.
- The Australian Government should fund the development and delivery of tailored training to all actors working in the domestic violence and sexual assault service sector in order to improve service responses for women with disability.



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against women and girls with disability.

The full report is available [here](#).



*An intern with USICD's summer program for disabled youth seeking jobs in International Relations and Development.*

## EVENTS/AWARDS/CONFERENCES

### Canada launches call to support inclusion of PwDs

The Government of Canada is working to ensure greater accessibility and opportunities for Canadians with disabilities in their communities and workplaces. To this end, the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities invited national not-for-profit organizations with a focus on disability to submit funding proposals until November 3, 2016 for innovative projects that identify, develop and test promising practices and tools that promote the social inclusion of people with disabilities. The practices and tools may be new or build on existing programs and services. Organizations are encouraged to visit the SDPP-D

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## **EASPD 20th anniversary conference**

From 19 to 21 October 2016, the European Association of Service (EASPD) providers for Persons with Disabilities celebrates its 20th anniversary in Brussels, Belgium. Under the slogan “Join the Trip! 20 Years on the Road”, EASPD providers will continue discussions on the importance of constantly evolving and adapting to pave the way to inclusion, as well as honor the 10 years since the adoption of the United Nations CRPD. For information on the conference, please visit the conference [website](#) or contact [anniversary@easpd.eu](mailto:anniversary@easpd.eu).

## **Survey to assess wheelchair use during emergencies**

The International Society of Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) are conducting research on the needs of wheelchair users in a disaster or emergency situation. Wheelchair users (temporary or permanent), caretakers, clinicians, or experts in a related field, are invited to [participate](#).

## **Call for items: the 2017 Global Platform for DRR**

As part of its commitment to ensuring an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach to the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction discussions (22-26 May 2017, Cancún, México), the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction is inviting interested experts and stakeholder representatives to take part in the Organizing Teams that will help shape the various substantive sessions of the 2017 Global Platform. The registration process to join the Organizing Teams is now open and will close by 27 October 2016. Please visit the [website](#) of the 2017 Global Platform.

## **Youth in International Development and Foreign Affairs**

The United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD) is calling on applicants to its annual Youth in International Development and Foreign Affairs internship program, which focuses on U.S. youth with disabilities from across the country who intend to pursue careers in international development or foreign affairs. The summer 2017 internship program will bring a group of talented graduate students, recent graduates, and rising juniors and seniors with disabilities to Washington, D.C., for nine weeks to work at an international organization. USICD will cover the cost of accessible housing during the program, reimburse travel expenses to and from D.C., and provide a limited stipend. To learn more about the internship program, eligibility criteria, and the application process, please visit the [website](#). **The application deadline is January 10, 2017.**

## **Call for submissions on support to persons with disabilities**

The Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Ms. Catalina Devandas-Aguilar, is currently preparing a study on the provision of support to persons with disabilities that will be presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2017. The Special Rapporteur welcomes inputs, in accessible formats (Word), in English, French, Russian or Spanish, from Member States, international and

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sr.disability@ohchr.org by 21 October 2016. Concise responses are encouraged, inclusive of relevant attachments where available. More information [here](#).



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