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Paralympics Preview

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Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide

August 2016 Newsletter: Countdown to the Paralympics -- Showcasing the Superhumans



A scene from Channel 4's Paralympic advert, "We're the Superhumans"

The Olympics started before the eyes of the world in Rio on 5 August, and the Paralympics will follow from 7 September to 18 September. The Paralympics have always been as competitive as the Olympics, but haven't always been appreciated as such. This started changing in London 2012, when the U.K.'s Channel 4 released "[Meet the Superhumans](#)", a high-energy, video advert set to Public Enemy's "Harder than You Think" that underscored the sheer power and defiance of Paralympic athletes.



Watch "We're the Superhumans with subtitles and sign language

Although the Paralympic events made recent headlines when it was announced that Russia would not be participating in this year's games, due to a doping scandal,

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with [“We’re the Superhumans”](#), which became the second-most-shared Olympics-related ad of all time on social media. “Superhumans” reset its message this year, with a playful and infectious musical spot featuring a disabled jazz band and other athletes performing incredible feats. Since its release on 14 July, it has generated 1.26 million shares across social media. The idea, Channel 4’s Dan Brooke to *The Guardian*, was to not just focus on the strength and speed of a few elite athletes, but also to help change attitudes to disability. “We wanted to say any disabled person can be a superhuman. You have everyday people doing amazing things.”

- The full schedule of events, organized by day, can be found on the Rio 2016 Paralympics website [here](#).
- Viewers can tune in to USOC and NBC to watch the livestream of the games. The link has yet to be disclosed, so be sure to check Paralympic.org periodically [here](#).
- Closer to the Sept. 7 date, NBC will be post the TV listing schedule. Keep checking back [here](#).
- What not to miss: Wheelchair Rugby and Wheelchair Basketball. Check out the full list of sports and events [here](#).



RI Secretary-General Venus Ilagan meets with members of the Japanese Council on Independent Living in July to discuss potential partnerships.

RI Global Partners with Japanese on Independent Living

Members of the Japan Council on Independent Living Centers visited RI Global Headquarters in late July to seek the NGO’s support in promoting the Global Summit on Independent Living to be held in October 2017 in Washington D.C. The Council, headed by Mr. Kozo Hirashita and Mr. Noboru Imamura, also expressed interest in learning more about

RI Global's work regarding the Independent Living movement. Independent Living Centers are organizations in which

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disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, that they have crucial perspective to contribute to society, and that they deserve equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities.

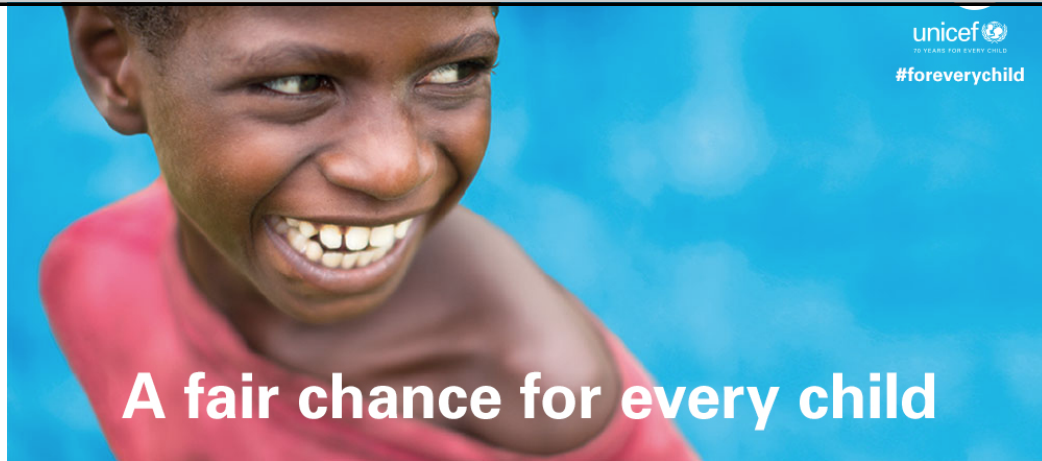
RI Global member, the United States International Council in Disability (USICD) based in Washington D.C., has been closely working with the Japanese organization for the holding of the global summit on Independent Living. RI Secretary-General Venus Ilagan provided the Japanese team with suggestions on how to promote the event and ensure that the IL summit is attended by representatives of disability organizations as well as those from governments and other NGOs. "The IL concept has been proven as an effective way for persons with disabilities to live productive and self-determined lives. Policymakers need not reinvent the wheel," Ilagan said during the meeting. "Rather, they should look closer on the achievements of IL centers and consider the IL concept as a way to realize the vision of self-reliance and independent living for persons with disabilities, especially those living in developing countries where resources are limited at best."



UN ECOSOC: Advancing SDGs through sharing of experiences

The 2016 High-level Political Forum on sustainable development closed on 20 July with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration. As the meeting ended, the ECOSOC President and chair of the 2016 Forum, Ambassador Oh Joon, outlined some of the key messages.

"The SDGs must be implemented in their entirety", he said. "We must make globalization work for everyone". The launch of the first global SDGs Report and the presentation of the 2016 Global Sustainable Development Report were highlights of the meeting, as were voluntary national reviews by 22 countries on the steps they are taking towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To date, 163 States and the European Union have ratified or acceded to the Convention. The CRPD Committee has received about 85 initial reports from States parties, working actively to monitor national progress.



UNICEF Releases 2015 State of the World's Children

In July, the United Nations Children's Fund released its 2016 State of the World's Children report, entitled *A fair chance for every child*. The report highlighted results achieved for young people across the full continuum of humanitarian action in 2015, while assessing activities in all programme areas. In disability rights for children, UNICEF:

- Launched a three-year partnership with BRAC International to support Communication for Development initiatives for inclusive education.
- Called on nations to support equitable public financing and child-focused budgeting, at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, UNICEF
- supported vaccination campaigns of 350 million doses of oral polio vaccine to help Nigeria become polio-free in September; the world is now on track to be certified polio-free by 2019. Check out [A fair chance for every child](#).



UN Secretary-General Elections

For the first time since the founding of the United Nations, both a new United Nations Secretary-General and a new President of the United States will be elected in the same year. To bring more transparency to the process of choosing the next United Nations Secretary-General, candidates have been addressing the

General Assembly and civil society through “informal dialogues” to presented their platforms. The 12

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Heleen Clark of New Zealand, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Christiana Figueres of Costa Rica, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

António Guterres of Portugal, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Susana Malcorra of Argentina, former Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General

Vuk Jeremic of Serbia, President of the General Assembly at its 67th session

Natalia Gherman of Moldova, former Minister for Foreign Affairs

Danilo Turk of Slovenia, former Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

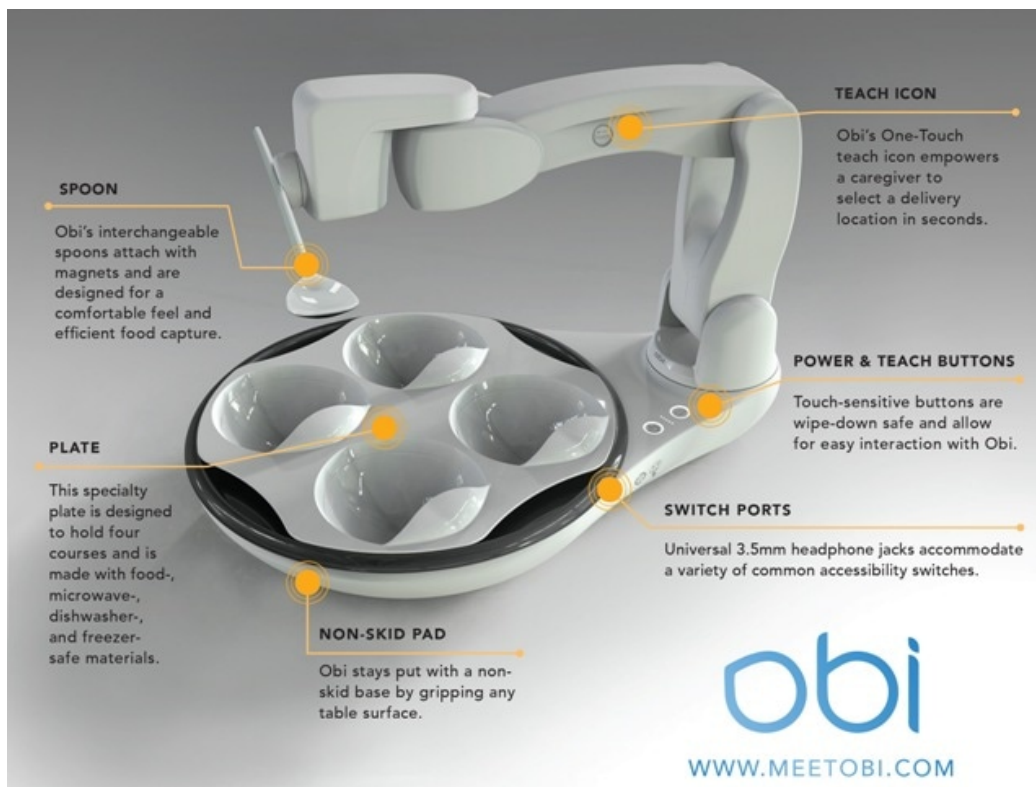
Igor Luksic, former Prime Minister of Montenegro

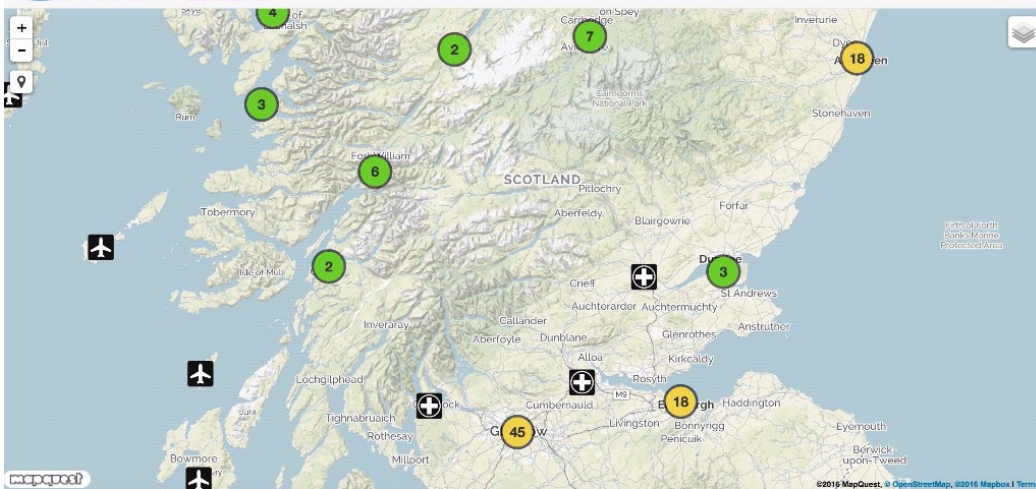
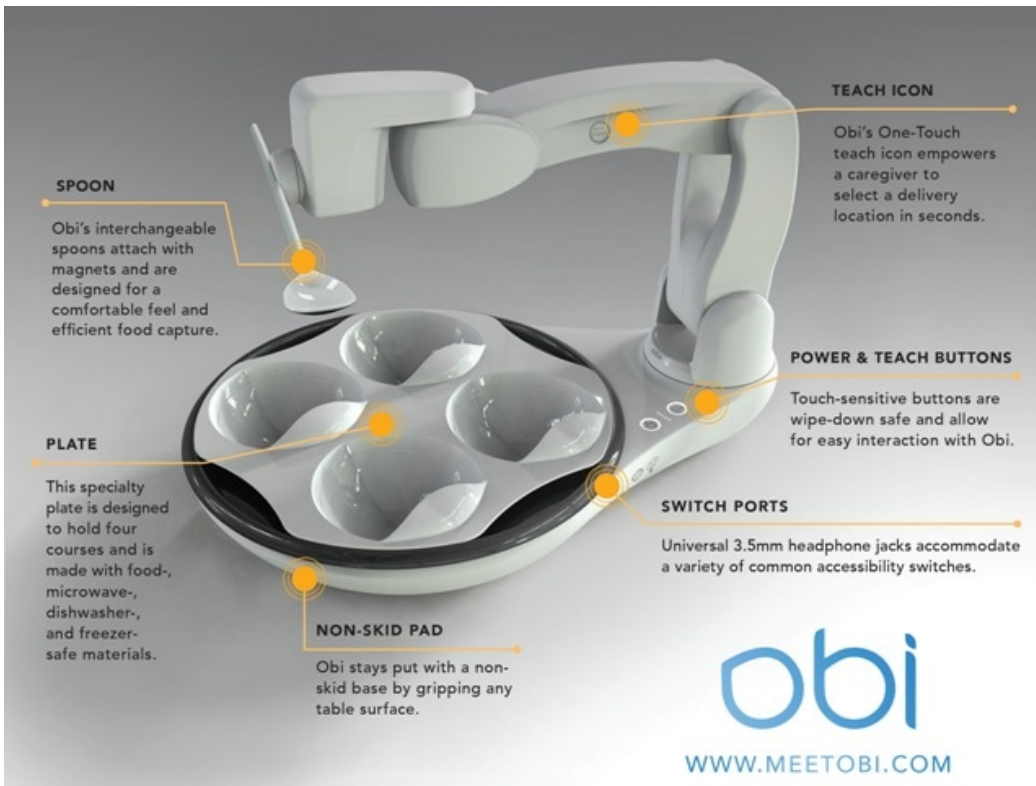
Irina Bokova of Bulgaria, Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

Srgjan Kerim of Macedonia, President of the General Assembly at its 62nd session

Miroslav Lajcak of Slovakia, former High Representative of the International Community and European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 15-member Security Council has started determining by a series of straw polls beginning on July 21 which candidate it will recommend to the UN General Assembly for a final vote by the end of the year. To find out more about the candidates and the process, click on the [Better World Campaign's UN Secretary-General page](#).





NEWS TO USE

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The simple act of eating a meal has become more dignified and enjoyable for many people with mobility disabilities. Obi, a revolutionary robotic dining device, blends elegant design, intuitive controls and a friendly personality to allow people usually fed by others to take control of their meals.

Obi's key functionality is a robotic arm that selects virtually any properly sized food from one of four compartments. Obi then delivers the food to one of several thousand potential locations where the diner can eat from the spoon. Supplied by a rechargeable battery, Obi holds enough energy to serve four to six meals on a single charge. Obi also fits within the confines of a dinner placemat, operates quietly and can be carried with ease like a laptop computer.

Designed and manufactured in the United States, Obi is FDA compliant and is certified by Underwriters Laboratories. The name "Obi" is derived from the word "obeisance" which is a term for a gesture of respect or deference, such as a bow or curtsy. In recognition of this, the Obi device fluidly "bows" to its user when turned on. An Obi device is available for purchase in the United States at www.meetobi.com.

Documenting Accessibility in the UK

A disability activist in the UK has recently launched a website that showcases decades of his photographs in an effort to spread information about accessibility across Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland.

Marg McNiel says he has traversed more than a million miles and has taken more than 500,000 photographs for [See Around Britain](#), a photographic access record of the UK on which he has been working since developing Myalgic Encephalopathy in the early 1990s.

[See Around Britain](#) features photographs of places such as churches, museums, cinemas, railway stations, hospitals, hotels, and other cultural attractions, as well as an interactive map of services such as accessible toilets. "(The photographs) are not pretty-pretty; they are everyday life reality."

In the last year, nearly 20 volunteers have helped McNiel by cataloguing the pictures and writing descriptions. See Around Britain also includes photographs for some sites in Belgium, Holland, France, Germany, Denmark and Sweden for a second undertaking, See Around Europe. To add a venue, email photos, preferably wide-angle, and a description, following the same template of headings, to editorial@seearoundbritain.org.uk

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Members of Eden Social Welfare Foundation gather for an event celebrating “[Eden Steps with Love and Leaps with Art](#)”, which opened on 17 June.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Eden Social Welfare Foundation– Bridging Disability Rights Across Asia

It’s evening in Taipei and just days after the UN’s commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Disability organizations in Asia Pacific have yet to celebrate, however, and have gathered disability artists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan in a cross-straight showcase of talent in response to the treaty that changed their lives.

“[Eden Steps with Love and Leaps with Art](#)”, which opened on 17 June, is just another one of Eden Social Welfare Foundation’s initiatives advocating for the right for persons with disabilities to develop in the arts. “Eden Steps” invited more than 30 artists of different disciplines – each with its own equal amount of flourish and fanfare.

After 34 years into serving persons with disabilities, Eden not only offers life and career advancement, as well as accessible services to ensure the independence for persons with disabilities, but also invests in cultivating their diverse talents and skills. Eden has also recently embarked on a mission to educate the public about life with a disability. “Eden Steps” included a piece in a dark room so the average “seeing” person might experience the world

through the eyes of the visually impaired, in addition to live paintings, wheel-chair dancing and other performances.

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Among other causes, Eden recently launched a campaign to donate 100 white canes to persons with visual impairments in Inner Mongolia and at least 50 wheelchairs in Vietnam. From 1-2 November Eden and the Department of Social Work, National Taiwan University (NTU) will host the second international conference on Developmental Social Work. See more of [Eden Social Welfare Foundation](#)'s work, or sign up for the [conference](#) in Taipei.



Disability rights advocates will converge on Quito, Ecuador in October to ensure their needs are met during the UN Habitat III

EVENTS/AWARDS/CONFERENCES

Upcoming UNITED NATIONS Conferences

[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.

[During Habitat III](#), the UN is expected to adopt the New Urban Agenda, which will guide the sustainable and inclusive development of the world's cities for next 20 years. The latest draft New Urban Agenda was released on 28 July, one of the last versions before the Habitat III conference in October. Along with the Nippon Foundation, the GAATES Alliance and Disabled People's International, RI Global co-sponsored a forum in June: **Ways forward Towards a Disability Inclusive and Accessible New Urban Agenda**, which aimed to make a concrete appeal for disability inclusion in the final document. Further information on the issues are available on the [UN Enable website](#).

[International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)

3 December: RI Global Secretariat, New York

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features the [United Nations Enable Film Festival](#) (UNEFF) and the [UN Enable Photo Exhibition](#).

Other Conferences

International Week of the Deaf

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) will commemorate the International Week of the Deaf (IWD) from 26-30 September under the theme: "With Sign Language, I am Equal". First launched in 1958 in Rome, Italy, IWD takes place annually on the last week of September. A truly global event, IWD is the only week in a year during which highly concerted global advocacy raises awareness about the Deaf Community on different levels. For more information on the week and resources, see the [WFD's website](#).

4th Ashok Memorial Lecture & Award

On 12 August, Deepa Sonpal, a leading disability rights researcher with the [UNNATI Organisation for Development Education](#) will present the 4th Ashok Memorial Lecture at the National Convention on Women with Disabilities in Bhubaneswar, India. Sonpal, who has worked with UNNATI for the past 24 years and has published widely on disability inclusion, started coordinating in 2014 a project funded by the European Union to promote social inclusion and democratic governance so that the vulnerable sections of our society, particularly the dalits, tribals, women and persons with disabilities, are empowered to effectively and decisively participate in mainstream development and the decision-making process.

The Convention will also give activist Nita Panchal with the National Disability Award. Panchal, the victim of the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, survived for two days under tonnes of debris with a broken spine after her school building collapsed. Now the secretary of the Disability Advocacy Group (DAG) of Handicapped International, Panchal has travelled to most corners of Gujarat and India, spreading optimism, conducting workshops and teaching disabled people to live productive, happy lives. The mobile app, [Azadi ki Udaan](#), a mobile resource for women's disability rights will launch at the convention.



RI WORLD CONGRESS

The facilitators of the 23rd RI World Congress have released the schedule of venues for meetings and the plenary session taking place in Edinburgh from 21-27 October and added links to the website for a full view of all the activities.

[Download a PDF with full details of each session.](#)

[Download a PDF with the full range of parallel sessions.](#)

Join 1000 of the world's leading disability experts, government ministers and policy makers to explore solutions to eradicate current barriers faced by disabled people everywhere. Included in the programme are [Penny](#)

[Mordaunt](#), Minister of State for Disabled People, UK, [Geoff Huggins](#), Director for Health and Social Care Integration,

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If you truly believe in creating a more inclusive world for all, come to [Edinburgh](#).



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