



Socialdepartementet

Inledningstal vid side-event av statssekreterare Madeleine Harby Samuelsson

**Time:** 15 June 08:00 – 09:30 a.m.

**Venue:** Conference room 12, United Nations Headquarters, New York

**Title:** Right to Participation -Accessible online meetings

**Organizer:** The Swedish Disability Federation

**Co-Sponsors:** European Disability Forum, European Union, Thye Permanent Mission of Sweden at the United Nations, The Begripsamgroup, The project Come Together in Sweden, Rwanda and Tanzania.

**Speakers:**

Secretary of State Madeleine Harby Samuelsson The Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Charlotta Göller, Gender Equality Focal Point, Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Mia Larsdotter The Begripsamgroup, Axel Isaksson, Swabia Hassan, Zuberi Sige The project Come Together in Sweden, Rwanda and Tanzania, Mia Ahlgren The Swedish Disability Federation, Pilar Orero, Professor, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, Risnawati Utami, Founder Perhimpunan OHANA Indonesia, Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, Belgium

**Moderator:** Catherine Naughton, Director, European Disability Forum, **Moderator:** Maria Johansson, President Equally Unique.

Thank you for inviting me to open this side event on a very important topic.” Right to Participation -Accessible online meetings”. I am very honoured to have been given the opportunity to make the introduction.

The Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender equality Ms. Åsa Regnér and I are both very pleased that The Swedish Disability Federation has taken the initiative to this side event in order to

elaborate on how accessible online meetings could strengthen the right to accessibility and participation.

As responsible for the co-ordination of disability policies in the Swedish government, I am very eager to listen to all interesting speakers represented here today, chaired by Ms. Catherine Naughton from The European Disability Forum and Ms. Maria Johansson chair for one of our Swedish umbrella organizations Equally Unique. I also of course look forward to take part of the interventions from the floor.

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Let me start by reminding of Article 9 in The Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This article expresses how to enable women, men, girls and boys with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, by improved accessibility.

So what does this mean?

It means that States parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems.

It also means that persons with disabilities, through improved accessibility, shall have the opportunity:

- \* to attend an inclusive education,
- \* to participate in the labour market without discrimination,
- \* to enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others,
- \* and to the full realization of all human rights.

To conclude: Without accessibility; enjoyment of freedom of thought and expression may be seriously undermined and restricted.

Against this background, I am especially proud of the new Swedish legislation on Lack of Reasonable accommodation as a Form of Discrimination,

Today we are going to experience how new technologies can be used to promote participation for women, men, girls and boys with disabilities. But remember, only if they are designed in a way that ensures their accessibility this aim can be fulfilled. New investments,

research and production should contribute to eliminating inequality, not to the creation of new barriers.

Representing the Swedish feminist government I want to underline the importance of a gender perspective in this discussion ensuring the empowerment of women.

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I believe that today's seminar can be a contribution to our efforts to create a more accessible society. I believe in the potential of modern information and communication technology in reaching Sustainable Development Goals for learning, work, health, political participation all over the world. Accessible online meetings can be a tool for fulfilling the purpose of the Convention.

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With this background: What are the measures to make progress towards a more accessible society and more inclusive decision making?

Firstly, the right to accessibility and to participation must, according to my opinion, rest on a solid ground built on a set of human rights based values.

Secondly, We have the tool in our hands – we have the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Now it is our responsibility to implement and carry out the requirements of the Convention.

I wish you a good discussion.