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Representation that Matters: Enhancing Active Citizenships for Young People with Disabilities

Promoting the active participation and representation of young people with disabilities in civil society, public and political life

Tuesday 9 June, 4:45 PM–6:00 PM (UTC-4)
Conference Room 11, UN Headquarters, New York
Live stream on [UN Web TV via this link](#)

Meaningful participation for young people with disabilities is essential in order to enhance a socially sustainable society, where all citizens are able to participate in and contribute to society on an equal basis – leaving no one behind.

However, research shows, that factors such as lack of information, physical inaccessibility, prejudice, and low knowledge of various disabilities lead to low participation in public and political forums for young people with disabilities.

Ensuring the appropriate frameworks to promote a conducive environment for young people with disabilities to participate, influence and take on leadership in civil society, public and political life is fundamental for the promotion of an active citizenship without barriers.

By bringing together policymakers, experts and youth representatives this side event aims to discuss how we move beyond theoretical rights and toward practical inclusion in order to ensure that democratic arenas are not just open, but actively welcoming, empowering young people with disabilities to be involved, engaged, and equal actors in society.

The side event is organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing in Denmark, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing of the Faroe Islands, the Nordic Council of Ministers and UNICEF.

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Preliminary programme

Moderator's opening remark

- William Korte, Chair of The Danish Association of Youth with Disabilities (SUMH)

Opening remarks from the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers

- TBA, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, Denmark
- Margit Storá, Minister of Social Affairs and Housing, Faroe Islands

Keynote: The right to – and importance of – an active citizenship and participation for young people with disabilities

- Heba Hagrass, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities
- Gopal Mitra, UNICEF's Global Lead on Disability

Examples of promising practices

- Lubna Jaffery, Minister of Culture and Equality, Norway
- Ragnar Þór Ingólfsson, Minister of Social Affairs and Housing, Iceland
- Peter Anomah-Kordieh Kwasi, Executive Director of Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations (GFD)

Panel discussion – what are the barriers and what can be done to enhance, support and promote the active citizenship of young people with disabilities?

- Siri Espe, Head of Public Affairs in Disabled Youth Norway (Unge Funksjonshemmede)
- Nora Sulejmani, Norway's Youth Delegate to the UN and representative of Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU)
- Klara Asklund, Chair of The Swedish National Organization for Young Rheumatics (Unga Reumatiker)
- Ninna Reinert Simonsen, Youth Representative, MEGD (Faroese Disability Organisation)
- Nilshani De Silva, Youth Representative, Sri Lanka

Questions and comments from the audience

Closing remarks

NORDIC COOPERATION ON DISABILITY

The governments of the Nordic countries and organisations representing persons with disabilities cooperate on disability and inclusion issues within the Nordic Council of Ministers. Modern welfare policy, UNCRPD and Agenda 2030 are important corner stones of the cooperation. In 2026, the Nordic cooperation on disability celebrates its 50th anniversary.

