

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2022



IDPD 2022: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Free Webinar / Thursday, December 1st from 2 to 3:30 pm CST.



Presentation by:

Steven Estey, Canadian Expert on the CRPD

Panel Discussion:

Diverse local experts with disabilities will apply the CRPD to Manitoba

Registration & more information: [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca)

IDPD 2022 Webinar – December 1, 2022, from 2:00 to 3:30 pm

For more information, please visit [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca)

Keynote Speaker: Steven Estey, Canadian expert on the CRPD

Panelists: Diane Driedger, Justine Kiwanuka, Mary Lavigne, Carrie Pacey

[Webinar Starts]

Darren Macdonald: All right. Great! Well, we'll mute and let everyone in. I see people are joining us. It might take a few minutes for everyone to join us, so welcome today. It is nice to see the numbers rolling in! Great! Thanks for joining us, everyone.

We'll get started in just a couple of minutes as soon as everyone has had a chance to log in. There are still more joining, which is great to see. So give it another couple of minutes.

Nice to see so many people joining. We'll just give it another moment as people are logging in. If you're like me. Zoom never seems to work smoothly the first time. So it takes a couple of clicks and leaving and coming back in. But it looks like many have joined already so great to see.

We do have a fairly full agenda, so I'll just give it another couple of seconds for a few more to join, and then the rest can join us when they can.

So first the voice you're hearing. I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Darren MacDonald and I'm the executive Director of the Manitoba Accessibility Office. And I'm really pleased to welcome everyone here today to our webinar celebrating international day of persons with disabilities. It was definitely an interesting day, filled with fire alarms and video recordings that didn't work and re-recording and editing videos. And you know, I'm probably not supposed to say these things, because I'm sure everything now will run smoothly, but in case it doesn't. In case we run into any technical issues, please bear with us, and if the technical issues are on your side, you know it's good to maybe leave and come back in. You're also welcome to email us if you're having difficulty at mao@gov.mb.ca

So that's our office and we'll try and work through those issues. So today you'll see on your screen. We'll be discussing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities. And we're asking our panelists to talk about what the convention means to them, and how it impacts their day to day lives.

So we have a few 100 people registered today, which is great to see. I see more just joining as we're talking, which is good and we have a very packed agenda. So we have guest speakers, panelists on our guests. So before we get to today's agenda, a couple of housekeeping items.

If you're new to zoom there's a few things you may want to do. You will notice you're muted. Everybody is automatically. The microphones were turned off when you join the room, and that helps just keep the background noise down.

We may or may not have time for questions and comments. If we do, we can unmute you. But we encourage you throughout the Webinar to use the chat feature. If you are able to send in questions or comments.

Or again, you can always email our office. That's the Manitoba Accessibility Office at mao@gov.mb.ca and we'll answer those questions. So any questions that do come in today via chat or via email, we will respond to that individual. We'll also post questions and answers on our website after the fact.

So as I say, if there is a chance for live questions during the panelists or after the panelists discussion, we can unmute you on our end. So as some of the accessibility features in zoom for closed captioning, you'll see at the bottom on your page there should be a live transcript button. So if you click on that and there's a button that says, show subtitle. That's your best option for getting the close captioning on.

So please do that if you like. And if you would like to view the asl interpreter at all times you can PIN them as well. Then that way when co-hosts or presenters, or panelists are speaking, you know we will spotlight the interpreter during that during that time. So

I should also mention Today's Webinar is being recorded, and will be available on our website in the next week, or so. And we'll post the pre-recorded video of our keynote speaker there as well as well as that question and answer.

So without further ado. Before we get into the agenda for today, and the official start of the webinar. It's my privilege to introduce Elder Parry Francois, who is a cultural advisor from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to give the opening invocation. Welcome, Parry!

Parry Francois: Welcome, Good afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon. Thank you. I appreciate the invitation. I am very grateful to be able to do the opening vacation for everybody. And I hope that everybody will have a very good discussion and very good conversation, and I will pray in my own language that you know that's how I like doing.

But I hopefully, everybody else. We'll pray in our own ways and our heart and mind, and we genuinely serious about what we're going to be doing, and how we're going to go about going through all these stuff. Now go away in a positive way.

Darren Macdonald: Great. Thank you. Mr. Fine. So for sharing your guidance and wisdom with us. this is sort of a new process for our office, so we also appreciate your teachings and direction on how to how to incorporate the blessing in the beginning. So thank you for your prayer and those words.

Now if we could switch to the next slide, we'll take a quick look at the agenda. As I said, it's fairly ambitious we're still on time, which is good to see, since we're so early in the in the in the process here.

So next up we will hear from our deputy minister. We will do a quick moment of silence for some disability leaders who have passed away in the last year. We have a keynote presentation by Steven s day, which, which we did manage to get recorded.

So it it's great I can, I can vouch. And then we've got a panel discussion where we'll hear from a number of folks, and then we'll. We'll round out just with some closing remarks for myself. So thank you. Everyone for joining us next. I would like to welcome Michelle Dubik to bring greetings on behalf of government.

Michelle is the deputy minister for families, as I mentioned, and she has the distinction of being the direct the official director under Manitoba's Accessibility, legislation, and certainly accessibility and inclusion are topics that I know are near and dear to her heart. So Welcome, Michelle.

Michelle Dubik: okay, the unmute button works. Thank you. Thank you, Darren for the opening comments and I'd like to acknowledge. Elder, I don't

know if he's left us but for starting us off with a prayer in a good way. It's a nice way to start a meeting.

I'm. Thrilled to be here on behalf of the province, and to bring greetings to this Webinar that's being held in celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

I'd like to start with the land acknowledgment. I didn't acknowledge that I'm here in Winnipeg, 1 one territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Cree, the Ojibway Cree, the Dakota, the Denny people that we acknowledged part of Manitoba is located on the homeland of the Red River, Metis. And that we acknowledged Northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are, the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We remain committed in working in partnership with indigenous people in the spirit of truth and reconciliation and collaboration in accordance with their constitutional and human rights.

On this day Manitoba joins people across the world in promoting the rights and the well-being of persons with disabilities. I wish to welcome the many Manitoban champions of accessibility, including individuals with disabilities from across Manitoba businesses not for profit organizations and individuals from the public sector

In 1992. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the annual observance of December 3rd as the international day of disabled persons. The goal is to promote an understanding of disability, issues, and to mobilize supports for the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Well, Manitoba has celebrated the international day of persons with disabilities for over a decade. Now this year the province is officially proclaimed in perpetuity.

Since 2,020. When Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, the Manitoba Accessibility Office has organized learning events, using the convention as a framework to discuss the rights and integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of social, political, economic, and cultural life.

The Convention builds on the Universal Declaration of Human rights by affirming that persons with every type of disability must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Convention goes on to clarify what measures must be taken, so that persons with disabilities can effectively exercise these rights.

During Today's Webinar, United Nations disability rights expert Steven Estey will explain the significance of the convention to the 185 signatory countries around the world including Canada.

Following this overview, a panel discussion with Manitobans with disabilities will help us all understand the relevance right here at home.

I have an example of how the Convention helped influence Manitoba's Legislature back in 2013, when there was a unanimous support for the establishment of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Like the UN Conventions Article 9 on accessibility, Manitoba's law also considers accessibility from a broad range of perspectives.

The accessibility standards not only guide access to the built environment and transportation, but also consider different ways people communicate, and how they access and remember information. In addition, our law set standards to ensure access to employment and customer service.

Management of businesses, and community partners have embraced accessibility. The strong response this year to the Manitoba Accessibility Fund demonstrates the desire to go beyond minimum standards and provide new opportunities for Manitobans with disability, whether that is in the arts, learning, employment, or in community engagement.

The recipients of the Accessibility Fund will share their tools or examples of leadership in accessibility for broader benefit of Manitobans. We hope the audience of today's Webinar will consider applying for project funds in upcoming accessibility fund applications.

Before closing on this international day of persons with disabilities, I wish to acknowledge the considerable skill and leadership that was recently lost. With the passing of Jim Derksen, Dave Martin, and Len Mitchell. All heroes of the disability community who were instrumental, ensuring disability rights in Manitoba and Canada internationally.

And I wish to thank Steven Este and our panelists for sharing with us their knowledge and commitment to human rights. A special thanks also goes to the audience for taking time from your busy day to join us online. I wish you all continued good health as we enter this holiday.

Darren Macdonald: Great, Thank you, Michelle. And you know, as you heard Michelle mentioned. Jim Derksen, Dave Martin, and Len Mitchell so the 3 had wide-ranging interests and talents and what they had in common was their leadership and lifelong commitment to disability, rights, and inclusion.

And Staff felt here that it was very important to just take a minute to, reflect, and to acknowledge these 3 individuals. I had the pleasure of meeting Jim and Dave. I can't say I know them well, but I certainly you. You could spot Jim Derksen at folk fest every year, and certainly all of them will be missed.

So first up just a little bit to say about Jim Derksen. Jim helped develop a number of disability organizations, including the Manitoba League for physically handicapped. The coalition of Provincial organizations for the handicapped. The Canadian Disability Rights Council and Disability Peoples International

Jim's leadership was particularly significant in convincing Canada to include disability as a protected characteristic In Section 15 equality rights of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Jim was the first executive director of the Disability Issues Office, later renamed Manitoba Accessibility Office, and upon retirement from Government, served on the Accessibility Advisory Council In 2,009. The University of Manitoba recognized Jim's many contributions with an honorary doctorate of law.

Next, I'd like to say a few words about Dave Martin. He was the second executive director here at the Manitoba Accessibility Office where he worked until his retirement in 2,021.

Dave began his career as the provincial coordinator of the Manitoba League of Persons with disabilities, and later became the executive director of 1010, Sinclair housing where he promoted and facilitated community living.

Dave was both an advocate for and a testament to, the success of employment and self-managed care for people with complex disabilities.

Dave's colleagues here would also like to acknowledge his deep fulfillment as Yolanda's loving husband and next Len Mitchell

Len worked at the Manitoba school for the deaf for 25 years, until he retired in 2,017. During that time he was a trailblazer in Manitoba's deaf community in Canada, and internationally.

He was the president of the Canadian Association of the deaf. 1,988 to 1,991, and served on the executive of a number of boards, including the Alberta Association for the Deaf, the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf and the World Deaf Federation.

So please. If you if you don't mind, we'll just take a moment of silenced pay tribute to these 3 champions of accessibility and inclusion.

All right, Thank you. Can we move to slide 4?

Happy to move on to our keynote, speaker, and a seam guest today is Stephen Estey

Steven has worked with disabled people's, organizations, human rights, institutions, governments, intergovernmental organizations, and United Nations agencies to advance disability rights for more than 30 years 150.

Stephen is a leading Canadian expert in matters related to the UN. Convention on the Rights for persons with disabilities. Stephen is late, deafened. I now turn it over to Stephen, who has pre-recorded a presentation for you.

Steve Estey: Hi! My name is Steve Estey and I live in Halifax. I've been asked to talk a bit about the UN Convention on the right people with disabilities. So I'm going to do that for the next 15 or so minutes.

I've worked in and around the Convention for 20 years, and its part of the work that I've done as a volunteer with the Council of Canadians with disabilities. Which is based in Winnipeg, probably an organization which many of you people know.

I started volunteering with CCD. Oh, my goodness, maybe 30 years ago and was involved with the International Committee there for a long time. That led to my involvement with the work to draft the UN CRDB. Or the Convention on the Rights of people with disabilities.

That started actually, I think, 21 years ago tomorrow. The Government of Mexico moved to motion at the Durban South Africa Anti-racism Conference to struck a committee to consider drafting a convention on the Rights of people with disabilities. And that went forward you, but based upon work that has been done with other groups of people in the UN system.

You have conventions for the rights of children, conventions for the elimination of discrimination against women. There are conventions around economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights. And there's a racism convention.

So there were 6 UN human Rights Convention, and you and the International Disability community worked for many years, to advance a process to set up a convention on the right to people with disabilities. That actually found some traction after the meeting in Durban.

And from the meeting in Durban it was agreed to go forward. The General Assembly agreed to strike a committee, and that committee met for the first time in this summer of 2002. And in my capacity as a volunteer with CCD. I participated in that meeting and it was an extremely interesting thing.

Because you had this big UN process going on, and I of course in those days really had no idea what I was getting myself into. But I went to the meeting in New York and then it was essentially a discussion about whether we will have a convention, or whether we won't have a convention.

Long story short. A year later they set up a working group to do a first draft of the convention. I was at the time volunteering for CCD. But I was also staff person that disabled People's International, which was also headquartered in Winnipeg. So Winnipeg is a pretty big part of this whole process. It's interesting, you know.

In any case, that working group met in January of 2004, for 2 weeks at the UN in New York City. And we came up with the first draft of the UN Convention. And from that countries came back to New York. Probably 4 or 5 times to do improvement on the draft. Over the course of 2004, 2005, 2006, we would meet in New York for 2 weeks at a time. And delegations from all around the world would come, and we would agreed to advance the text of the Convention.

So at the end of the day. Which was in 2006, we had the final draft of the UNCRPD and what the Convention on the Rights of people with disability does is it talks about the full range of human rights, economic, social, and political rights, civil and political rights. And by that I mean that's just kind of jargonistic, I realize. But I mean basically what we're talking about is the right to education, the right to health, the right to life all of the basic human rights that everyone is entitled to.

But what the CRPD does or the convention does is it talks about how you make that right, real for disabled people. So as an example did you talk about your right to education. Well sure, everybody's got the right to education. But what does that really mean?

And what we did is we talked about the appropriate support for people with disabilities, access to information by sign language, by braille, by all of these things and the convention details, these sorts of things and sets up standards that countries need to meet.

So that basically is what the convention is, and I think a lot of people sort of look at it and go oh, that's just another UN document. It doesn't really mean anything. Because there's no way to enforce it. You cannot go to court and say the UN Convention gives me the right to education, and I'm not getting brail in my grade 9 geography class.

But what it does to it sets up the standards around accessible information for education or accessible health care or whatever these things are and

going from that. When you have a UN convention, countries that are connected to the convention through ratification of them need to report on how they are. How they're meeting their obligations.

So it sets up a rotational reporting approach, and every 4 years you have to report on how you're doing around the convention. So can they ratify the CRPD in 2010 and in 2014. We did our first report and it's interesting to me, at least because it's a twin frog process. You have a government report and those government reports are things that maybe many of you folks have been involved with, I don't know. But it moderated through or mediated through the Department of Heritage here in Ottawa, where I am today.

And the Department of Heritage coordinates between all of the Federal Government departments that are relevant to the implementation of the Convention and all of the provincial jurisdictions. So the Heritage Department coordinates between the 13 or 14 different jurisdictions across the country to get a report together to say how we're doing about, meeting our obligations under the Convention. And that's a very interesting and cumbersome process for those of you who work within the provincial government in Manitoba, or wherever. You'll be aware, probably, of just how much energy goes into this.

And I think it's a very useful thing to focus the attention of governments on the realization of rights for people with disability. But from my side, from the NGO side the civil society side. We also are able to file a report called a parallel report or a shadow report. And not to be glib about it. But the way that I always describe this is that the Government reports between the Federal Government and the Provincial Territorial Governments. They tell the truth, here in Canada there are no lies that are being put forward. But they tell kind of the best truth.

They point to good examples of how we're meeting our obligations under education or health, or whatever, and that's useful information and important. But it's not really the whole truth. So it is like, you know. You see, on TV, when people get a court and the and to swear an oath and say, Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing by the truth? I like to think of the parallel reports are where you get the whole truth.

Talk about the kind of places where we're not doing so well on things. And that sets up a thing called the interactive dialogue. So I've traveled to Geneva many times with NGO people and Government people to talk about our reports under the CRPD. And you do these, and you meet with the committee of Experts. And that experts committee is comprised of 18 people from around the world who know the Convention very well.

Canada has just appointed an individual, or I had someone elected to this committee. She's Dr. Laverne Jacobs, who's a law professor at the University of Windsor, and she's a human rights expert. And the people like Dr. Jacobs from around the world comprise this committee. And they talk with NGOS and with governments about how they're doing in terms of realization of their rights.

And from that discussion, or you know the UN jargon that they call it the interactive dialogue. You and I might call it a chat. It's all the same thing. But the point is that you have this discussion between the government and the people, who drafted the Government report, and disabled people from across the country in front of the CRPD Committee, and then, of course, you meet privately with the committee as well.

We have a person who's what's called the rapporteur responsible for the Canadian Report. A Professor from the Law School that the University of Sydney named Rosemary K S and Rosemary is responsible to oversee the Canadian report. She's someone with whom I've worked for a couple of decades. She's a real expert in the C. RPD. We've talked for many hours about the realization of rights for people with disabilities in Canada.

And from the discussion the committee writes a report. They call it again in UN speak concluding observations. And those concluding observation are basically a series of recommendations coming from the Government report and the civil society report, as to how to advance things for a situation of people with disabilities on the ground in Canada.

And I'll close with this, and say that after our reporting process in 2015/2016. There were a couple of big things that happened. I mean there's a lot of minutia. The stuff is available on line. You can see it easily if you want to read it. But the big take a ways from the 2016 projects were first of all. That Canada had not signed a document called the Optional Protocol.

And what that optional protocol is a thing that allows individual to file complaints to the UN. If they feel that, their individual rights are being violated. So the committee talked about the fact that it was important for Canada to consider signing the optional protocol. And as a name can note. It is an optional thing. So you can ratify the convention without signing the protocol, and that's what Canada had done.

But the committee said, You really ought to reconsider this, and in 2018, I think. Canada did ratify the option on protocol. And that gives us a significant opportunity to file the individual complaints. We're actually looking at doing that in the context of medical assistance in dying right now here in Canada. And I've been in discussions with people in the UN system, the Committee, and with the special rapporteur, about the legislation that's going on in Canada are MAID.

So you know it's all useful because it allows you, or allows us to talk to people outside of the Canadian Government about things that are going on that are important. And the UN has actually written to the Prime Minister expressing concern about medical assistance in dying, and there's some ongoing discussions about that. So all of this to say that while in a lot of ways it's kind of nebulous and fuzzy around these UN conventions.

There are things, I think, that are useful and over time. I think that you see an advance of rights for people with disabilities. I remember years ago, talking with the human rights lawyer from global affairs Canada. And he compared UN Human Rights Treaty to Glaciers. And I thought that was an interesting kind of Canadian analogy. What he said was Glaciers retreat. But they do so, so slowly that you can't see it.

But if you look at the topography of a land where there was a glacier 30 40 years later. The glacier is gone and a whole landscape has emerged, and I think that that's a nice image in terms of trying to understand what human right conventions are like. And how I've seen over the 20 years I've been involved the nature of the discourse around disability and human rights really change by the convention.

And I think we're going to see it continue to change. At least, that's my hope. So let me leave it at that. I hope you found that to me somewhat useful, and I'm awfully sorry not to be able to be with you this afternoon.

But I'm here in Ottawa for meetings, and I wasn't able to join in person. So let's leave it at that. Take care, Bye, bye.

Darren Macdonald: I'd like to stay thanks Stephen, for his willingness to present with us today. I can tell you it wasn't easy because of his schedule. He I did have the pleasure to meet earlier in the week. And you know, it seems like in the morning he'd be in Montreal, and then the afternoon in Ottawa, and then Halifax. He's a very busy person, and gets around.

I appreciate his you know his comments. They're very thoughtful and educational, and certainly I think things like UN conventions and protocols. One can be a bit nebulous. They can be a bit fuzzy. So that's why we thought it would be great to segue into a panel discussion. And bring this a bit more local and a bit more concrete.

So before we invite our panelists to discuss. I will just mention, if some of you may have noticed, if you had a really keen observation skills. That there was a brief edit in Stevens video, and I just want to assure people we didn't it out any content. It was that his partner walked in while he was recording it. So it was just sort of a funny moment while he was recording, so we edited that bit out.

But without further ado. I would like to introduce you to Frick, who we coaxed back from retirement. Many of you will know her as the executive director of the Manitoba Accessibility office. And we were able to coax her back from retirement to help us with. today's webinar. I'm going to turn it over to you to talk about the panelists and the next bit of our agenda in the panel discussion.

I'm not seeing you to pinned yet. So maybe you're muted. I'm not sure. Also just a note for our encore technician. I have been advised that the chat function isn't on. So I don't know if there's a way to activate the chat function. But if you do have questions we will try to answer those questions. Assuming we can get them in through Chat.

And if not again, I just want to give the opportunity that you're always welcome to email our office, the Manitoba Accessibility Office email addresses MAO@gov.mb.ca So again, anyone wanting to send in questions or comments.

We're still waiting. It looks like for Yuta to rejoin. Just trying to see. I don't see her on my screen. So again we're very lucky to have panelists here today, and we were going to have each panelists introduced themselves, so we can get to get on to the introductions and have each panelists speak to an article in the UN Convention. And again take it from that nebulous and fuzzy place to be a bit more concrete.

So our panel today we have 4 very diverse members, and we're very thankful to have you here. If I could maybe, ask you to introduce yourselves. Diane, we will start with you because I saw you first.

Diane Driedger: Hi, I'm Diane Driedger. I am a assistant professor in the interdisciplinary Masters program in disability studies at the at the University of Manitoba. And I have been involved in disability rights in Manitoba, in Canada, and internationally for over 40 years. And I have been part of the whole cradle of Winnipeg. We are the cradle of disability rights really in the world, and it's been such a privilege to be part of that.

Darren Macdonald: Great thanks, Diane. I see Yuta's back on the call, which is great. We just started introductions, but I will hand it over to you to introduce yourself and lead off the panel discussion before we introduce the others. So far, only Diane has been introduced.

Yutta Fricke: Wouldn't you know it, this is a day of technological crises. Welcome panelists, and it's my pleasure to be in involved with this panel this year. I wanted to bridge a little bit the discussion that I think Diane might have started in on. And that is that as Steven Estey mentioned how important Winnipeg is.

And to several of the panelists today, including Diane and Justina and myself. We were all a part of disabled People's International when it was here in Winnipeg, right at the beginning with Diane in in 1980, and a little bit later for Justine and me.

But we witnessed first hand how important global action is, and how important our own participation as Canadians is to our community of people

with disabilities around the world. I think nowadays, because of climate crisis, we are well aware of the importance of global community.

And so on this international day of persons with disabilities. I want to highlight as well that the convention. It is very important both here in Winnipeg, but also around the world, and it ties us to community and set standards for all of us to follow. So I wanted to highlight that, and I actually wanted to invite Diane to speak just a little bit about that.

Because she gave such, I don't know exciting comments on our practice run. So I know you've introduced yourself. Diane, if you want to mention a little bit about the importance of the convention from your perspective. And then the format of this panel that I will begin with Diane. The convention actually has 48 articles. 32 of the articles are action oriented, Steven mentioned just a few.

I asked the panelists in advance to choose from. Among those 32 articles, an article that really speaks to them and the conditions of their life. So I'm honored, and I think we all are that you're willing to share your personal stories and to tell us how a document like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities can have meaning for an individual's life.

So Diane beginning with you. if you wouldn't mind telling us a little bit about why, the convention is important to you, and which article you've chosen. Thanks, Diane.

Diane Driedger: Hi, thanks. Yes, you know the UN Convention is really the Magna Carta of the Disability Rights movement, as I have seen it unfold over the last 40 years. And we folks from Winnipeg have been part of this all of this time, and in fact, Henry Ends, who was the first chair of Disabled People's International, who has passed. He passed in 2002. Was working on the forerunner of the UN Convention.

So he was invited by our Canadian Government to go to the UN. And start drafting what was known as the world program of action for disabled persons, in the eighties. And Henry did a lot of that spade work in the eighties and the nineties. To make it up to the point where Steve Estey, has joined us today right. That this has been, how it has carried on and morphed into a convention.

And this convention was written with not only governments, but also people with disabilities in partnership from all over the world. And this is why I mentioned it so, Magna Carta, because it has everything that we have been talking about as people with disabilities for the last 40 years enshrined in it.

And for me, the most important article that I picked is article 27 work and employment. And the reason why this is important to me is because I acquired disability. Just over 30 years ago I started as an ally to people with disabilities, and I acquired disability myself later on. And I found out that my working and employment to opportunities were affected by disability.

In fact, I found as a person who has fibromyalgia, which gives me a lot of fatigue and whole body pain that I needed to work at home at least part of the time. And in the early 2000's I started going to job interviews and saying that as one of my accommodations. And, in fact, one of our non-profit agencies, very well known here in Winnipeg.

Who works in the area of human rights hired me to do a project in 2002. and then, when they found out that I asked, was asking to work part time at home, we're talking 2 days a week. I was told, No you are not part of the team then, and therefore we are not hiring you.

Oh, we have to go look for someone else now, because you won't come to the office to be part of a team. So at the time I considered a human rights complaint. Of course we have that mechanism. However, I was offered a much better job a week later.

And so I took that and went on working with people with disabilities in Nunavut through the University of Manitoba. So now we've gone through Covid. Hey, what have we all been doing? Working from home? Everyone finds out it works pretty well. We like it. We get lots more done, and you know what this is. The accommodation that's needed for a lot of people with disabilities like myself.

Fortunately, I mean I have not had a problem with that where I teach at University of Manitoba, I have had this option for the last 10 years. And so I know how working at home makes you productive. And it also for me means that I can work lying down at home. I can you know, talk on the

phone. I can work on the computer. I can rest when I need to, because you know most offices don't have couches.

Although I did try an experiment when I was the provincial coordinator of the Manitoba League of Persons with disabilities In 2010 to 2013. I did put couch in my office because I was the person in charge now, right. And I did lie down in my office and work at various times as well as working at home. That wasn't a problem. Folks would come in and say, Wow! I wish I had a couch in my office. This looks so welcoming and cozy, and then we would sit on the couch and have a meeting. No one was behind a desk or uncomfortable.

So my point being here is, you know what accommodations for people with disabilities work for everybody. In fact, it works better. It's better for society. And now we are confronting this whole issue of will people return to work full time. Well we have a hybrid model. Now, it appears there are still some employers who will not their employees work anytime from home.

There are other employers that are doing a hybrid thing, you know, if you come to the office a few days and work at home a few days, that's good. And I know of other folks who are just working almost completely at home. So the question is, can we, as society now move forward and accommodate people, and you know it's not always disability.

There are a lot of young moms, for instance who could work quite well at home with their young children there. There are people who are caring for aging relatives who really don't want to leave the house and leave their mom or dad alone. And so it can work for all of us. And so, you know, as I watched this unfold during Covid, I kind of chortled, as people said, hey we do so much more.

And I'm so happy that this is one of the things that we are now talking about. I'm not saying I'm happy for Covid. But you know this is something that's made a big difference for people with disabilities like myself. And not only that for women. Now, Article 6 is the women's article, and I know that other panelists will speak more about that.

But I just want to say that it's mostly women who have disabilities that have fatigue and chronic pain. For whatever reason. And so, therefore, this is an issue of women with disabilities. The need to have a reasonable

combination of working from home, having flexible hours, flexible ways of working. Thanks so much.

Yutta Fricke: thanks, Diane. Thanks for starting us off, and also you showing with your last comment that there's often an overlap among the articles. As there is in our identities right? And I think that that one wonderful thing about the panel this afternoon is that each individual has a rich, unique experience in in terms of their roots, that has nothing to do with disability, but also has an impact on their lives.

So I'm happy if panelists want to raise any of those issues, and the other thing about employment. That I think, those familiar with the accessibility for Manitobans Act will appreciate is that it goes a step further. So already during Deputy Minister Michelle Dubik's comments. We heard about how the accessibility for Manitobans Act was influenced by the Convention. In fact, the preamble talks about the convention. The content of the articles is also quite similar, and resembles the same, and gives more content about well, how do you achieve that.

And from the points made by Diane, I think something really important is that the expertise lies with the person with a disability. So where a conversation starts hopefully between the supervisor and the person with the disability to find out what arrangements can work, because that's certainly true of invisible disabilities. But also visible disabilities. What works for one person does not necessarily work for another, so that that conversation is so important.

Our second panelists this afternoon, which we will bring another perspective. is Mary Lavigne. And Mary if you don't mind I'll ask you to introduce yourself, and then tell us about the article that spoke to you. Thanks, Mary.

Mary Lavigne: Hi! I am Mary Levine. I am Metis born and raised in Winnipeg, the birthplace of the Metis nation.

Since 2019 I have volunteered as a citizen member of the Human Rights Committee of Council for the city of Winnipeg. The committee serves as an

advisory body to the Mayor and the City Council on Human Rights, Equity, Diversity, Peace, Access, and disability related issues and emerging trends as they affect Winnipeg.

I view these issues through my intersectional lenses as a Winnipegger, as a woman, as a Manitoba Metis citizen, and as a person with disabilities. Winnipeg is striving to be a leader in the promotion, protection, and education of human rights. Our world-class human rights infrastructure includes our Canadian Museum for human rights, the strong academic programs of our universities, like the work that Diane does. And the many groups and organizations doing the community-based human rights work. They all will help lead us into the future, a future of hope, peace, and diversity. And I would like to share some of my lived experience in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities article 9 accessibility.

So when many of us think of accessibility, it's likely that the physical environment comes to mind, ramps, elevators, washrooms. And yes, the Human Rights Committee of Council does work to ensure the city of Winnipeg conducts the review of all its projects and services, through that universal design lens.

But there are other accessibility considerations. So, for example, in July the Human Rights Committee of Council recommended that Winnipeg begin phasing out the traditional 1960's accessibility Icon. The one of the person sitting still in a wheelchair, to remove it from the city of Winnipeg communications and properties, and replace it with the new 2010 accessibility Icon. Which is much more representative of the diversity within the disability community as it depicts a person in a wheelchair actively moving forward. That motion was unanimously approved by the Executive Policy Committee this fall and changes are underway.

That Article 9 of the UN Convention includes enabling persons with disabilities to live independently, and participate fully in all aspects of life. To ensure persons with disabilities access on an equal basis with others, to not just the physical environment and transportation, but also information and communication.

Including information and communication technology and systems.

So as a person who requires assistive technology to be successful in my workplace and as a university student. This affects me on a day to day basis. So, for example, again, a COVID-19 pandemic example during covid, University courses were held virtually. And to ensure fairness and integrity for tests and exams, the University implemented a procedure requiring students to use a lockdown browser software during online tests and exams. To ensure students could not have other programs open to Google the right answer or have their electronic textbook open, or to have their cheat notes open on their desktop.

So I appreciate the intent of the process. However, my reality was that that lockdown browser also prevented my assistive technology from working, and I was unable to complete my tests in this manner. It's crucial to consider accessibility and potential barriers to persons with possibilities. When you're making changes to your procedures or you're implementing new software.

So, as you may be aware, we touched on it earlier. The Manitoba Accessibility Standard for information and communications has been created and will be implemented. Starting with the Manitoba Government, this may. So all organizations. Not just government will need to consider the ways in which Manitobans like me, interact with or access information. They provide and to develop measures, policies and practices to provide barrier-free information and communication.

So in the end, during Covid Lockdown. I had to prove to the University that my assistive technology was not compatible with their new process to be granted an accommodation to write my tests and exams.

Now finally, I'm completing my last course, this semester. I am doing it through distance education online, and then I will earn my degree. But yet again, this September I had to prove myself to receive the same accommodation for my tests and exams. Which is not exactly in keeping with me having communication access on an equal basis with others.

We can do better and we need to do better to be a truly world-class when it comes to human rights. Ensuring accessibility for all will help us achieve that future with more hope, and peace and diversity. Merci.

Yutta Fricke: Thank you, Mary, and thank you for these comments. I'd tie right back to our own accessibility legislation as well, and our reminders possibly listeners on the line right now. About how we can do better. And it's just for those listeners we have Mary's email and I'm sure if you're working in an educational institution, and want to make sure that this doesn't happen continually, that that Mary will provide her advice. Or we can try and figure something out together.

Also at this time I want to read the article 9 on Accessibility, just to show how close our legislation and what Mary was talking about, and Diane fits in with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. So, the article, accessibility has the purpose to enable people with disabilities, to live independently, and to participate fully in all aspects of life. And therefore the State parties will take measures to ensure people with disabilities have access on an equal basis with others to the physical environment. Transportation information communications, including technologies and systems and facilities open to the public.

So there you can hear the same tone as we have in Manitoba in our legislation.

The next panelist that I would like to introduce is Carrie Pacey. Again I will ask Carrie if she could introduce herself, and then tell us about the article that that she chose to discuss this afternoon. Thank you, Kerry.

Carrie Pacey: My name is Carrie Pacey and I am from Esquimalt First Nation. I have only been a status-registered status Indian since 2019. Which is part of my story. I don't have a background in human Rights and United Nations, and everybody else has a lot more information than I do. I'm just here to tell a personal story. When I got my status it was because the laws. Oh, sorry I want to first thank the organizers for changing the wording from indigenous woman with a disability to women of settler, immigrant, metis and indigenous roots.

That was really important to me, because I don't just identify as an indigenous person. I feel like I'm straddling both sides of the treaty. I was brought up very much the same as most mainstream people, without knowing about my indigenous roots. And that's important to share, because

my perspective is changing as I get to know more and more about my indigenous roots.

The article that I wanted to speak to is about law and justice. Because in 2019, when I did get my registered status, that's a legal designation. I was also added to my band membership and that is something that was decided by the Federal Government.

If you were registered as an Indian legally, you were also added to band membership. I don't actually feel that I've earned the right to be a member of my band. I think that I have a long way to come, because I still have very much mainstream culture in how I think but that's starting to change.

The reason I picked the law and justice because of the history that the Indian Act has. How the law has been used to marginalize indigenous people. The over representation of people who are incarcerated, women institutionalized, and children in care.

It just, you know. It hurts my heart to look at those numbers. It really does. The law does not work for indigenous people. You can see it in the numbers. You can see it in the statistics. Indigenous people have been greatly harmed by the law and it continues today. I know that part way through the pandemic my high school, a lot of my high school colleagues or classmates started to write about a conspiracy in reference to another country on how this pandemic started.

And I couldn't even respond. All I could think about was the conspiracy within our own country that we have created to marginalize indigenous people. Canadians are just starting to hear about residential schools. And that's only the beginning. It impacts a lot of people because you think about children but there were a lot of other laws.

And the law let me regain my status that was 142 years overdue. My grandparent was a woman. And therefore our ancestral status was taken away. If my grandparent had been a male, that wouldn't have happened. So for a 142 years I waited to get my connection, and unfortunately I'm too far away from my band. I'm not in the same locale.

I'm an Internet indigenous person, because everything I learn about my culture. And my language is through the Internet. And so slowly I'm learning about the laws and about different ways that indigenous people

think. And it is a way of thinking that makes the separation. When you talk about law. When I was first asked to choose an article

I went to find about the law, and really the law in the United Nations is about empirical law. There is also aboriginal law in Canada, which is the law that I talked about with the Indian Act that has marginalized people, and you know, push it caused so much over representation in institutions, and in and in child care.

Sorry I didn't prepare my speech. I just want. I just wanted you to know my true feelings, and so I probably should have practiced it a little bit, because very, very emotional for me. Indigenous law is something that is so foreign to the way that we think the way that our society acts. Today I opened up restorative justice, because I thought if I lost my emotion I would be able to turn to this one piece and try to explain a little bit more.

So while I try to get my emotions back under control. Restorative justice is based on an understanding. Sorry it, restorative justice encourages meaningful engagement and accountability, and provides an opportunity for healing reparation and reintegration.

That one sentence, and below it uses processes, including conferences, dialogue, and circles, and is guided by skilled facilitators. Those 2 things mean more to me than the rest of the restorative Justice, because restorative justice requires a crime to be acted on.

So, I wanted to take away and talk about my son got into a situation a couple of years ago on Halloween. Where some 12, 13, and 14 year olds. So very young kids had pushed on a gate on Halloween. They were out hanging around, and they shouldn't have touched somebody else's property, but they didn't see any harm.

When the owner saw them on his security camera he got a little anxious that he had been robbed in the past, and had vandalism on his property in the past. And so, you know, he was a little anxious, as you can understand. He took the video of these 12, 13 and 14 year olds and posted it on social media to try to identify who they were.

Immediately as parents. We all got upset that our children were being posted on social media for touching the gate. The RCMP got involved. The property owners, tried to get more action to be done about this while they

were trying to figure out who the children were. In the meantime the parents are upset and the RCMP talk to the parents. The parents are already in a in a in a mode where they're not as cooperative if they would have been if the kids pictures hadn't been posted. Anyway, I'm making this long this long story, I'll try to make it shorter.

So restorative Justice was brought into the fold and in order to participate in restorative justice. The children had to be charged I don't understand why. That would be because my understanding of indigenous law is not just for criminals, not just for victims of crimes. It's for the whole community.

In the end I was in I was able to speak to the RCMP and the homeowner wanted to know that the children understood that what they did was wrong. That they disrespected his property. They didn't break anything they didn't do any damage, but in order for him to be heard, he had to go to the step where he was willing to charge them.

Once I talked to the RCMP, and you know, tried to get them to understand that you know we weren't looking for restorative justice. We were looking for just a conversation and so we separately have the children all right. An apology to the homeowner and he accepted it, and it was done. There was no crime that needed to be reported. It could have easily been handled if we just had a forum to communicate, to have this meaningful engagement without actually a crime.

And I think that that speaks a lot to human rights. When people think of human rights they think about the law, and if you infringe on my human rights. I have every opportunity to go to court and fight it. But wouldn't it be so much nicer if you could have the conversation without thinking about the law first.

So I don't know how much time I've been taking, but I've calm myself down a little bit so my first part of my employment story.

Yutta Fricke: You know, Kerry. I'm goanna just to make sure that that Justine gets a chance. But you raise really important things about access to justice for one, that whereas the UN Convention focuses in very much on people with disabilities. And the first point of departure to access to justice would be that there is accessibility. Which I know in many cases there is

not, but it also speaks to interpretation, that is intersectional. That understands what access to justice looks like may be very different in one population from another.

And if we simply think that, this person belongs in a box that says people with disabilities, we will forget and neglect other areas of that person's life. So your story was a very good reflection of that intersectionality. So thank you, Kerry. And we're doing pretty well with time, so we may have a chance to go back and discuss more stories.

But for now I want to welcome Justine Kiwanuka, and old and dear friend of mine, dating back to Disabled People's International, who has a very unique story as well about how the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities affects her life, or one particular article. Justine, if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself and telling us about the article that you choose.

Justine Kiwanuka: Good afternoon everybody and I'm honored to be part of the panel and the opportunity to celebrate the international day on persons with disabilities. My name is Justine. I was born and raised in Uganda. I moved to Canada many years ago, over 30 years ago.

I was torn when I was asked to be on the panel. I was torn into looking into on 2 articles one on the Liberty of movement and nationality which is Article 18. Being a woman from Uganda with disabilities that came to Canada as a refugee, definitely, this impacts me.

This article states that countries or States shall recognize the right of persons with disabilities to liberty of movement, to freedom, to choose their residence, and to their nationality on the equal basis with others. Which we normally don't, people with disabilities. We are placed because that countries don't want to take problems. They think we are problem tonight to the States.

They think we are problem to health that will be impending or more needing. This article also states that the person is with the disabilities should not be deprived on their basis of disability, for their ability to obtain, possess, and utilize the documents of their nationalities. Or other documents of identification, or to utilize relevant process, such as

immigration proceedings that may need to facilitate it to an exercise of their rights, to liberty, to movements. Looking at that, and looking at who I am as a woman with disabilities. That I was a refugee once as upon a time and a woman of color.

Then I looked at what impacts me more at this point of time being a woman with disabilities. So I chose to look what the article 6 on the Convention of Women with disabilities. What does the article 6 say that countries should recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subjected to multiple discrimination. And in this regard countries should take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women with disabilities of all human rights and the fundamental freedom.

What does this speak to? How does this speak to me? And how does this speak to all women with disabilities? Personally, I think that this convention means that countries should facilitate equalization of opportunities to persons with disabilities, to women, with disabilities. To empower us, to be on equal footing with all other people, with all other women. That we should enjoy equal rights and practice or exercise fundamental freedoms.

Why? Because being a woman with disabilities does not negate me from full participation, does not negate me from being a parent, does not in the get me from having equal education like any other. Women with disabilities, face additional barriers to achieve gender equality. Therefore countries like Canada, I feel need to take action at all levels, to address the inequalities that women with the disability is face.

Gender discrimination and other forms of discrimination, and intolerance causes stress to women with disabilities and the causes inadequacy. Inadequacy to enjoyment of our human rights and fundamental freedom. I therefore would emphasize that states and governments should recognize women with disabilities, in a way that we should have equal rights and enjoyment of our freedom.

We are always sidelined as mothers. We are always in the sidelines as levels falling in love, enjoy being a loved person. Freedom to accessible housing. Previous speakers have spoken. Diane, Mary and Carrie have also spoken about freedom to accessible education, and housing. As parents freedom to equal equality in society, women with disabilities

disempowered. We need to be empowered. We need to be treated on equal basis as people. Thank you.

Yutta Fricke: Justine, you continue to be a strong advocate. A couple of things that you said. One thing about the women with disabilities, and being a person with disability and empowerment, and what that might look like. I was recently in South Korea with disabled people's international, retracing my roots, and attended the National Assembly there. And found that I witnesses in other countries that there is a representation by population that includes from each region one person, who is female.

If not the first person voted in. One must be female, and one must be a person with a disability so 3 representatives per region to the National Assembly. So that's why it's actually an interesting model of empowerment to make sure that the voices are heard right up to the National Assembly. Which is the equivalent of our Parliament.

The other thing that I'm reminded of is something that I, Diane had had said earlier in our prep session. And that is that whereas the convention is a is a guiding document here in Canada other countries have actually adopted a wholesale as their measures for how to ensure accessibility to people with disabilities.

So that's interesting, too, that the to country might not have accessibility. Legislation like we do in Manitoba, but it will have if it accepts the UN Convention. It will have 32 action oriented articles. That will guide the various topics we've discussed today. Access to justice status of women employment. A couple of times we talked about employment as well as accessibility.

So I invite everyone to go back to the Convention and to just read what it says there. In one reason in our prep session, and I think we'll close the panel here. We have plenty of time, which is quite nice, and I don't see any questions in the chat. But if anyone does have a question, please contact Tracy MacMillan, our Office Manager, at MAO@gov.mb.ca and send an email to her. Please contact Tracy MacMillan at 204-945-7613, and she can make sure that somebody gets it, if you are unable to email.

Darren Macdonald: Yutta one question that did come in as you're wrapping up. I don't know if it's a question for Diane, or just a question in general speaking about article. Was it 27the work in employment, I'm just wondering the question Diane If you could speak to the importance of the proactive measures.

Not just, I mean, I think, hopefully, employers are learning to be reactive. They're learning to come up with accommodations. But the question was really around, what would you recommend employers do to be proactive and why and how, that maybe fits with recruitment, retention, and those types of things.

Diane Driedger: Well, I think so. I think being proactive means employers need to be flexible now. Being a person with disability means that we need flexibility in all parts of life. Society has been built without us for hundreds of years, thousands of years. And so when you are recruiting people, when you're doing interviews, ask a question, ask the question. Do you need any accommodations, in your employment and ask them to speak on what those are.

But then you have to be very careful with managers who don't understand reasonable accommodation because they may think this is a burden. And we're not going to hire that person then. So there is a lot of education that has to be done with middle managers in particular. I've seen this a lot, not only in Canada, but in other countries where I've worked.

People at the top can be brought in. But if those people in the middle who are the middle managers who hire. Most of the people who supervise don't understand that concept. It's not going to happen. And, in fact, that's where most of the discrimination takes place right. In my experience, and from what I've seen you know, in non-profits, in government, in international organizations. These are the stories I have heard from other workers with disabilities through the years.

We have to just start with that. It's kind of like the same thing as I mentioned. If you are a parent with a young child you know. That is an accommodation to. We're not only talking about disability here we are talking about people's lives, we are whole people, we need to be

recognized as that. And as we know, a lot of people have quit their jobs or retired because they realize they're going back to how it was before a very inflexible a rigid way of doing things. So we have to be flexible.

Yutta Fricke: Thanks, Diane and Darren if there are any other questions that you see that I don't thanks for jumping in. But you know, originally we were going to focus a little bit today on the implications for Covid, and it's nice to see that I think almost every speaker has spoken about that. In including and in the ways in which we've learned from Covid that that flexibility is not such a bad thing. So that that was a really good comment.

I've seen Justine. You had your hand up, and there's one thing I wanted to mention when we were talking earlier, and that's that the other reason that it's something like the Convention is so important. Is that even section 15 of the Charter of Rights and freedoms in Canada, it affects citizens of Canada. It does not affect immigrants and refugees who want to enter Canada. The convention does so it is another way, and we do use a point system just as Justine said.

And if you're goanna be a supposed burden on the health care system and that's points against you, and that has really even destroyed lives of families that have wanted to enter Canada. So that's something that that maybe participants on the call today can raise with their MP's. But it's important that in in a situation of world you know crisis and the war in Ukraine that that we rethink not just for refugees, but also for immigrants.

Why, why this negativity towards disability when we're set up to be accessible? Justine, what comments would you like to make

Justine Kiwanuka: A couple of comments. One is because I was the first Canadian or first refugee to be allowed to come to Canada. Because Canada would not allow people with disabilities without being sponsored. So, even though I would have qualified, but without exposure, because I have a disability. I wouldn't have been allowed to come here. So I was sponsored by the United Church as the first Canadian disabled person to come here in Manitoba.

Again, because there are no accessibility that accommodates used to accommodate right now things are different. Okay. Secondly, I would like to call people because, on the Beijing platform for action. I actively was part of it. In drafting the Beijing platform for action. It addresses the inequalities or and the barriers that face women with disabilities that women with disabilities double or have more complexity in the full equality and the advancement of their human rights.

Being the fact that if you are a woman. Through race, age, language, ethnicity, indigenous, or a woman from metis aboriginal. Then couple that with being a woman with disabilities, so advancement of women with disabilities, when you are black woman, all that complexes the advancement of human rights and freedom.

So, fundamental freedom in human rights. So I would like you to look at the Beijing platform for action which actually implements the article I was talking about.

Yutta Fricke: Thank you, Justine. And for those people who don't know I mean it's now a few decades old. We do not have the same number of UN meetings anymore. The Beijing platform for action on the status of women is the rest of it. And it was another UN document that was created with women from all over the world back then in in Beijing, and I can't even remember the year it was I think the mid eighties.

Justine Kiwanuka: 95 and in 2005 as well, and it then they went back.

Diane Driedger: Yes, I just wanted to say to illustrate the point about how we do not include. We do not go accept people with disabilities as immigrants. You know, when my husband and I were thinking about where to live, and he's originally. From Trinidad, we were living in Trinidad. We got married. And then I said, okay, why do we want to do? And we said, okay, let's go to Canada and get some more education.

Well, luckily for me, there had just been a court case done by a couple where one partner was disabled and refused entrance to Canada, even

though the able-bodied partner had a job and it was a challenge to the charter, and it was struck down. And so a disabled spouse you could you could sponsor them.

You see, my spouse has a disability as well. If that hadn't been there right, we would be living in Trinidad right now, and you wouldn't be seeing me here. Maybe you'd still be seeing here. But I we would not be living in Winnipeg, because my husband would not have been allowed admission except for this couple, who challenged it with the charter.

Yutta Fricke: That is a good illustration, and that would definitely be our loss. With you living in in Trinidad. Even though the weather might be a little bit warmer for you there. I want to thank all the panelists. I know I said it before, and I'll say it again at the sharing of stories and hearing the individual voices, really helps bring our legislation alive.

Whether we are talking about the accessibility for Manitobans act here in Manitoba, or internationally with UN convention. So thank you for participating, and I will pass it back to Darren to close our event.

Darren Macdonald: Yeah, thank you. And thanks to all the panelists. Before we log off, I just yeah, I want to thank Steven for his knowledge and expertise, and presenting today. Thank you to our ASL interpreters for doing a wonderful job. And for our encore technicians for keeping this on the rails. It was great

And I would like to acknowledge the support of the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network, or MBAN for helping shape and promote the Webinar today. This network is comprised of allies in the disability, community and public and private sector organizations.

A reminder that the recording of the Webinar will be up on www.accessibilitymb.ca Within a few days, or give us a week, maybe. And we'll post some questions and answers that came in as well. And while you're at our website, please remember to subscribe to our newsletter accessibility news for updates on these you know various updates on our standards and our act, and what our office is up to.

So thank you very much for attending. And you see that the proclamation from this year's International Day for persons with disabilities is up and up on the screen. I understand that the Minister of Families was reading a statement in the Legislature today, so she couldn't attend so. But thank you to everybody for attending, and thank you for all you do to promote and advocate for accessibility and inclusion. And I want to wish you all a happy International Day for persons with disability and joyful, safe holiday season.

Thank you.

[Webinar Ends]