

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES: TOWARDS THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN AFRICA

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The Centre for Human Rights invites abstracts for a conference on disability rights with a focus on the effective implementation of the rights of women with disabilities in Africa. The conference will be held at the Centre for Human Rights on **Tuesday the 4th and Wednesday the 5th of November 2014** in Pretoria, South Africa. The conference will also coincide with launch of the second issue of the *African Disability Rights Yearbook*, the first issue having been launched in 2013. It is anticipated that papers presented at this conference will be reworked by the authors and submitted for consideration for publication in the 2015 issue of *African Disability Rights Yearbook*.

Globally, women with disabilities experience significantly more barriers in realising human rights in both public and private settings. They are more likely to suffer multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination inside as well as outside the home. In Africa, as with many other societies around the world, the situation of women with disabilities is complicated by traditional and conservative views on the position and role of women in society. It is not insignificant that the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in its preamble and substantive provisions is cognizant of the intersectionality of gender and requires states to fulfil gender equality. Article 6 of the CRPD is the clearest expression of the State obligation in this regard. Article 6 says:

1. States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention.

At a regional level, article 23 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in African (Maputo Protocol) underscores the importance attached by the regional human rights system to fulfilling the human rights of women with disabilities. Article 23 calls on States to:

- a. ensure the protection of women with disabilities and take specific measures commensurate with their physical, economic and social needs to facilitate their access to employment, professional and vocational training as well as their participation in decision-making;
- b. ensure the right of women with disabilities to freedom from violence, including sexual abuse, discrimination based on disability and the right to be treated with dignity

The conference seeks to bring together scholars, researchers, practitioners, disability activists, disabled people's organizations and policymakers from across Africa and beyond to interrogate

the intersection between women with disabilities and the fulfillment of their human rights in the African region.

Possible topics to consider

The conference theme opens itself to a wide range of topics that address the rights of women with disabilities in a wide range of spheres. The spheres include but are not limited to the following topics taken individually or in combination:

- gender and identity
- gender mainstreaming
- education
- vocational training and employment
- health, including sexual and reproductive health
- sexuality
- violence against women with disabilities including sexual abuse and sexual violence
- criminal justice system
- political participation
- participation in cultural life
- women with disabilities who are subject to multiple discrimination due to their belonging to indigenous communities, being HIV positive, sexual orientation, etc

Submission specifications

A committee will review abstracts that are **in English** and are **300-350** words in length and in MS Word (not PDF).

Abstracts must include: (1) author's name; (2) affiliation; (3) qualifications; (4) e-mail address; and (5) title of abstract.

Abstracts must be sent by e-mail to thuto.hlalele@up.ac.za.

Submission of abstracts deadline

30 June 2014. Authors will be notified by 15 July 2014 whether their abstract has been accepted.

Submission of papers deadline

15 September 2014. Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be required to submit their full papers by 15 September 2014.

Funding

Limited funding for travel and accommodation is available only to support those whose abstracts have been accepted and who have also submitted written papers. Applicants seeking financial support should indicate in a separate letter, accompanying the abstract, the reason(s) for the application and the nature of support they are seeking. Applicants will also be notified by 30 September 2014 whether their application for funding has been accepted.

Enquiries

Enquiries about the conference should be sent to Ms Thuto Hhlalele. Her contact e-mail address is: thuto.hlalele@up.ac.za; and her telephone number is: +27 (0)12 4203587.