

## **Advancing the rights of persons with disabilities: Innovative Policies and Practices & the post-2015 MDG agenda**

### **Zero Project Report 2013 presented at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

*Geneva, 8 March 2013:* Which innovative practices and policies exist, and how best to cooperate to implement the CRPD? Which ways forward to enhance the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda? This was discussed yesterday, together with about 40 representatives of permanent missions to the UN, international organizations and NGOs, at the side event *Promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities: Where are we now and the way forward post-2015* at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council. The event, held in room XXI at Palais des Nations, Geneva, was organized by the Permanent Missions of Austria, Finland, New Zealand and Thailand as well as the International Disability Alliance, in collaboration with the Essl Foundation and World Future Council and their Zero Project.

Co-Chair H.E. Christian Strohal, Ambassador of Austria and Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva, after introducing to the session, welcomed the representatives of the Zero Project: Michael Fembek, Programme Manager of Essl Foundation, and Ingrid Heindorf, Coordinator of the World Future Council's Geneva office.

About 3 to 7 percent of the global Gross World Product is wasted because the potential of persons with disabilities in the labour market is not realized. In the first part of the event, Ms Heindorf explained that, not least because of this, the Zero Project team focused in 2012 on the crucial subject of employment and disability, producing an impressive 250-page [report](#) including indicators, together with innovative practices and policies that promote employment of persons with disabilities. "After discussing the report's findings together with 250 decision-makers and experts at the second Zero Project Conference in February 2013 in Vienna, our aim must now be to bring solutions,

our innovative practices and policies, to the attention of all state parties to the CRPD,” Dr Fembek said. He also announced the project’s next topic: it will be Accessibility.

Co-Chair H.E. Päivi Kairamo, Ambassador of Finland and Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations Office in Geneva, introduced the second part of the event that focused on the post-2015 development agenda. Speakers were Yannis Vardakastanis, Chairperson of the International Disability Alliance, and Craig Mokhiber, Head of Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It was emphasized that the current negotiations on the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda have a high priority, that the UN CRPD very clearly makes the link between human rights and development, that 2013 will be the most important year for the MDG process, and that one of the post-2015 goals must be Human Rights. Co-Chair H.E. Päivi Kairamo invited then the audience to propose questions and comments, which came from the Ambassador of Thailand, the Permanent Mission of New Zealand, OHCHR, ILO, UNICEF, Council of Europe as well as others.

All documents and presentations are available online on <http://www.zeroproject.org/about/presentations/geneva/>

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