



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

## Side Event | **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: from digital divide to digital empowerment**

10<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of State Parties on  
the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 13-15 June 2017



11.45 a.m. - 13.00 p.m.

15 June 2017

Room 11, UN Headquarters, New York

*International Sign interpretation and captioning will be provided*

## Introduction

This side event, organized jointly by UNESCO in cooperation with The Nippon Foundation and World Federation of the Deaf, will focus its discussion on the importance of making cyberspace equally inclusive and accessible for all.

The panelists will share concrete examples on how digital empowerment resulting from successful measures taken at the international and national levels improved the quality of life of persons with disabilities, provided access to information and knowledge, facilitated learning and teaching, cultural expression and employment, as well as built an enabling environment and opportunities for self-realization within the context of the implementation of UNCRPD and the SDGs.

The scientific and technological progress should not deepen further the divide between the young and the elderly; children, women and men; speakers of lesser-used languages; those who live in remote and urban areas; as well as those who are differently abled, but in contrast provide new opportunities to access multilingual information and knowledge, using inclusive ICTs and enabling full expression through culture and arts, to ensure full participation in society.

## Agenda of the side-event

- 11.45 – 11.55**    **Welcome remarks by Ms Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg**  
Knowledge Societies Division, Communication and Information Sector,  
UNESCO (moderator)
- 11.55 – 12.10**    **Presentation by Professor Alireza Darvishy**  
Laureate of UNESCO/Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah Prize 2016 for  
Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities 2016 (Switzerland)
- 12.10 – 12.20**    **Presentation by Mr Yasunobu Ishii**, Senior Program Director, The Nippon  
Foundation (Japan) **and Professor Gladys Tang**, Director, Centre for Sign  
Linguistics and Deaf Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong (China)
- 12.20 – 12.30**    **Presentation by Mr Florjan Rojba**  
General Coordinator of the Albanian Association of the Deaf Supporting ANAD  
Advocacy and Member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) (Albania)
- 12.30 – 13.00**    **Discussion (Q&A)**

## Recent initiatives

In 2016, UNESCO with support of the State of Kuwait has established a Prize named “[UNESCO/Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities](#)” to recognize the outstanding contributions of individuals and organizations in promoting inclusion and enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities through the application of digital solutions, resources and technologies. Prof Alireza Darvishy, laureate from Switzerland and Tiflolibros from Argentina received the Prize in 2016 for their long-lasting contribution to the digital empowerment of persons with disabilities, their projects and programmes, tools and resources developed, and enhanced co-operation and partnerships.

Within the context of the upscaling [UNESCO Atlas of Languages in Danger](#) to World Atlas of Languages, UNESCO in partnership with the World Federation of the Deaf initiated a consultative expert dialogue on the inclusion of sign languages. The first consultative meeting took place on 21 February 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on International Mother Tongue Day. It helped to address issues related to the enrolment criteria, design and structure of the new World Atlas of Languages in terms of the inclusion of sign languages, and issues around accessibility of the Atlas as a whole for the deaf sign language speakers. This also contributes to the implementation of the UNESCO’s only normative instrument in this field - the “Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Access to Cyberspace” adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2003.

From 22 to 25 March 2018 in Singapore, UNESCO and The Nippon Foundation in cooperation with other partners will organize the first [Asia-Pacific Festival of Artists with Disabilities](#).

## Major organizer

UNESCO Communication and Information Sector  
Knowledge Societies Division

## Co-sponsors

[World Federation of the Deaf](#)  
[The Nippon Foundation](#)

## Website:

UNESCO - Access to information for people with disabilities  
<http://en.unesco.org/themes/access-for-pwd>