

Informal ASEM Human Rights Seminar Series

Event on “Human Rights and Disabilities”:16th Seminar outcomes

**“Nothing about us without us:
Enhancing participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life in
Asia & Europe”**

10th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention
on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN COSP 10)
United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA

Wednesday 14 June 2017, 11:45 am – 1 pm

Organisers: Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), CBM

Sponsors: Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), CBM, International Disability Alliance (IDA)

Participation in political and public life is a critical element of socially inclusive development, and fundamental for persons with disabilities to take part in society on an equal basis as others. Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) aims to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to take part in political and public life, while the Sustainable Development Goal 16 promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development by ensuring inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

However, 10 years after the adoption of the CRPD, persons with disabilities still face exclusion, discrimination and barriers to full participation in political and public life. The obstacles to participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making and policy-framing processes often relates to lack of accessible information and issues of legal capacity. For instance, persons with disabilities are frequently denied the right to vote due to lack of information on public consultations, political parties, voting procedures as well as physical barriers to public buildings and lack of alternative voting devices or mechanisms.

Based on the outcomes of the [16th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights](#), this event will bring together experts from Asia and Europe to:

- Exchange best practices ensuring meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life in Asia and Europe;
- Share recommendations to improve participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of political and public life in both regions;
- Exchange ideas on how regional processes in both regions can support national implementation.

Tentative Programme

Welcome remarks on behalf of the co-organisers of the 16th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights – Vanessa VOVOR, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

Panel Discussion followed by a Q&A session

Moderator: **Mirjam GASSER**, CBM Switzerland,

- **Nadia HADAD**, Executive Committee Member, European Disability Forum (EDF), and Board Member, European Network on Independent Living (ENIL),
- **Dr Rosemary KAYESS**, Senior Research Fellow, University of New South Wales, Australia,
- **Sébastien KESSLER**, Project Manager, CHUV Hospital and Co-Founder of id-Geo, Swiss Delegation Representative
- **Risna UTAMI**, Chair of the Indonesian National Consortium for Disability Rights (INCDR),

Background

This event is organised in follow-up to the 16th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights, which took place on 8-10 November 2016 in Beijing, China, on [“Persons with Disabilities and Human Rights”](#).

The [Informal Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\) Seminar on Human Rights](#) promotes mutual understanding and co-operation between Europe and Asia in the area of political dialogue, particularly on human rights issues. It is co-organised by the ASEF, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (nominated by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. ASEF has acted as the Secretariat of the Seminar since 2000.

Speakers profiles

Mirjam GASSER specializing in human rights. Mirjam has considerable experience in the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities. She worked for the Swiss government on national implementation of disability rights as well as for a Swiss disabled people's organizations strengthening the rights and participation of people with disabilities. From 2013 to 2016 she worked for the WWF in energy politics, advocating on the local and regional level for renewable energies, again with a focus on enhancing the capacity of local communities.

Nadia HADAD was born in Belgium and spent part of her childhood in Morocco before returning to Belgium to complete her secondary education. She studied civil engineering and specialized in mechanical conception and water resourcing. In 2003, she travelled to work in Senegal, while her she was in a car accident and became disabled as a result of this. She returned to Belgium and after two years decided to combine disability and development cooperation. She became a member of several DPO's and NGO's.

As a result of her lobbying work she became the Vice President of the Consulting Council for Persons with Disability. She is also a Board member of the NGO PHOS (Platform Disability and Development Cooperation), member of IDDC (International Disability Development Cooperation), of the Belgian Expertise Center Independent Living, of Onafhankelijk Leven (Budget-holders Association for Personal Assistant). She is also a member of GRIP (Equal Rights for Each Person with Disability) where she is involved in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Nadia is also a Board member of the European Network on Independent Living. In May 2017 she was also elected in the EDF Board of Directors and in the EDF Executive Committee. She became also member of the Membership and Credential Committee.

Rosemary KAYESS has extensive disability policy experience. Rosemary Kayess has devoted her career to the study and promotion of human rights and discrimination law in Australia and internationally. She has made a significant contribution to the disability rights movement. She has held ministerial advisory roles with both the state and federal government on disability and carer issues. Rosemary has had extensive research experience working and advising on a variety of social research projects including access to justice, human rights and disability, guardianship, young people in nursing homes.

Kayess was appointed to the Australian Government delegation responsible for drafting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Since 2009 Kayess has been a member of the AusAID Disability Reference Group; in 2010 she was appointed Director of the Human Rights and Disability Project at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Kayess became Senior Research Fellow at the Social Policy Research Centre at UNSW in 2011.

Sébastien KESSLER is a physicist, health economist and politician in Lausanne's City Council as well as a community activist and founder of the first consulting firm in Switzerland (www.id-geo.ch) that specializes in universal design, whether environments or services. He works in the general management of the university hospital in Lausanne and is also an independent member of the Swiss umbrella disability organisation "Inclusion Handicap" which supports the candidacy of Professor Markus Schefer to the CRPD 2019-2022.

Risna UTAMI is a lawyer and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in her home country of Indonesia. She has been active in various activities related to disability issues, human rights, policy advocacy and development in Indonesia and international level. She is the founder and director of OHANA, an organisation that strengthens social justice and social welfare for Indonesians with disabilities. Her experience gained from leading local, national and cross-national initiatives has allowed her to develop several projects throughout Southeast Asia, and beyond.

Risna is also the Chair of the Indonesian National Consortium for Disability Rights (INCDR), a national consortium that has 45 organisation members representing 8 provinces in Indonesia to advocate CRPD implementation at the local and national level. Through this consortium, she actively promotes "disability inclusive development" in the Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development Goals to be in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the local, national and global level. Since 2013, she has been a speaker in advocating the rights

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of persons with disabilities and development within the United Nations Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and various UN High Level Forum at the UN HQ in New York, USA.