



UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL



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**New UN Convention guarantees rights for persons with disabilities**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) became the first international human rights instrument to come into force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when on 3 May Ecuador became the 20<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the treaty.

The Convention does not create new rights for the estimated 650 million people around the world with disabilities, but aims to ensure that the benefits of existing rights are fully extended and guaranteed. This rights-based approach represents a paradigm shift from the previous charitable approach to persons with disabilities (PWDs). By ratifying the Convention, States commit themselves to enact laws and other measures to improve disability rights, and to abolish legislation, customs and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities.

The CRPD includes the rights to education, health, work, adequate living conditions, freedom of movement, freedom from exploitation and equal recognition before the law. It also addresses the need for persons with disabilities to have access to public transport, buildings and other facilities, and recognizes their capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Convention's Optional Protocol allows individuals to petition an international expert body.

Twenty-five countries have now ratified the CRPD. The Government of Nepal has signed but not yet ratified it, and OHCHR-Nepal would again like to encourage the Government to take that important step now. The time is ripe, as the Constituent Assembly is about to start work on a new constitution which will be the blueprint for a truly inclusive country where the rights of all, including PWDs, will be protected in law.

“An important step will be ensuring that the Convention is implemented by national laws and programmes. Changes to the law help speed up changes of attitude”, said OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett. “My Office is ready to assist the Government, as well as the National Human Rights Commission and organizations working for the rights of PWDs – including those with physical, mental and intellectual disabilities – in taking the steps necessary to implement the CRPD.”

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