Friday, 26th February 2021

CDPF Seminar B, Module 2.

RICHARD: Okay, hello everybody, welcome to our second seminar, seminar B, on a module 2. It is today, Friday, and it's the afternoon one, our evening one, and morning for some people. UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, with Stainable Development Goals and the Impact on Disabled People's Lives. With me, Richard Rieser, I have Prasanna Kuruppu the DCPF Executive from Sri Lanka, Sarah Kamau our Acting Chair, Thandiwe Mfulo one of the two Vice Chairs, and Emile Gouws who is on the executive representing people from the autism spectrum and neurodiverse people from South Africa.

We have got a good seminar ready to present you. It will interactive, there will be some activities, we will be using the chat, make sure you have the chat open to participate in what we are doing. So, over to you Sarah, and, there we go. This is the introductory slide, okay.

SARAH: Again, welcome all the participants who are on this online course. I want to introduce this a module by sharing a quote by Walt Whitman a poet, who says, "The earth does not argue, is not pathetic, has no arrangements, does not scream, haste, or persuade, threaten, promise, makes no discriminations, has no conceivable failures, closes nothing, refuses nothing, and struts none out."

       From this quote we can see that most of the, of the things that the poet was referring to are related with the Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Articles under even the principles as well, as the sustainable development goals, which have been implemented currently. Look for example, at the word, "Everyone", we know that, that we as persons with disabilities are included in society and would like to fully participate just like everybody else, the word, "Right", which makes us feel represented, which makes us feel included and able to be part and parcel of the society. We have rights like, legal rights, we have freedoms, we have the words, "Freedom", right here, we have fundamental freedoms which we as disabled people would like included and would like to be able to live independently and be able to access our rights in all perspectives regardless of our impairment. We want quality education, which is also part of what the poet was talking about, and this makes us not be left behind. We can go to the next slide.

RICHARD: Okay. Hang on a second. Let me find the button, there we go. It's, it's entitled the 'Long Road to Human Rights for Disabled People' because it's hidden by the block there.

SARAH: Hidden by the block, y. So the long road to disability rights started with the universal declaration on human rights in 1948, and this declaration did not have any mention on persons with disabilities or disability rights. From there there was International Covenant on Social, cultural rights conference, and which happened in 1966. This also did not mention disability rights in it, and disabilities are rights, disabilities rights that need to be part and parcel of society regardless of what it is. So, again, in 1979 the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which is the CEDAW convention was held, and this convention did not also mention the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They had no mention of disability at all. So, we find that the journey has come a long way. The 1981, now, again, was the year of the disabled, which now brought about the language of disabled people and inclusion in this convention at that international level, this ended up with, with the standards ‑‑ this can go to the next standard roles on equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities. This shows that slowly, by slowly now, persons with disabilities and human rights started recognising that disability rights are also human rights. In 1989 ‑‑ okay, we have already talked about the 1989 convention on the rights of the child, which is also the rights of children with disabilities, needed they were not mentioned in the convention, and this, we know that children have a voice and they have rights. So we need to give them the space when it comes to decisions on human rights, they are also human rights even as children. In 2006 then there was the UN Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where most of these rights of persons with disabilities now are clearly brought on board and... after, after some time the, the issues of persons with disabilities now moving forward.

RICHARD: Right, you need to start winding‑up.

SARAH: The rights at international level. We have the Sustainable Development Goals which are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

RICHARD: Thank you Sarah. I would now like to invite Prasanna to take us through the, some of the human rights, the general human rights, not ‑‑ we'll first of all look at the UN international human rights declaration and then later some on to the UN CRPD, but human rights please Prasanna.

PRASANNA:  Hello, Richard, hello to all, I hope you are taking part to learning on this online training session with great enthusiasm. Am going to recall some of the points we made on the film, I hope most of you have gone through the film before joining today. Human rights, the human rights chapter we learn that basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world from birth until death, although they can sometimes be restricted, for example, if a person breaks the law or in the interests of national security, the rights are based on the shared rights, dignity, fairness, equality and respect and independence, this values are protected by law and international treaties. Modern day human rights were brought together by the United Nations in light of horrors in the Second World War. The system was created to work together for the world peace and to guarantee the rights of every individual, everywhere. We also spoke about the characteristics of human rights. Human rights and without discrimination to each and every person, the only requirement to having human rights is to be a human. Human rights are inherent.

GEMMA: Prasanna, Prasanna, Prasanna. Prasanna. Please slow down. Please slow down. Thank you.

PRASANNA:  Human rights are a national part of who you are. Human rights are inalienable, human rights automatically belong to each human being. Next slide please. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, UDHR 1948, UDHR was first taken up in the first General Assembly in 1946 the rights in the UDHR comprises of political, economic, social and cultural rights, all of them are interconnected and bound together, I'm sure you have must have gone through these 30 articles, we are going to list how to do the activity mentioned in the course book and I will go through the articles to recapture the articles of the UDHR, the right to equality, freedom of discrimination, the right to life, liberty and personal security, freedom from slavery, freedom from torture and degrading treatment, right to recognition as a person before the law. Right to equality before the law, right to remedy by competent tribunal, freedom from arbitrary arrest and exile, right to be considered innocent until proven guilty, right to a fair public hearing.

RICHARD: Slow down Prasanna, they have got to caption it they can't keep up with you.

PRASANNA:  Family, home and correspondence, right to movement in and out of the country, right to asylum in other countries from prosecution, right to nationality and the freedom to change it. Right to marriage and family. Right to own property. Freedom of belief and religion. Freedom of opinion and in formation. Right to peaceful assembly and association. Right to participate in government and in free elections. Right to Social Security. Right to desirable work and to join trade unions. Right to rest and leisure. Right to an adequate standard of living. Right to education. Right to participate in the cultural life of the community. Right to the social order that articulated this document, and finally, community duties essential to free and full development. Article 30, it's about freedom from state or personal interference to all above rights. Next slide please. Now you can see, in your course book there is a follow‑up activity. Let's see how we could do this follow‑up activity. First, there is a bigger circle in the centre, write a human right from the UDHR in this big circle. Then three circles in the middle marked as effects, just you ask if this slide is [Inaudible] what are the possible effects, right any three effects that extend with arrows from the centre circle. Then mention each of these effects and what human rights would be denied by this effect. Put each right in a right extends with arrows from the effects. Let's try one, I hope you can understand how to do this activity. So for this I will check education. We will take, right to education in the big circle. When you attempt to follow‑up activities, please do not take right to education, I repeat, do not take right to education in your follow‑up activity submission, you have to find another right from the UDHR. Now we have to find three effects, what there are possible effects when someone does not have access for education? There can be many things, for example, unemployment, literacy, poverty, and many more effects. Let's take poverty, literacy and unemployment as three possible effects. Now write it in the circle in the middle now take each of the three mentioned effects as an ask what human rights would be denied by this effect. Put each right in the circle that extends with arrows, then go back to UDHR articles.

RICHARD: Do you want me to go back?

PRASANNA: Let's see, what are the, what there are rights denied, the rights that we see, what are the arts denied, article 19 freedom of information, Article 19 right of public hearing. Now I hope you can understand. So final one is unemployment. So what is the effect, is unemployment, what are the rights beside because of unemployment, we can take article 25, right to a standard of living, article of 17 right to all [Inaudible] this time, of course, the course work. Okay, I hope you understand how to complete this activity now, as I mentioned earlier, do not attempt to right, attempt right to education, find a right, remember all the rights are interconnected together, if you really look you can find effects and rights denied. Thank you.

RICHARD: Okay, so now we are going to have a film to just reinforce those points that Prasanna has made both in the presentation and here again, but it's a wide field but I think it's worth having this TEDEd Talk.

[Captioned video playing]

RICHARD: Okay, very informative film. Now we will go on. The next thing is really for you to give us your views, I'll read these out, and then give you a moment to think about it. Are human rights useful? Do you think they are useful, give us a yes or a no on that. Then, in the same chat, say, how are they useful. Give us a reason why they are useful. Give one example of how human rights have improved your life. These are general human rights not the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People's human rights, general human rights. I'll give you half a minute to think about that and then Gemma will start reading some out, and we will come to one or two people who said something interesting. Are they useful? How are they useful human rights evening one example of how they have improved your life. Okay, Gemma, would you like to start looking at the chat for us please.

GEMMA: Okay, so they are coming in quite quickly. Which is good. I'm just going to stretch this out so I can see. Okay. I have, for one example I have: human rights are useful, improved my life to give me access to equipment for communication. Someone said that. Prasanna, I'm just going to mute you, I can hear something. What else is there? Sorry they are coming in quite quickly. Yes, very useful, in enabling one to live a decent life and enjoy the freedoms of being human. I have attained my education and can be able to hold a job and living as a human because of my rights. That's somebody in Uganda said that. Somebody has said they can protect disabled people from losing jobs because they can't do something as they can require employers to accommodate us. Umm... of course, allows for equality, equity, respect, dignity. Umm... somebody else: yes, human rights are really useful. At times when you are challenged as a result of your disability you can easily refer and request for what is rightfully yours.

RICHARD: Hmm.

GEMMA: Human rights are useful, as they set a standard for equality and equity, they have helped me in that I have access to an education despite my limitations. Just having to mute somebody, sorry.

RICHARD: Pick one or people to speak if you can from one or two parts of the world who are on the call if they would like to just tell us a bit more. We had one about, we had someone with a decent life and a good job, is that from Uganda.

GEMMA: Hold on. Okay. Okay. Yes. That's somebody in Uganda. Martin. Martin, I'm going to ask you to unmute your mic so you tell Richard more about that.

RICHARD: Hello.

GEMMA: Hold on, I have to press the button to do that. Okay, Martin I'm asking you to unmute here. Okay, Martin you are unmuted.

RICHARD: Hello, tell us a bit more about how human rights have helped you Martin. They have access issues, for all we know. No. Okay, let's try someone else.

GEMMA: Okay, umm... sorry. Somebody said: I was able to get an employer to be required to employ me when I couldn't do one particular role in my job but could do all my others. Matthew Maddi, would you like to speak on that one?

RICHARD: That would be good.

>> I can speak on her behalf.

RICHARD: Yes, you may.

>> I'm from Uganda, especially here in Uganda if you have the right education it means that you have the right job, wherever if you have a right to accessibility, especially in education, and you have the, have the right to [Inaudible] you have a right to [Inaudible] it moves in life to sustainability, you have that opportunity, if that person gets a job it means that person has a right to it, that's why a persons with disabilities, disabled people here in Uganda, many of us we are living, we are lacking opportunities because our rights are not, the rights of disabled people here in Uganda, opportunities, if they come, that's why the opportunity of getting that job is there. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you very much. Yes. The cost of having rights is eternal vigilance, just because they have been given doesn't mean they are going to say, we are going to keep challenging and pushing for them. Megan Adonis had her hand up, would you like to say something, can you say something.

>> Am I unmuted, go ahead.

>> I'm Megan from South Africa, I have the right to be a mother, a wife, for me to be fully integrated into society and to be able to express myself as a woman with a disability in South Africa.

RICHARD: Thank you. Very useful. One, we'll take one more Gemma, they have all come back on the chat, any more on the chat that are worth saying and then pick one more person.

GEMMA: Umm...

RICHARD: There are two more people with their hand up.

GEMMA: Somebody, yeah, sorry, somebody else. Martin, Martin, would you like to go. Martin you have got your hand up. It might be that you have got to sign if you want to put your video on.

RICHARD: It's a bad connection.

GEMMA: Martin we are having difficulty in hearing what you are saying, I think it's a bad connection.

RICHARD: Maybe he can put what he wants to say more in the chat a little bit more, and you can read it out after the next thing. We need to proceed, we have got quite a lot more to do. Anyway. We'll move on, they'll be some more opportunities to share later on. Okay.

GEMMA: Oh he's just on now, I'm...

RICHARD: Is he, okay, I'll wait.

GEMMA: Martin, do you want to go. Oh, lost him again ‑‑ oh, there we go, hi.

>> All right, thank you my name is [Inaudible] calling from Zambia.

RICHARD: Yes.

>> Yes. Nothing without us, "Nothing About Us Without Us", I'm so much happy to learn that in human rights there is an issue to us because we are able to get employment and education equally without any discrimination. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you, that leads us into the UN CRPD. I think one of the things that is obviously you are beginning to learn about this, the universal declaration of human rights, as Sarah said at the beginning, did not mention disability. That's why we had 50 to 60 years of struggle to actually get a binding treaty on disability, which we didn't actually achieved until 2006 and was brought into force in 2008. We now have 182 countries, including all the Commonwealth countries apart from Botswana, who have ratified this treaty. That means we too now have not just the universal rights, we have rights as disabled people, or persons with disabilities as the treaty is called, and let's look at the principles at the of all the inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons it comes directly from the that, non‑discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion in society, sounds like it might have been there before, but of course, before your story there from Zambia and indeed the stories from Uganda and South Africa, those rights you now perhaps take for granted were not granted to disabled people, we were very often separated and denied the right to have children, the right to work, the right to education. So, these are new rights for many of us that have only been coming up in for a short time. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity, this is a principle. The fact that it has to be written into the principles of our treaty, of the UN CRPD shows that we weren't always accepted. Equality of opportunity, yes, that's been there all along, but remember when you are talking about equality, equality means treating everyone the same. For disabled people that often isn't good enough, we need equity, we need the reasonable accommodations the extra support, the positive discrimination. So that we have a level playing field, because otherwise it isn't equality. That's why accessibility is written into this treaty. It's the first treaty in the world to have accessibility in it the were some mentions in some of the ones that came before but not as a principle. Then equality between men and women, this is something that was in many of the treaties, but clearly we had to have CEDAW, the, which was talked about, because there wasn't equality between men and women, and there still aren't in many parts of the world, and particularly disabled women and we have to keep fighting on that and in a module 10 we will be having a whole session on that. Then, respect for the evolving capacity of disabled children, again very important and this was, both of these what we call twin‑track in fact all three of those are twin‑track they have a particular Article, Article 9, accessibility, Article 6 for women, Article 7 for children, but then they come all the way through the treaty as well. So we call that a twin‑track approach.

       Okay. So, this is the structure of the UN CRPD, it would do you all a lot of good to actually learn what these main Articles are and what they stand for there are several versions, particularly in the appendix, which is also up on the website, for this unit to have a look at the, you can have a glance, an easy read version or the full text, but familiarise yourself with what these mean.

       Then, I'll go on to the conned page, adds you can see some of this are specific to disabled people, habilitation, rehabilitation, others are more general, but all our thought to be what was necessary, personal mobility, 20, for us to have in a treaty. Similarly, equal recognition before the law, most treaties don't have to spend a lot of time on that, but because we have so many disabled people that are denied equal recognition before the law we had to spend a lot of time on Article 12 and we'll be talking in much more detail next week about that, and so, let's go on to see if you can work out where some of these go, after we have seen this film from the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland, which I think is a very short summary of the UN CRPD and very useful.

[Captioned video playing]

RICHARD: So I think that really puts that in the context. Let's see how far we can go on this. So if we take a simple activity now. Like barriers and solutions, which I introduce you to last week as fundamental building block of the Convention, the move from the medical, individual traditional model to the social human rights model, it's the barriers beyond this that disable us, not our impairments. So let's have a look at how that might work, four examples here, lack of access to public buildings transport and so on. The solution of course, is fairly simple. We would ask for transport plans and investment structure investment, based on our access, and universal principles of design. Which article do you think put in the chat we might be talking about here, which would be the most important one? I did talk about it several times, so I think you can guess that one fairly easily. So in the chat can we have a few examples from the chat, Gemma?

GEMMA: Umm... first one, someone has come back straight away saying Article 8. Remember we need to give people time to read everything that is being captioned.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Someone said Article 8, someone else said Article 9.

RICHARD: Article.

RICHARD: ‑‑ go on.

GEMMA: 9, that's all so far.

RICHARD: 9.

GEMMA: 9 and again 9.

RICHARD: 8 is tangential it's awareness‑raising, so obviously it will help to raise awareness of access, but access is the key one, then in the definitions it also defines what we mean by Universal Design and you will find out about that in the, in module 4. So, I'm not going to go on about that now. Let's try another one. Okay. Living in an institution with no privacy, or control over what happens to you. That's the barrier. The solution, support for living in the community with your own accommodation, and funding to pay for basic needs and a right to make decisions about your life. So, what articles might we be talking about there?

GEMMA: Somebody said, Article 19, and somebody else said Article 3.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Someone else says 3.

RICHARD: Article 19, well the principles, yes,‑‑‑

GEMMA: Someone else says 14 and living independently.

RICHARD: Okay. Then there is respect for privacy, and also, so that you have enough money to live on whether you are working or not, the state has a responsibility to provide you with an adequate standard of living, right, and this is 80% of disabled people in low-income countries do not get this, it's a right that has to be fought for, but it's not there at the moment. So that you have it. It tends to be linked to those in employment. So those who are in the informal economy as we will see in unit 5, which is a very large number of disabled people who are self‑employed, they don't get any sort of safeguarding as has been shown clearly through the COVID crisis. So, those are the ones that we need to look at. 19, 22, 28 and 14. Let's try another one. Not being allowed to decide whether you are treated with invasive drugs or ECT when you have mental health issues. Particular group of disabled people who are particularly badly treated by the medical system, and we have some Articles that relate to this. Being supported, the solution is being supported to know the impacts of different treatments on you and being allowed to choose. That you have a right to choose. That people can't force things upon you. Well, which Articles are we talking about here, any suggestions please? Okay.

GEMMA: It's interesting, got quite a lot of different ones here.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Umm... I think it's what you are referring to, to start with. Somebody said: 25, and then...

RICHARD: That's health, yes.

GEMMA: 10, 15, 16 and 22.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Somebody else said 22 and 14.

RICHARD: Hmm.

GEMMA: Somebody else said 4, just 4.

RICHARD: That's responsibilities.

GEMMA: Somebody else said 22, again 22 and 14.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Someone else said 25.

RICHARD: 25 is health, but the key one here is Article 12, recognition, equal recognition before the law, but actually people can't make decisions for you. You cannot have guardianship anymore, you must have assisted decision making, whether you have a cognitive impairment or mental health issue, you have a right to make these decisions with support from your friends and so on. You must choose who those people are that support you. Also, freedom from torture, 15, would come in here, as well, as 25. Of course, the general principles would count as well. Last one because this is taking quite a long time. Not being allowed by parents to marry someone because they are disabled. Explain you, as an adult, have a right to marry the person of your choice, it's not to do with your parents. Many cultures still remain that, it's not a human right that the parents choose who you marry. You have a choice in these matters and it's about your consent as an individual, and that's what the international human rights situation is. So, what one would we be bringing in there? There is one particular one that is relevant to this.

GEMMA: You need to give people time now.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: 23, 23 again.

RICHARD: 23.

GEMMA: 21.

RICHARD: 21 is... freedom of expression. So, yes, that might count, but it's more the 23 is the key one, respect for the family and the home and equal recognition before the law. I hope that's been useful to people, we seem to be getting a lot that are saying similar. So we need to press on.

       So, again into the chat, this one will take less time but two questions: what has your country done well to publicise your rights as a disabled people? And, what areas of your life could be improved by full enforcement of the UN CRPD? We had before things that people said that had improved, what about things that haven't yet improved? That's question five. What has your country done to publicise these things? So, I'll give you a moment to think about that, and if you can then put some answers in the chat, we'll maybe take one or two people and then press on.

RICHARD: So what has your country done well, to publicise your rights as a disabled person, and then what area of your life could be improved further by full enforcement of UN CRPD in your country? Any takers, Gemma.

GEMMA: Yeah I was just giving few seconds just to... okay, there is no effort in St Lucia to publicise rights of the disabled. Access to employment needs to improve. Policies that encourage families to take their children with disabilities to go to school. We're in the Constitution, we have a right to be represented. Our Prime Minister spoke about us, gave us a new term. Umm...

RICHARD: The person from St Lucia you can do that as one of the follow‑up activities, write a leaflet to publicise it, it's a small country. Take it to your DPO, get them to meant on it and then publish it around the island, because I think that's how you let people know what your rights are. Anymore?

GEMMA: Umm... Nicola in Jamaica says: my country Jamaica is not doing much to help people with disability. South Africa, we have disability rights month as a national holiday which does bring disability rights to the forefront for a moment, however enforcement is not strong and if the UN‑CRPD was enforced then the rights to employment and education would be taken more seriously.

RICHARD: Who is that writing?

GEMMA: That is Nonhalana, in South Africa.

RICHARD: If they want to say a little something about that, because that sounds quite an interesting comment.

GEMMA: Are you able to unmute?

>> I believe I'm unmuted, I hope I'm audible.

GEMMA: Yes.

RICHARD: Thank you.

>> We have disability rights month in South Africa from 3 November to 3 December, so a lot of media try to (over talking) sorry about that, I was just... media will happen to that and discuss disabilities rights, and I guess even though I too feel that not enough is done, but it seems the holiday does force people to sort of say something about it, but again, because enforcement of the UN CRPD is not strong in South Africa, so the right of education for employment, or employment is still not very much understood and therefore those rights, people, a lot of disabled people don't get to enjoy those rights, or something is not being done as it should be done.

RICHARD: Thank you. Now, of course, there was a famous case about five years ago in the... in the Western Cape about the right to education.

>> Hello, hello!!

RICHARD: Where someone with a learning disability, can you get off the line who ever that is, someone was, they took the case to the court and they won, because the, the authorities had said no this doesn't mean everyone, it only means those that can benefit from education. Well, who are they to judge that? The right is for everyone to have education, and the way that these rights will be shown is in the Commonwealth if we are if we all have a judicial system that is one where we would all be able to access it and get Legal Aid to support us in taking cases. So we need to organise to take cases to win our rights. I'll take one more, Gemma, and then we must press on.

GEMMA: Somebody from Nigeria.

RICHARD: Yes.

GEMMA: My government have done well in the area of enacting the local Disability Act in 2018, the implementation of the Act has much remained a bottleneck. That was for question 4. Then question 5, the implementation will greatly improve my chance enjoying first consideration in terms of timely service delivery to my person.

RICHARD: Very good. We will be looking in modules 13 and 14, how we organise to actually win these rights, both locally and then putting pressure on government. So we will be looking at that. Indeed we are coming on now to how we can use the UN structures to do that as well.

       Thank you very much, we'll move on now, I think. The optional protocol is one such method that you can use where you have exhausted the procedure in your country, i.e. gone to court and not got an answer, or written to the government and they have ignored you. You can, if your government has signed up to the Optional Protocol, it's a separate treaty, only about half of the Commonwealth countries are signed to be it, but you can easily find out which ones they are, if you go on to, "UN enable", there is a list of who signed up to what. What it does, it creates the right for individual communications to the UN CRPD committee, which is elected by States Parties, over a four‑year period, half every two years, half disabled people, the current one is gender‑balanced and nearly all disabled people, elected by governments. So that's good. They can write and reply to this, they can carry out enquiries and it's a very important instrument. I'm going to give you an example of how it was used by one of our membership organisations Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance, ROFA, the representative of the UK disabled people on the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, and they got information from thousands of disabled people who, when a change of government occurred in 2010, following the banking crisis they believed they needed austerity and they cut back very severely on the rights and social entitlements of disabled people, they gathered evidence from thousands, ROFA, and 15 other DPOs representing Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland as well, and they came together as a coalition, you can see them in the picture there. All the different organisations went to Geneva and said this, and incidentally there is grant from the Commonwealth foundation if you want to go to represent your country in Geneva and they will pay for that. I can see they're listening to it is Stieg Larsson, a member of the committee then from Denmark, he led the committee in the UK, they came out with a very strong report against the UK, you can see that website there, these were the things that it said. That the UN said that the UK was, had done, "Grave disability rights violations." The UK welfare reforms led to grave systematic violations of disabled people's rights. Rights to benefits disproportionately affected disabled people, the UK was the first to be investigated under the UN Convention it signed up to in 2007. The government said it strongly refuted the committee's findings and said it was an offensive view of disability. They claimed that they spent 50 billion pounds on disability, largest of all the G7 countries, but when that was looked into, they included all sorts of things in there, all benefits, accidents at work and other things which weren't really related to it. Disabled people were regularly portrayed as negative in the press, with leaks from ministers to the front pages, sanctions for employment and support allowance increasingly significantly and disproportionately applied, so‑called bedroom tax, another measure the government brought into charge people in social housing extra if they had an extra room, failing to see that people needed that for support assistance and equipment. Assessments did not take account of a support person and some work schemes had no visible impact though they cost millions and millions of pounds. Large companies that supported the Conservative Party had been given the contracts and they got no disabled people into work. So that is an example, and I'm going to skip this one I'm afraid because of the time but think about using the Optional Protocol and we'll come back to that later on.

On to Prasanna now who will tell us about some of the monitoring mechanisms and then go on to talk about how they were used in Sri Lanka. Prasanna.

PRASANNA: Thank you Richard. Okay. In this session I'm going to cover monitoring, reporting and compliance mechanisms specified in the UN CRPD. It's very important that in a state once they ratify the treaty they must set a procedure in their country to implement the Convention. The state requires to create focal points with all state ministries, departments or agencies in the government itself.

GEMMA: Prasanna ‑‑ Prasanna, you're going to have to slow down.

>> Can you slow down?

GEMMA: Slow down please.

PRASANNA: Make sure the government policy and trade policy and trade implemented in the government. The role of the vocal points is to become a bridge between the institutions, and the coordination mechanisms and other stakeholders in the sector to work together. As for Article 33, there should be an implementation monitoring mechanism, an independent body established as Paris principles, which explains the principles to be followed when establishing mechanisms without a state or other interference. The DPOs NGOs organisations and other stakeholders should partner with such mechanisms to make sure implementation monitoring and promote human rights of persons with disabilities, and their grievances are heard, and addressed with suitable and appropriate remedies. The reporting compliance, for reporting and compliance we need to know the functions of the UN CRPD committee, Article 34 and States Parties reporting on Article 35. UN CRPD committee, States Parties to par UN CRPD, it means that ratified the Convention can nominate individually [Inaudible] disability, to persons with disabilities for the committee on rights of persons with disabilities. There are 18 members who serve a term of [Inaudible] elected by Conference of States Parties in New York, once in every two years. The reporting mechanism Article 35, Article 35 requires state parties to report to the CRPD committee within two years of ratifying to submit the initial report, and an update to the initial report after every four years. Civil society, special DPOs are encouraged to submit shadows reports and be present when the States Parties are answering the committee's questions and represent persons there. The UN CRPD committee is for general comments and carry out investigations. Now in the slide you can see the diagram, five pillars, or rather five steps, focal points in government as well, as national [Inaudible] coordination mechanism, are in these two circles as in Article 331, the third circle is to enforce minimum standards, UN CRPD is not only a human rights treaty it is the only treaty on human rights as well, as services and standards, the state obligations under article under‑‑ the fourth circle reported finally, international co‑operation where necessary, especially for least developed countries or developing countries to seek assistance and support for Article 32. Okay, next slide.

RICHARD: Now Prasanna is going to tell us about a particular example from Sri Lanka, rather than reading the whole slide out you can make the main points, thank you.

PRASANNA: This is the Sri Lanka Shadow Report ‑‑ yes. Sri Lanka Shadow Report submitted to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review in 2017. Sri Lanka ratified the Convention only in 2016 and they have submitted their report in 2019, and for the CRPD committee we have some more time to submit our Shadow Report, [Inaudible] now let's look at the Shadow Report submitted by the disability organisations from Sri Lanka. [Inaudible] during Sri Lanka's third cycle in 2017. UN CRPD in March 2007 and became a States Parties in 2016. It took nine years for ratification but did not enact a disability rights Bill. Disabled people are marginalised in Sri Lanka by all stakeholders, the attitudinal barriers, place a major role in stagnation of policies and regulations. Therefore, they frustrate accessibility inclusivity, and participation of persons with disabilities in different first, such as education, employment, transportation et cetera. Matters pertaining to persons with disabilities have failed to break away from the social and welfare aspects and remain always as a social service the conventional, institutional set of the state did not change [Inaudible] attempts to include the norms and principles of the convention in national framework, such as national policy and access regulations and national disabled action plan and human rights action plan could not reach far in terms of implementation, due to procedural, conventional and state bureaucracy and lack of political leadership. Next slide. Next slide.

RICHARD: Yeah, I have done it.

PRASANNA: The new graft Disability Rights Bill, in 2006 prepared and was approved by the cabinet of ministers in 2008. These are the first issue we have raised in this Shadow Report and we have given some recommendations that you can see from the blueprint. The draft first amendment more than five times, building pressure from disabled activists as well as member of the national council, complying with the UN CRPD norms and principles especially Article 33, but so far as it's failed to reach the papers of the Parliament. After the European Shadow Report in 201 seven, receiving 6 recommendations during the review, [Inaudible] and included most important aspects of UN CRPD, especially Article 33, such as focal points, government coordination mechanism, and as well, as the implementation of the monitoring mechanism into the draft rights Bill, now in circulation. The only issue is the delay. Due to the change of government since 2019 as well, as the COVID‑19 pandemic, many similar but important issues are on hold with priority. On the other hand, accessibility regulation number one of 2006 specifies a minimum accessibility standard in Sri Lanka, this was [Inaudible] tsunami devastation to use as standard for new construction after tsunami. Although a ruling has been given by the Supreme Court in 2011 to government and stakeholders to implement the regulation, many responsible government institutions haven't taken any action to fully implement the regulation up to now. This is mainly due to the [Inaudible] government mechanism in place. Here in the slide you can see some of the thematic areas and also the recommendations made by the joint fund in that shadow submission. The Shadow Report has brought up many thematic issues and many recommendations, it's changed the government viewpoint but most of the interventions have stranded or stagnated due to low prioritisation, and non‑availability of focal points and government coordination.

RICHARD: Can you make your last point, Prasanna.

PRASANNA: Legal redress, access to communication, access to information, especially, during this pandemic, discrimination and inequalities are still at large to the other positive changes of the human rights council recommendations and [Inaudible] Shadow Report 2017. However since 2019 changes were evident in main political parties, as a result of proactive lobby by activists, but said bureaucracy is preventing positive outcomes of these interventions.

RICHARD: Okay you'll have to stop now.

PRASANNA: Convention and mostly due to [Inaudible] perspectives. Over to you Richard.

RICHARD: Thank you very much. We wish you well in Sri Lanka to try and move forward and get your full rights.

       Now the next person who has got 6 minutes who is Thandwie from South Africa who will talk about a report that was made on the behalf of disabled women in South Africa, and Thandwie.

THANDWIE: Can you hear me Richard, good afternoon.

RICHARD: Off you go then, we have got your slide up, are you ready to talk about it? Thandwie?

THANDWIE: Yes Richard.

RICHARD: Okay.

THANDWIE: Yes. Can you hear me Richard?

RICHARD: Yes, we can hear you, would you like to start speaking about your three slides, thank you.

THANDWIE: Can you hear me?

RICHARD: Yes, we can hear you. Are you having some connection problems?

THANDWIE: Yes, it's very bad here.

RICHARD: We can hear you well, so why don't you just speak.

THANDWIE: Okay, can you put now, I don't see the slides, can you just, let's jump to the slide about the Shadow Report of South Africa. I don't see the slide.

RICHARD: Yeah, the slide that's... that's your first slide is there. Starts, "Women and girls with disabilities in South Africa face intersectional discrimination..." It's up on the, it's up on the screen.

THANDWIE: I cannot see the screen Richard.

RICHARD: Okay, have you got the slides in front of you?

THANDWIE: Maybe you can read it ‑‑ pardon.

RICHARD: Just read them out from where you are, can you do that or do you want me to read them, and then you comment?

THANDWIE: Please read them Richard I can't see the slide at all.

RICHARD: Women and girls with disabilities in South Africa face intersectional discrimination on the basis of both gender and disability in many aspects of their lives. They are discriminated against and subjected to harmful stereotypes, that undermine their dignity and create barriers to full inclusion. Particularly black women, women in rural areas, women with intellectual or psycho‑social disability are regularly discriminated against and denied access to justice or essential support services. Furthermore, women with disabilities face unique forms of discrimination particularly in healthcare, particularly when accessing sexual and reproductive health. That's the first slide, why don't you tell us a little about that last point that you said this morning when you go to the health clinic.

THANDWIE: Yes, when you go to the health clinic, when you talk about women with sigh so social, or women with mental disability, you go to a clinic and you are pregnant instead of being treated like a normal women they will ask you are you pregnant, are you also sleeping with when. If you are not women enough to get pregnant, i respective of your disability. In terms of justice, most of women with disability are getting raped. There are cases, their cases can take six years, fighting that justice must be done for them and it's not happening. So, you will find a lot of discrimination among, amongst women with disabilities, especially those with psycho‑social...

RICHARD: Thank you for that, I'll read the second slide now. Under Article 6 of the Convention, and then you can meant, the rights of persons with disabilities States Parties must recognise and take measures accordingly to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of women with disabilities. As the committee on the rights of persons ‑‑ CRPD committee explained in their general comment number 3, general comments are things that they produce to clarify how to implement each of these articles, there are already ten of them up on their website and are very useful to read. In their comment stowed ensure that third parties do not violate the Rights of Women with disabilities. That's, not just a state, but third parties as well. This submission focused on the rights violation disproportionately or uniquely affecting women with disabilities in South Africa, as identified in the initial report to the CRPD Committee, it concludes with recommendations to the CRPD Committee to take into account during the review. Can I read those out and you can meant on them. At the top of this slide you can see the 8 organisations that brought this, that were part of the consortium. What they argued to the CRPD Committee, that there needed to be specific measures to address discrimination experienced by women in and girls with disabilities, to empower them especially black women with disabilities, improve access to justice for women and girls, provide training for the justice systems, combat abuse and violence against women with disabilities, and ensure gender‑based violence services are accessible in disadvantaged areas, such as places you can go when you are abused, developing an developing an awareness‑raising programmes and monitoring, amend the laws to comprise South African women with disabilities to make their own reproductive choices and ensure that comprehensive sexuality education programmes are available and accessible to women and girls with disabilities. Lastly, to collect data on the issues most impacting on girls and women and ensure that they are included in the data collected. So any comments for about a minute on those please.

>> What data, there is proper data, specifically on women with disabilities. It's to me like, the [Inaudible] committee say there needs to be focus on that. The other in terms of this [Inaudible] the justice department, including their employees, where most of the time the challenges are there. In all, like in our country there is still a lot of racism, it goes [Inaudible] we find that most of the black women [Inaudible] comes to violations, when it comes to rape, reproductive help (sound malfunction) the committees must make sure that everyone is treated equally, especially women the third‑party must be like, it's me and I'm pregnant, [Inaudible] third‑party violations a woman with disability, it's not really, really [Inaudible] women with disabilities their rights are protected, they ought to be safe, that's what the committee said. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you. We will, we will have a whole a module on women's rights which is a module 10, women and girls, so we'll be able to pick this one up there, but it's a good example of how, if you get organisations together you have much greater strength in going forward to the committee. The committee at the moment is stuck, because of COVID they are not hearing any cases this year, so we hope things will improve shortly, so more shadow reports can be brought.

       Now we are going over and Emile, Emile Gouws from South Africa, representing the neuro‑diverse and myself are going to talk together about the SDGs. Do you want to say something to start with Emile, about why the SDGs are particularly important to your community, the neuro‑diverse community? Emile. Have we got Emile.

EMILE: Thank you Richard.

RICHARD: Yes. Okay do you want to say a little bit.

EMILE: Good evening everyone, thank you for this major opportunity. Thank you. Well, as you all know the autism community remains part of the marginalised group we expose challenges on cognitive emotional social ills, as such the neuro‑diverse community, specific individuals on the autistic spectrum still need a secure and structured environment because due to the perceptions as well, as the stigma which we will address now, it will influence our development and we will socially regress. Discrimination leads to frustration, and higher anxiety levels. With reference to the autism spectrum you will see on your screen there are 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but I'm just going to emphasise on those relevant to the autism spectrum. For instance, we need to make sure that we reduce inequalities to make sure that we have accessible society and grab all opportunities for persons equality education system free from discrimination and victimisation is relevant. The fourth sustainable development goal for me personally is reducing inequality and equal employment for all. Persons with disabilities and specifically individuals on the autism spectrum. As the majority of us know, individuals on the autism spectrum the dependent on public services as well, as public transport, so there is a specific need for us to make sure that the public transport are accessible for these individuals, and in the workplace we need to create decent work and equal economic growth and most importantly we need to make sure that these individuals are, are citizens and to make sure that there are accessible services and facilities.

RICHARD: Thank you Emile, we'll come back to you, we'll ask you a few questions. Now we're going to see a film about the Sustainable Development Goals, that answers all the questions you might have. What there are SDGs? In 2015 world leaders from 193 countries agreed the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs the world's new action plan for the next 15 years to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, fight in equality, tackle climate change and achieved sustainable development for all. SDGs follow the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs, agreed in 2000 in a 0 coordinated attempt to tackle development issues. As a result, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, compared to 1990. More girls and boys go to primary school than ever before and far more people have access to water and essential medicines. Progress of the MDGs has been mixed. Today, over 800 million people still live in extreme poverty, they are also most vulnerable to the increasing impacts from climate change and environmental degradation. Years of hard-won progress fighting poverty could easily be wiped out by even small complex, economic crisis or natural disasters. Also, sub‑Saharan Africa and southern Asia consistently achieve less progress than other rinse the MDGs maid success on national averages, often missing what happened with marginalised groups like people with disabilities, indigenous groups, rural communities, and women. The international community recognised the new challenges and achieving prosperity must go hand‑in‑hand with protecting the planet. After three-year participatory process world leaders finally adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals, so what are these goals for? They are end poverty for all. Freedom from hunger. Health and wellbeing. Quality of education. Gender equality. Clean water and sanitation. Sustainable energy for all, decent work and economic development. Innovation and resilient infrastructure. Reducing inequalities. Sustainabilities and communities, sustainable consumption and production, action on climate change. Healthy oceans. Sustainable eco‑systems. Peace and justice. Global partnerships. Are four underlying principles that come with the SDGs, that are transformational in the way we work on development in the future. Firstly the SDGs are universal, they apply to everyone. Every country rich and poor, north and south, developed and developing. They recognise the global challenges like tackling climate change and changing models of development require global solutions. Domestic policies at the look at these issues in one country will have an impact on other parts of the world. So we need to co‑ordinate. Secondly, they integrate all dimensions of sustainability, economic development, social progress and environmental protection. For example, they tell us to grow enough food for all without destroying the soil or over‑using water. To develop our companies without increasing inequality. Or to produce enough electricity this for all without pumping more CO2 into the atmosphere. This is similar to what experience SDGs tell us we should leave no one behind. Governments have agreed no goal should be met unless it is met with everyone. Including those in society most vulnerable and hardest to reach. So, education must reach indigenous communities. Jobs created for women and men. Quality healthcare available for all rural communities, and water and sanitation facilities accessible for people living with disabilities. Tackling exclusion is the key to tackling inequality. Finally, the SDGs require the participation of all, a process to agree the SDGs took years and included national dialogues, consultations with civil society groups, the private sector and academia, and ended with negotiations between all governments at the UN. There is a strong sense of ownership of these goals. The result is ambitious but it reflects what the world wants.

RICHARD: Okay. So that's a really informative film and our next slide is looking at the SDGs and how they relate to disabled people, but before we get to that two points I want to make. The COVID pandemic we know we have been the hardest hit and we'll be talking about at the next week with the A module 3. You have got this, this should be up on the website tonight, with the course book and the PowerPoint, and you should prepare yourself for that. What we have learned is already, they talked about how fragile the world is, already 70 million more people have been plunged into extreme poverty this year because of COVID. We also know that large numbers of disabled people have been the hardest hit. So, it is very fragile and we have to integrate our demands and our views completely within the general thrust of improving society wherever that is happening. Now, disability is in every one of those 17 articles, but there are specific references in goal number 4 on education with a link to Article 24 of the UN CRPD on et cetera, goal 8, the promotion of sustained and full economic growth in employment links to Article 27. Actually without the detail of Article 27 which we'll be looking at in more detail in a module 5, you, we don't have a way, a road plan if you like of implementing goal 8 for disabled people. Closely linked is goal 10. Which strives to reduce inequality within and among countries, and that's linked to Article 5, adequate standard of living and most importantly Article 32 which is about international co‑operation. Then goal 11, would work to make cities and human settlements inclusive safe and sustainable, and there we have alongside that our article 9 we have all right talked about and of course, article 30 which is about leisure and sport and culture, and Article, coal 11 is talking about making green spaces in cities accessible for everyone. Then goal 17, stresses that in order to strengthen the means and the means and revitalise global partnership for sustainable development the collection of data and monitoring and accountability is essential, and so therefore we have got awareness raising and data, Article 31, we have not mentioned today but it's really important to have disaggregated data, you can't have planning in a country unless you know how many disabled people you have got, we have got a whole session on data coming up in a module 12. Particularly using the using the Washington Group questions, getting your census to use those.

GEMMA: Richard you need to wind up.

RICHARD: Yes, I'm going to skip over these last ones. I'll shut this down now and bring everybody up who is on the from our team, to just say a last word to wind up, Sarah 30 seconds from you if we can.

GEMMA: Sarah has had to go, I'm sorry.

RICHARD: Sarah has gone. Thandwie are you still there?

THANDWIE: Yes Richard.

RICHARD: Yes, do you want to say a last word to everyone, just one?

THANDWIE: What I would like to say is to those who are here at the end, thank you very much. This is a very good programme, all of us will be able to know, and once you know you are able to deal with everything that comes your way as a disabled person. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you very much Thandwie. Emile, do you want to say just one or two sentences about what you think about what we need to do.

EMILE: Thank you, I believe it's our responsibility to ensure that parties recognise that persons with disabilities have the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard in health and specifically the SDGs that we mentioned just now, to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of our disability. We have hone that we are equal members of society and it's up to us to ensure that there is change for good. Thank you Richard.

RICHARD: Thank you. Is Prasanna still with us?

PRASANNA: Yes Richard.

RICHARD: One last thought to leave with one.

PRASANNA: Just a small word it's for the youth with disability, especially in our context we find it very difficult to engage youth for this activism, I request all youth and women to join together and learn the disability and become activists in your own countries and thereafter in regional and national level. Thank you.

RICHARD: Well we had 54% of participants our girls and women, and 59% are 35 or under. So hopefully there is a lot of people out there who can be the can generation to take forward this struggle. His is a millennial struggle, it's not won by any means. We have put the means there to achieve it, but the implementation will take a huge, greater effort to recruit thousands more disabled people to become activists to challenge, we are not going to get what we want, by just accepting what is given. We cannot accept the crumbs from the table, we have to be sitting round the table as equal partners, with the state, with employers, with local government, and all organisations of civil society and they must make space for us to do that. So I wish you all well on this tonight and I hope you will get on with the follow‑up and then do your reading and watching for next week where we will see you all again. So, thank you very much for attending. I think it's been a good seminar today. Thank you. Bye‑bye. Goodbye.

GEMMA: Thank you everybody.

RICHARD: You can put on your screen for a moment if you want to wave goodbye. Nice to see all your faces. Okay. Great.

>> Hello Richard, I wanted to ask a question, I'm from burr list and I wanted to know what [Inaudible] in different countries, to submit a Shadow Report, I work with one NGO and another, and my Ministry of Human development here in Belize is asking that the disability DPOs we submit the Shadow Report to them and they will submit. For the past couple of years Belize has not submitted a Shadow Report.

RICHARD: The Shadow Report should not be to do with the ‑‑ it should be direct to the committee in Geneva you are not an adjunct of the government you are independent of the government if you want more details send me an email and I'll send you some guidance, we have to end now, our signers have been working hard for hour and a half, and our captioner, thank you for them, we're going to end now thank you very much.