



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Towards inclusive parliaments for persons with disabilities

Online roundtable debate for parliamentarians organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Monday, 16 March 2026

14:00 – 16:00 CET (Geneva time)

BACKGROUND

This roundtable debate will allow parliamentarians to share good practices and real-life examples of how they can take effective action to make their parliaments inclusive for persons with disabilities and ensure that their rights are respected. It will showcase concrete parliamentary initiatives – laws, budget allocations, oversight mechanisms and changes to processes and policies within parliament – that have successfully advanced equality and inclusion, while also drawing on the expertise of United Nations (UN) human rights treaty body members, as well as the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The briefing is intended to be interactive and will be held online in English, with interpretation in French. Interpretation in Arabic, Russian or Spanish can be arranged upon request.

PROGRAMME

Monday, 16 March 2026

14:00

Welcoming remarks by Ms. Fatma Öncü, Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

14:10 – 14:45

Introductory session

This session will highlight how parliaments have become more inclusive and participatory for persons with disabilities with the help of guidance from UN human rights treaty bodies and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. Participants will share practical experiences of passing new laws, changing parliamentary policies, strengthening oversight and shaping budgets to foster inclusivity, and taking action on the rights of persons with disabilities in parliament. The focus will be on what has worked, what obstacles were encountered and how parliamentarians can partner more effectively with UN mechanisms to achieve lasting results.

Moderator: Ms. Paddy Torsney, Head of the IPU Office in New York

Discussants:

- Ms. Mara Gabrilli, Member of the Federal Senate of Brazil, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Ms. Heba Hagrass, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities
- Mr. Julius Moilinga, Member of Parliament from South Sudan

Interactive discussion

14:45 – 15:50

After the introductory session, parliamentarians will be able to make comments and ask questions to the discussants, as well as exchange their own experiences of taking action for making parliaments more inclusive and participatory for persons with disabilities. The discussion will centre on:

- Concrete steps taken in parliament: passing laws to protect, defend and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities, ensuring their implementation, allocating resources, conducting oversight, amending parliamentary procedures, and working with human rights institutions.
- The main challenges faced, the strategies that helped overcome resistance, and opportunities to build stronger engagement with UN treaty bodies for greater impact.
- Identifying practical measures through which the IPU could enhance its support to parliaments in promoting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.
- Lessons learned and tentative strategies for continued engagement in the future.

15:50

Closing remarks by the moderator
