



# 2021 Annual Conference

## CONCEPT NOTE THEMATIC SESSION 4

**Building back better: How should national human rights actors address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 and response measures on persons with disabilities?**

**Maison de la Paix (Pétale 5) and online event (Zoom),  
Tuesday 12 October 2021, 14:00 – 15:30 (CET)**

## TOPIC

In his 2021 [report](#) to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities states that ‘times of crises often reveal deep truths’. The risks posed by the virus, as well as the many containment measures offered by different States, are today disproportionately affecting persons with disabilities. This is exacerbated by pre-existing social and economic inequalities. Today, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19, as outlined by the Secretary-General in his policy brief [A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19](#).

This thematic panel will discuss how different national human rights actors coordinate their activities of monitoring and safeguarding the right to health and other rights of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the right to live independently and be included in the community. Amongst others, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) are mandated and well placed to monitor experiences of people with disabilities, and to advise and hold duty-bearers to account for maintaining disabled peoples’ rights throughout emergency measures. Such actions include

- facilitating the meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities throughout the cycle of response, recovery and advance planning
- ensuring that all response and recovery efforts take an intersectional approach inclusive of the diverse needs of all persons with disabilities
- addressing health and health-care inequities
- ensuring accessibility to all pandemic related information and communication
- as well as ensuring State investments to stimulate recovery through affirmative actions favouring persons with disabilities and measures to increase inclusiveness, responsiveness and accessibility of mainstream and disability specific services and infrastructure.

The afternoon thematic session on how national human rights actors should address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities also forms part the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ [2021 Fundamental Rights Forum and its Geneva Hub](#).

## PANELISTS

- **Amalia Gamio**, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- **Bokankatla Malatji**, Commissioner on Disability and Older Persons, South African Human Rights Commission
- **Elham Youssefian**, Inclusive Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor, International Disability Alliance Secretariat
- **Tytti Matsinen**, Board Member, European Blind Union

## MODERATOR

- **Miloon Kothari**, Member of the GHRP Advisory Board

## PARTNERS

[European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights](#), [International Disability Alliance](#)