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>> SIOBHAN MCGEE: Thank you very much. Hello, everybody. You are very welcome wherever you are in the world. And thank you for joining us. I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Siobhan McGee and I'm the Chair of the Irish Consortium on gender-based violence and also the CEO of Action Aid Ireland. We would like to warmly welcome everyone to the event. We're exploring GBV, gender-based violence as a hindrance, understanding the barriers for women and girls with disabilities.

Just at the outset I wanted to alert you to the fact that there are captions available for the event. The link is in the Zoom chat or Youtube description. And for any reason that you need the captions, if you can't find them, e-mail us at info@gbv.int. This year is focusing on the full and equitable equal participation of women in society.

In 2020 CBM and the consortium on gender-based violence launched a new paper that can be shared with everybody here. It was on the need for

disability inclusion in GBV programming. And this conversation today and hearing from our colleagues and friends is an important element of bringing up that whole topic forward in our understanding. We are really aware that women and girls with disabilities face many challenges in having full and equal participation in society. And gender-based violence is one of the ways that this manifests. We are delighted that we have amazing speakers joining us today. And we look forward to hearing your insights on this important topic. Most notably, first of all, I want to welcome Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason. She is the Irish Ambassador to the United Nations in New York since 2017 and with her team led the way on the campaign for Ireland to become a member of the UN Security Council. And now is leading the way around all of that engagement.

So we appreciate that work. And that Ireland at this time when conflicts are growing evermore and Ireland's place at the table in the Security Council and issues around gender-based violence stay on the agenda. In a few moments we will be handing over to Mary Keogh, but I want to warmly welcome Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason who is going to provide us with some opening remarks. Thank you.

>> GERALDINE BYRNE NASON: Thank you very much indeed, Siobhan. Good morning to everyone from New York. I'm really delighted to welcome you today to this side event looking at gender-based violence with a particular focus as Siobhan said on the perspective of women and girls with disabilities. For the past number of years it has been my sincere genuine pleasure to participate in the annual event hosted by the Irish Consortium on gender-based violence. I am enriched by the meeting and the focus on hearing from grassroots.

I think that's in many ways the real magic of the CSW. It brings together grassroots with policymakers. So in an Irish sense a real gathering in many ways.

The theme Siobhan mentioned it at the top of this year's commission on the status of women is the women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life as well as the elimination of violence for achieving gender equality. It couldn't be more timely.

As UN Secretary-General Guterres said that COVID is a crisis with a woman's face. The shadow of this pandemic and the pandemic of gender-based violence is just one aspect of that.

And women are continued to be grossly underrepresented in decision making on COVID. You just have to flip the coin and you see that countries led by women have performed particularly well in their COVID responses. I think that we need to join the dots between those things and am pleased that this year's CSW seeks to do in many ways just that. We are delighted to be joined today by three really inspiring speakers who have tirelessly advocated for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all aspects of life.

They worked on access to justice for women and girls with disabilities, including victims of sexual violence as well as being advocates for policy reform and inclusion of Persons with Disabilities across a whole range of areas, from electroprocesses to ensuring increased access to information, participation in decision making, sexual reproductive health rights and psychosocial support. We have an excellent and engaging discussion ahead of us. I will say a few words to you before we get there.

Friends, Ireland places gender equality at the heart of our foreign policies. The SDG of leaving no one behind is central to our work. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is part of that, including imbedded in our national action plan on women, peace and security. We recognize we know that ending gender-based violence is a whole of society effort. We must tackle the underlying root causes such as unequal power relations and negative and pervasive gendered social norms, stereotypes and practices which perpetuate and often condone gender-based violence. We must acknowledge that the vast majority of violence against women is perpetrated by men. We need to say it as it is. Men and boys must be fully engaged in this shared effort to change the harmful and restrictive masculinities that perpetuate violence. Gender equality is central to Ireland's commitment to focus on the furthest behind first.

At the core of this is recognizing that women and girls, people living with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities and members of the LGBTI community often experience systemic levels of discrimination and exclusion.

The increase in gender-based violence and domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a universal phenomenon sparing no country, no woman, no group in the world. It reminds us just how fragile many of the gains that we have made in relation to gender equality really are. The reality even before the pandemic one in three women would experience violence during their lifetime. Women and girls with disabilities are at an even greater risk of GBV with some studies showing that women with disabilities are twice as likely to experience GBV as nondisabled women and four times as likely to experience controlling behavior by partners.

Homes should be a safe place for all. But many women, girls, nonbinary, trans, and gender nonconforming Persons with Disabilities for whom their homes are a place of fear.

In the context of COVID-19 and the related restrictions these individuals are even less able to escape violence, particularly if their usual supports are not available to them. At the same time people with disabilities are often excluded from the programs and services that are designed to work to prevent and respond to GBV.

People with disabilities are often the most marginalized. They face a range of barriers, including physical, attitudinal, communication, institutional, as well as policy and legal barriers. This results in multiple degrees of discrimination, exclusion, and risk.

As members of the Irish Consortium on GBV, we were delighted to partner with -- which was launched last year which Siobhan referred to in her introduction. The learning brief highlights, the importance of ensuring a rights-based approach to GBV programming, putting the experiences, the voices and lives of people with disabilities at the center and participating in decision making and leadership.

It also emphasizes the need for a rights-based model of disability focused on breaking down barriers for people with disabilities and strengthening their rights in society. We hope that the brief will be a useful resource to make sure that our work on GBV fully integrates the normative and legal frameworks on the rights of Persons with Disabilities such as the international Convention.

Turning to Ireland's broader work here at the UN I'm very proud of the work that Ireland has done as co-Chair of a very significant UN group of friends of vision in New York. Ireland is leading a group of countries from around the world seeking to improve recognition of the fact that 90% of all vision loss is in low and middle income countries often due to poorer access to health services.

So a simple fix. This has seriously a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Women are 8% more likely than men to be blind due to unaddressed vision impairments. So we plan to continue that work actively here at the UN and hopefully to have a Resolution in the year ahead.

Before I conclude, if you will indulge me for a moment I want to say a word about Ireland's place on the Security Council. We took up a seat at the iconic table in January of this year and we will have the honor, the privilege of sitting there for two years. We are very determined to use those two years to bring Ireland's emphasis on the furthest behind in to the Council.

We are exercising leadership on women, peace and security at the Council, including through Ireland having the honor to co-Chair the informal experts' group on women, peace and security.

Disability is part of that approach, too. We very much look forward to working with colleagues on the call today with all of you to raising awareness of Security Council Resolution 2475, 2475, a groundbreaking resolution agreed in 2019 on the protection of Persons with Disabilities in conflict.

So friends, I hope that you will enjoy the discussion today and that you take real advantage of this opportunity to be uplifted and motivated by our speakers who are really leading the way and raising up voices of women and girls with disabilities. And once again, I'm really deeply honored to have had the opportunity to speak with you all this morning. Thank you very much.

>> SIOBHAN MCGEE: Thank you very much, Ambassador. Thanks for those insightful and wide ranging remarks talking about the intersectionality of inequality in particular. And today our focus is on that

around disability and also the governance context and the global commitments that we are aspiring to meet together and the centrality of rights-based approach. So we are really pleased that you took the time to join us and appreciate that very much.

Now I'm going to hand over to our Moderator for the rest of the session which is Mary Keogh Ph.D. Mary, thank you for taking up this role with us today and for adding your experience and insights to this occasion. Mary is the advocacy director with CBM Global and formerly the senior advisor on disability and gender equality. Very informed. And we're grateful to you, Mary, for helping us and engaging with us today. So we're in your hands from here. Thanks.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you so much. And really pleased to here. Ambassador, thank you so much for your opening remarks. For the next -- for the rest of this session we are going to be speaking with our panelists who I'm -- I'm going to introduce in a moment. But I wanted to, first of all, go through some very quick housekeeping rules. Questions can be posed in the chat. We have a number of questions prepared, but we also equally want some audience participation. So please post your questions in the chat.

If you are not speaking, can you please keep your camera off and our panelists with cameras on? This makes it easier and more inclusive and accessible and for accessing sign interpretation. We have -- you can pin sign interpretation. So I think Brianna has put some instructions on that in the chat. So how to do that. And there also is captioning and the link to that is there also. So I -- we will periodically put that through the webinar so we can make sure that everyone is able to participate.

So I'm going to -- yeah, I mean we have a really great panel to discuss today. And I'm pleased to be able to moderate this and be with a really strong group of women with disabilities. So I'm going to introduce, first of all, the speakers. They are going to speak for five minutes each. And then we will be -- I will be preparing some questions to ask. And then we will be integrating some questions from the chat.

So yes, let's start and get going.

So in terms of our first speaker, I'm going to turn to Carolyn. Carolyn Dagani is the current President of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf and on her second term in this role. She is one of the primary movers of the Filipino sign language, deaf rights and other deaf related movements in the Philippines. I have had the pleasure to meet Carolyn face to face in Manila years ago. She is a strong advocate and she has a lot of experience that she can share with us. I'm going to hand over to you for the next five minutes maybe to take us through some of your key highlights and looking forward to hearing from you. Thank you, Carolyn.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Hello, everyone. Good morning, and good evening, depends on which area of the world you are in. I'm Carolyn

Dagani, President of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf. One of the prime movers of the Filipino sign language and other deaf movements in the Philippines.

I'm also an advocacy advocating for many deaf people are empowered. And in my term as President of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf, the membership has grown. I'm also involved as the Chair of the Deaf Education Council, founding member of the Filipino Sign Language Council and assessment for the deaf, a member of the Filipino Coalition on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and coordinator of the National Deaf Network of access to (inaudible) COVID-19 to name a few.

I have delivered lectures and presentations in conferences and meetings and Assemblies. And participated in national and international trainings and activities recently in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Fiji, United Kingdom and Thailand and other countries.

On women and gender related advocacy, I'm also -- cross disability and CRPD issues or advocacies. Serving as the official representative of the Philippines Alliance of Women with Disabilities for Civil Service Organizations. Was part of the Delegation to the 64th session of CEDAW for the review of the Philippines representing during public and private briefings in coordination with other Philippines community service organizations of indigenous women, migrant women workers, women living with HIV/AIDS and rural community. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you. Next I will move to Barbra Nyangairi. Barbra leads a research and advocacy think tank on deaf and disability issues in Zimbabwe. And under her leadership she has successfully advocated for policy reform on Persons with Disabilities and lateral processes increasing access to information and sexual reproductive rights and psychosocial reports for parents and children with disabilities. Barbra, over to you. And very warm welcome to have you here today on the panel.

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: Thank you very much. So I am the executive director of Deaf Zimbabwe Trust. Disability issues in Zimbabwe have been very topical since 1992 when we had our first disabled persons act. Zimbabwe signed the Convention in 2013. But since then we are still fighting for domestication of the CRPD. But we have had some progress in the work that we do with the Zimbabwe Trust, providing psychosocial support for parents and children with disabilities, understanding that our disabled course is still very much located in the witchcraft discourse. And as a result of the negative attitudes, there are inequalities, barriers and discrimination that are still very ripe as a result of that.

We are working to see access to justice. The Ambassador very well described the vulnerabilities of women and girls with disabilities to sexual and gender-based violence. In our country it is no different because it is just meaning that they can get away with it. Access to justice and creating a justice system that is more accessible and more able to really adjudicate

issues in a free and fair way for women and girls with disabilities is a struggle but we are making progress.

In 2013 as Zimbabwe promoted a new constitution and sign language became one of the official languages in our constitution. But the implementation of that, the operationalization of that we have had to do strategic litigation where dialogue has not worked. I think we have two cases where we had to introduce strategic litigation and take the issues to court. Women and girls with disabilities in terms of access to education, 90% of them have not been to school. This makes them more vulnerable to gender-based violence. Because schools are actually protective spaces and protective spaces in the home. And parents seek livelihoods outside the home and leave them vulnerable to all forms of abuse. So access to education is one of the things that we have been advocating and very excited that as Zimbabwe Trust we contributed to the educational amendment act which is disability provisions.

So we are very excited about increased access to education. Our Education Act actually criminalizes not sending children to school which was not there before. And we are thinking that this will really work to increasing access to education for children with disabilities. And therefore limits vulnerability to violence.

We also worked towards training young Persons with Disabilities as advocates, self-advocates. And because of the lack of education, the ability to self-represent is very limited. And so that has to be changed. So we are working towards all that. So we look forward to a very lively discussion as we discuss that. Thank you very much.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. Thank you so much, Barbra, and we will be getting in to more detail once we start the questions. The third speaker is Tendai Madondo. Tendai is a social worker with Deaf Zimbabwe Trust. You are very welcome. And I will give a brief introduction and you can come in then.

Tendai is a trained ECD teacher. She has defied all the odds and become part of the first four deaf graduates of social work in Zimbabwe. She has pursued her third level education after her primary and her secondary education. So really wonderful to have you, Tendai, speaking from your experience and looking forward to hearing more. But over to you for the moment maybe to give us a little bit more insight in to who you are. Thank you. I'm just going to check where the sign interpreter.

>> TENDAI MADONDO: Education for children with disabilities training in sign language for women with disabilities, inclusion. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Okay. So that's a brief introduction. I think we missed the beginning of it because the sign interpretation didn't come on. Could we maybe just do that again.

>> Would you like her to start again? Seems to have lost network there.

>> MARY KEOGH: She may be having connection problems but just in case she wants to reintroduce, absolutely because I think we had -- if she is having connection problems we can also move on. So just checking. It might be.

It looks like the screen has frozen. So if I can maybe move on, and what we can do is once Tendai comes back online, we can come back to Tendai, if that's okay with everyone. These are the joys of moderating Zoom meetings when connections come in and out. So bear with us everybody.

So I might start then with the first question. And basically this is to -- I'll go to Carolyn first with this. The theme of the CSW this year is about the full and equal participation of women and its elimination of violence. What do you think are the biggest challenges for women and girls with disabilities in society in the Philippines?

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Right. So generally we have a lot of challenges. For people with disabilities in general, in terms of accessibility, there have been a lot of barriers to accessibility which then translates to how they access services to health, education, justice, social protection, among others. At the same time they also have some troubles in terms of how the governance is here in the Philippines. How -- the system of politics here in the Philippines. So this would have an effect on the national budgeting in terms of how this national and local implementation laws and policies and partnering with different Civil Society Organizations, and participation in Government processes, also the geographic challenges here in the Philippines because we have thousands of islands here. And there have been problems in terms of communication and movement and varied situation of the local Government which some might have enough budget and some might not have -- some are poorer than the rest.

And, of course, the problem of disasters, the Philippines being a very disaster prone country. Many parts of the country is hit by disasters. There is the situation of armed conflict, like terrorism, especially in the Southern part of the Philippines. And so -- and, of course, it's been exacerbated by the situation now because of COVID-19.

So that really, you know, poses a lot of threats to the health and the economic balance of women with disabilities. Plus, of course, this also -- we are talking about women and girls with disabilities who are more at a disadvantage because they have fewer access to education. And, of course, we are also dealing with the stereotypes, how society perceives them. Taking on women and girls with disabilities, taking on more domestic chores. And that they are expected to be not assertive but to be passive. So that's how society dictates the role of women. And, of course, you know, in terms of deaf and girls, deaf women and girls here in the Philippines we tried to look at the number of cases, the reports we have from 2006 to 2012 and we have 346 cases that involves deaf women and girls all over the Philippines.

And about 75 to 84% of these cases are filed by deaf women and girls.

So -- and this includes situations of rape and sexual violence, which is ten times more likely to happen than other kinds of complaints. So these are mostly cases that involves gender-based violence. So those are the current situation that we are facing now.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. Thank you so much. I want to check if we are okay with Tendai to come back just to see. Sorry, I can't see on my screen. I'm making sure. Is Tendai back in the room with us to maybe introduce herself again and I can address that question also to Tendai? So welcome, Tendai. Please go ahead.

>> TENDAI MADONDO: My name is Tendai. I'm a social worker who works with Persons with Disabilities and support the children -- who support children with education, training for people with disabilities for inclusion in sign language for children.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. And maybe if I can ask you the same question that I asked Carolyn. So the question is in Zimbabwe what do you think are the biggest challenges for women and girls with disabilities?

>> TENDAI MADONDO: Yeah. In Zimbabwe GBV is mainly in rural areas. We see more girls in rural areas don't attend schools. Others refusing to go to education. Others are forced to get married first. The biggest problem is communication and access to services, there is a barrier of access to services. And if you want to go to the platform, police don't understand communication and sign language. Again others that were abused, and they force them to sleep with them. And they don't give them money.

Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you, Tendai. Thank you. Can I just say -- if there is any background noise, people with their microphones on, if they can mute just to -- sometimes it happens. I thank you very much, Tendai, for that answer.

I'm going to come back again to Carolyn, if that's okay. Hi again. How are women with disabilities threatened with violence because they are active participants in society? Are women with disabilities intimidated for actively participating in society? So reflecting on your experience in the Philippines and all of your activism work, have you come across this experience. And maybe if you can share a little bit more, that would be great. Thank you.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: So Mary, I just want to clarify the question. If you won't mind repeating the question again, please.

>> MARY KEOGH: Yes. How are women with disabilities threatened with violence because they are active in their society? And that can be in any form of activism. Are women with disabilities intimidated for actively participating in society? How have you seen women with disabilities being intimidated because they have spoken out in their society on any particular topic? Is that clearer?

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Yes. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Well, a lot of -- a lot of times well, let me talk about, you know, the impact first of this gender-based violence to women. Because for many times there have been a lot of unresolved trauma for these women and girls with disabilities who experience GBV. Especially for the victims who are not able to access services to counseling or any form of assistance.

And so this sometimes results to loss of opportunity or interest in terms of education and employment, unwanted pregnancies and in extreme cases mental breakdowns which would lead to institutionalization in mental hospital or medical facilities. And also repeated sexual violence that have led to several clusters of prostitution.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you. You raise the issue about access to justice being a very key issue for women and girls with disabilities in terms of getting access to justice. So there is a question -- our next question is related to that and I might maybe start firstly with Barbra. How important is access to justice in the broader rights movement? And what are the challenges experienced for survivors with disabilities that you have found in your -- through your work?

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: Thank you. Access to justice is very, very important for women and girls with disabilities. Particularly because of the risk of violence that they face on a daily basis. And as long as there is no access to justice, there is a sense of that you can abuse a person with a disability. There are no penalties. There are no repercussions for that. And I think because of the lack of access to justice for women in Zimbabwe we have seen a lot of violence perpetrated on women and girls with disabilities and many of them have the perpetrators have gotten away with it. And so strengthening the justice system is a very important mechanism for preventing gender-based violence.

It is a very important way of making sure that perpetrators are brought to work and the right to justice is upheld. So one of the challenges many -- many challenges that we face in Zimbabwe with regards to the justice system is accessibility. And we are talking about the physical access, the built environment is very much inaccessible. Until recently most of our courts had steps and did not have facilities that would ensure physical access for women and girls with physical disabilities that would need accessible places such as ramps, lifts. Up until now lifts are not available.

The other challenge that we face is there is no preparation to receive women and girls with disabilities in our justice system. And this preparation could be just by way of disaggregation. So you are looking at it from the police where the report is made. Up until a person gets to court, there is nothing in the justice system to receive Persons with Disabilities. So one of the things that has happened many times we have been to court is that as

you go to court, the prosecutors are surprised that the person are deaf. What we do now? So you are looking at justice delayed, many times justice denied because cases are postponed because there is no preparedness to receive -- especially women and girls with disabilities who have been violated a lot more.

You look at issues of communication barriers. So access is also not just the built environment. But communication barriers. We have many cases that have been thrown out, particularly for women and girls who are deaf as well as women and girls with intellectual disabilities. Because of the communication barriers and the way in which our justice system does not have the mechanisms to provide communication support for women and girls with disabilities.

The other issue is awareness, lack of awareness. The reporting mechanism how to report, when to report and what to do. As Zimbabwe we have done a lot of initiatives for preventing gender-based violence. We have put a number of organizations that work on access to justice and prevention of violence. Unfortunately in the awareness programs many of them have not been able to include women and girls with disabilities.

The information has not been provided in accessible formats. At times the -- the environment where they -- awareness campaigns are conducted maybe they are radio programs, deaf women can't access them. Deaf girls can't access radio programs. The lack of simplification of processes and procedures. One of the things that we've also seen was that the justice system itself can be very intimidating. It is not a space that you just get in to and you understand what's going on. And that has been a deterrent to actually reporting cases. Tendai talked about failing to report rape when it occurs. That's a very common issue here.

And so you find that perpetrators are not brought to book and therefore they think they can do it again and again. And they go on to perpetrate violence to women and girls with disabilities. Our legal framework is not very inclusive in that it doesn't provide specific provisions for how to provide supports to access to justice for women and girls with disabilities.

>> MARY KEOGH: Barbra, thank you so much for taking us through because it is such a systemic issue. It's from the highest levels in terms of getting access to courts, to the very basic levels have been able to get access to to very important services. And I want to ask that same question to Tendai. So I can just ask it again. And once I finish it I will go to a question from the audience. So Tendai, you have heard Barbra speak about the terms of accessing justice. To hear from you about your perspective about how important is access to justice in the broader rights movement and what are the challenges experienced for survivors with disabilities. So Tendai, over to you if you are comfortable to answer that. Then I will move to a question from the audience.

>> TENDAI MADONDO: In courts police have a problem with sign

language. They don't understand sign language because children if -- if they want to go to the police -- police who come back later, put their interpreters there and to report their cases is very different. The abuse continues. And unfortunately disability they decrease in their challenges. The person who rape them go free and they don't get their justice. In Zimbabwe, there is no sign language in courts. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you so much, Tendai. And I know that Carolyn probably has a lot to add in to this as well because it has been a lot of Carolyn's work. I might go to a question from one of our Irish colleagues. If the organizations that you are with represent or work with all disabled women with different impairments. So maybe just to hear a little bit more. I think, Carolyn, you spoke about all of your work as a disabled woman in the disabled movement in the Philippines and also Barbra and Tendai from the Zimbabwe perspective. Is that question clear to everybody?

>> Yes.

>> MARY KEOGH: Okay. So who would like to go first?

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: All right. I am involved in the different movements in the sector. Advocacies in education and also in coalitions, CRPD and also part of that and other disability rights movement advocates.

So also women and gender -- and also sexual and reproductive rights. Yes, I have possibilities.

>> MARY KEOGH: You are coming from the representative perspective. You are speaking on behalf of Persons with Disabilities for Persons with Disabilities. Yeah.

Barbra, and I come to you, Barbra and Tendai, on that quickly.

>> TENDAI MADONDO: Yes. In Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Trust we have different deaf women with individual -- to fight abuse and solve problems. We continue to help them. They don't know sign language and they are abused and they don't know what to do.

And -- they don't have hearing aids. Those -- Zimbabwe Trust everyone -- we continue to support them. Women at home, they have problems with their colleagues and they -- if -- their problem is not solved we help them solve them at Zimbabwe Trust.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you. Anything else to add there from -- okay. Yes, do you have something to add in, Tendai or Barbra? So maybe I might just move on. And that's -- that's a very important question around because it is always a key issue when we are working from a disability rights perspective around how we are across impairment, across all groups of Persons with Disabilities. But also recognizing that certain groups of Persons with Disabilities can also be very much left behind in conversations whether it is about access to justice or in general in terms of gender equality.

So I'm going to come, Carolyn, back to you, if that's okay. I know you

have worked quite a bit with indigenous women and Muslim women in the Philippines. Can you talk about the importance of an intersectional approach or your experience that you've had raising this issue at CEDAW? I'm very aware of the work that you have done with the CEDAW Committee, Carolyn. It has been very groundbreaking to bring disabled women's rights in to general women's rights. So I think maybe to hear a little bit about that experience would be really good. Thank you, Carolyn.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: It's truly important, for example, Muslim women, Indigenous People, these are intersectionalities that have to be recognized to empower women. Some are even forced in to marriage as you know. They don't know women -- most women don't know their rights, especially the laws in the Philippines. We are not empowered because they are not educated. Many are not educated.

We've had discussions on accessibility to education, meetings, but it's always -- there have been barriers, always and always. Sometimes even their families, their own families take advantage of them because they are not aware of their rights, gender rights. Those coming from now are the -- (inaudible).

It is a Province town in the Philippines. Young women, deaf women, some lost their hearing eventually and issues of politics have been -- politics, religion even are barriers for them to have access. I think -- I even attended or participated in an international conference of Muslim people of -- of deaf Muslim people and it was the first time that I was there.

They had their own vocabulary. It's different. They have their own signs. Way different from the signs that we have. And also we have connections with ASEAN organizations where they have interpreters for their own mosques. So their culture down South is very rich. And what happened in UN CEDAW that was in 2016, I spoke and represented the Philippines Delegation. And I talked about a case of art. And this was a very sensitive issue, because the CEDAW Committee or the operations protocol in 2011 which -- was in 2011 but essentially centered around women in 2013 but has not received any reply in the government since. These cases are and I raise this point where this deaf question was raised and no interpreters.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you. Thank you very much, Carolyn. And I know that one of the challenges always around how we bring disabled women's rights in to the perspective of wider women's rights issues and I think that's something that's growing in all of the work that all of our panelists, too, really, really contribute to that.

So I might just come to another question from one of our participants is on -- the question is to Barbra. Barbra, has there been any deliberate attempt to engage security agencies, especially the police on the issues of GBV and providing knowledge and capacity building for responding to cases.

So I think this is back to your previous discussion a few moments around the challenges at a systemic level with regard to inclusion. So maybe if you could address that, that would be great. And thank you to the participant for the great question.

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: Thank you very much, Mary. That's a very important question. We have been engaging not just us but a number of organizations have been working with the police to ensure increased access to justice. And we are very excited that the police has been very receptive to our efforts. Have learned sign language and victim friendly unit has come up with measures to ensure inclusive processes in terms of receiving cases. There is still more that can be done. How do you prepare the justice system from the police the time the report is made up to the time in court. So that whole ecosystem needs to be prepared to be able to handle cases. Yes, there is a lot of work being done. The police are very receptive and we look forward to working more with them.

I think inclusion, Mary, you have experienced it is very incremental. It is a little step and a little step and a little step. We have been taking progressive steps to make it possible. And it has been a very good journey so far. Unfortunately it has been delayed because for a long time nothing has been done. Women with disabilities have been raped. Children have been born out of those rape cases. And nothing has been done to the perpetrators. They have gone free. So we hope that it is the beginning of the end of a generation where women and girls with disabilities are just abused and no one is brought forth.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you. Anybody else on the panel like to come in on that before I move on to the next question? Carolyn or Tendai, if you have anything to add to that? There's no pressure to come in all the time. So don't worry about that if there is nothing to add for the moment. Carolyn.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: I think it is also important to note that deaf, deaf -- not just the deaf but also people with -- other people with disabilities are advocates themselves. They have to be included in sensitivity trainings. And be aware of the UNCRPD as well. So they are aware of their rights. They have to work together. We all peoples, people with disabilities have to work together, work as one. Have our numbers increase. Be an inspiration so we take down all these barriers. And then we get our access and participate fully eventually. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you, Carolyn. Thank you very much for that intervention. I'm keeping an eye on the questions in the chat room. And thank you to my behind-the-scenes people who are helping with this as well. Maybe two or three questions to ask the panelists that I have prepared. If there are other questions coming, please do send them now.

So I might just come to Barbra and Tendai with this question. And this is more from a kind of an INGO perspective. So CBM global is an INGO

organization. Organizations here are INGO organizations, not a representative organization. From a program perspective I think many -- sorry. I'm just going to -- yes. Many INGO organizations feel intimidated by disability inclusion thinking that inclusion is a really specialized and difficult thing. What is your experience with this? And what suggestions do you have for INGOs? So what suggestions do you have for INGOs to become more disability inclusive? Barbra.

>> TENDAI MADONDO: Tendai will take it first. Inclusion is an attitude that -- program designed and it is reflected in the financial and material resources annotated. It is very difficult caused, by ignorance and attitudes and fear. Same investment that was made for gender inclusion was meant for disability inclusion. Training is intentional. Resources should be allocated to disability inclusion for women with disabilities, they must be included.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you very much, Tendai. And Barbra, I think you have something to add to that.

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: Just that many times international organizations have put in a disability inclusion as an afterthought. And as Tendai said, there are no resources to support inclusion. And so when you then say oh, Persons with Disabilities are welcome, let's come in. But the program designed has not been inclusive. So if it is an afterthought it means you don't have resources for sign language interpreters. You don't have resources for simplified materials. You have not advocated for inclusion.

And therefore it becomes very difficult to include Persons with Disabilities in our work. So inclusion for INGOs has been an afterthought. And I appreciate the work that CBM has been doing to go to the partners and funders to say disability is something that you actually budget for because you are giving resources to different partners, bring in disability and at that point in your project, program's design, in your initial allocation of resource. So that's not an afterthought. That I think that's what has been our experience. And I have seen CBM train GIZs globally to begin to include in the program design inclusion, disability management training for different international organizations has been going on which is very, very important. So that inclusion is not an afterthought.

In Zimbabwe we have got a number of international organizations that are really embracing inclusion in its entirety. And we have seen a lot of progress with our work with Persons with Disabilities in different spaces. It is education, employment, informal -- the informal economy, uplift financial inclusion. There is a -- there is a real buzz for inclusion in our country that has been led by international organizations. But -- it was as a result of intentional work by CBM Global to begin to bring the inclusion agenda on the table for every, you know, sector that we are working in and whatever sector has to be inclusive. And we have seen that happening. So we are

very happy for the progress that has been done. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you, Barbra. And just maybe to come back really briefly on that point because I think a lot of INGOs can have the resources to do that, but it's really about the movements and who we partner with and partnering with Disabled Peoples Organizations are really, really key for this in terms of inclusion. We can't have inclusion and women led disabled organizations involved in inclusion.

So I have -- I'm conscious of the time. We have estimated 90 minutes, but also we don't always have to go to 90 minutes and some questions are coming in. We will keep going for the next little while. So these are more just at a policy level. We had the Ambassador with us earlier which is really wonderful. Ireland sits and has its seat on the Security Council at the moment. For most of Ireland this is important for us. But it is also really a great opportunity to look at how to make sure, you know, people are not left behind. And I think that's -- that's a challenge.

So to all of the panelists I'm putting this question. Do you have any messages that you would like to pass on to the Irish Government as we are sitting on the UN Security Council to ensuring that disability would be adequately addressed? What would be your key message that you would like to send? And it can go to whoever wants to speak first.

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: I think I can start. Thank you. I think for Zimbabwe our message would be to make disability inclusion a priority on the Security Council. It's a global problem. It is not just an African or continental problem. It is a global problem. Other countries have made progress with regards to inclusion but there are still challenges. But Africa is still lagging behind in terms of making inclusion a priority in most of our interventions.

And so we are looking at -- there is a time when disability -- there was a decade of inclusion and a decade that was dedicated to disability inclusion. And I'm thinking that it's important that we actually put and prioritize disability as giving it priority and evidence in all our work by making it whole in everything that is being done by the Security Council. The CRPD has been ratified by a lot of countries. It is the domestication of those provisions in the CRPD. So we don't want -- how do we move away from just talking ratification so that we look good, so the countries look good and they don't do anything about it? I think our message is that Ireland has to bring to the Security Council that we do not want tokenization. It has to be genuine inclusion of Persons with Disabilities across all sectors.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thanks. Does Tendai want to come in or do I move to Carolyn? Maybe we will move to Carolyn. Have you got any key message you would like to give as Ireland has its seat on the Security Council? What would you like to see the focus?

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Right, Mary. Thank you for that. Well, again thank you for that opportunity to get involved. But I'd just like to

emphasize for all women and girls with disabilities that in all levels of decision making that would affect their rights we need to empower them. We need to allow them to decide for themselves. We need to make sure that their rights are recognized. Always have the basis, the legal framework of the CRPD for full inclusion. We don't actually adhere to the charity perspective anymore. But more on the rights perspective. So we need to recognize that in all levels of decision making we need to involve women and girls with disabilities.

So I think that's the key message that I would like to emphasize, you know, the saying that Nothing About Us, Without Us. So thank you so much.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you so much, Carolyn. That's a very important and very key message. Just check, anybody else wants to come in? There is a related question. So Carolyn, you spoke there about women with disabilities needing to be in the room around decision making and being there and included. So I -- if you could share a little bit about what your experiences linking with grassroots disability women activists with international Forums. Because I think a lot of the time that we have is very big international discussions around gender, equality and disability inclusion, but linking it to grassroots and making sure that the grassroots voices are included is really critical. So hearing maybe just a little bit more from you on that and then Barbra and Tendai, either of you wanted to come in on that also, that would be great. Is that okay, Carolyn? Are we okay?

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: I think that in terms of grassroots promotion we are looking at the issue about education. I think Carolyn, Tendai brought to the floor the challenges with access to education. And how that denies many women and girls with disabilities a chance to sit on the table to make decisions. Because they are not even in the spaces when the decisions are made.

There is also elitism unfortunately but even within the disability sector itself, there is elitism. That is preventing women and girls with disabilities at the grassroots level to come in, be and part of this big movement. Poverty, Zimbabwe, for example, is a very formalized economy. And how do you participate when you are running after the daily livelihood putting bread on your table? The ability to participate in the women's movement becomes very (inaudible) because you are looking at these issues that are pressing, the urging issues of putting food on the table, to participate even in the women's movement.

In our country the women's movement itself is a challenging space for women and girls with disabilities because the meetings are not accessible. The information is not provided in accessible formats. And that goes back to the design of the programs by the women's movement and how that can then ensure that inclusion takes place.

So participation in the grassroots processes for women in the grassroots,

we have that education is priority because education puts in you spaces that you would not be if you are not educated. So which is why our main focus as an organization is ensuring that women and girls with disabilities have access to education because this will ensure that they are able to participate in decision-making processes, you know, from a very informed point of view. So education is very, very key.

Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. Carolyn, I see you had your hand up there. Was it to come in?

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Great. If I may add to what Barbra mentioned, here in the Philippines while we have seen some improvements but still we are considered a poor country. So we had limited resources and accessibility to services, to education, to employment health services. Social protection, and so we had a lot of barriers, even comparing it to the poor -- the general public. Like, for example, a concrete example would be during this COVID pandemic there was a social amelioration program by the Government. And millions of Pesos have been allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Development. Deaf people couldn't get basic information about where to access these funds, where to get support. And so, you know, we are talking about different levels, different layers of barriers, systemic barriers. And so the noninclusive governance is something that from as basic as the use of language which marginalizes deaf people, even further.

And so what happens now we talk about Filipino sign language being a means to have that accessibility. And we have been lobbying and advocating for the recognition for that for the longest time. And, you know, how we use that particular legislation in order to break down those barriers to communication, the Philippines being a disaster-prone country we need the Government to take more accountability in terms of addressing the inclusion concerns that we have, especially at the local level.

We also need to make sure in terms of data gathering we need to have more disaggregated data which is very crucial, especially at the local level. We have a lot of areas, regions in the Philippines that are not reached by these programs, by this session protection programs. So we have to make sure that these are being addressed as well.

Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. And Carolyn, very important point -- sorry. Tendai, apologies.

>> TENDAI MADONDO: Poverty, lack of Internet, lack of ICT is a problem. For example, computers, phones, laptops, and very difficult. For example, Skype, how do you use it if you don't have (inaudible) with disabilities. Don't have sign language and you don't hear voice in Zimbabwe. People with disabilities have challenges on that during this COVID-19 time. Because COVID-19 is difficult. Information -- and they

have information but it is very difficult to communicate. How do you communicate with phones if you don't have -- we have to -- digital poverty.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. And to come back to some of your comments there and to connect with some of the comments in the chat room and back to Barbra and Carolyn around the noninclusion pieces, we need to include regional participation in project design. We need to think about when we are doing all these big programs, whether at a national level in terms of COVID rollout vaccination program or information program or at a project level that inclusion, reasonable accommodation and thinking about inclusion is really critical. So I think thank you to the colleague who raised that in the chat room because I think that's a key theme that's coming across as each speaker speaks.

So I'm going to look -- I have two more questions. And then in terms of anybody else we can look at that. So we're moving towards the SDGs. I mean we are looking at 2030 being as kind of the framework for finalizing and a huge amount of effort and emphasis on accelerating the SDGs and the Sustainable Development Goals. For people who don't know what the SDGs are, and the -- the Sustainable Development Goals have put a big emphasis on leaving no one behind.

I ask the panelists to give your quick thoughts on do you think we are on track to achieving the goals that the SDGs is looking for in terms of gender equality and wider goals in terms of education? Okay. So we will go to Carolyn first because I see your hand up first. So go ahead.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Right. If we are talking about the Philippines in general, unfortunately no, we are still not on track. Filipinos with disabilities most specially are still being left behind and that includes deaf people. There have been very poor efforts from -- yeah -- from the National Council on Disability Affairs to implement the national plan of action, the strategy to promote these SDGs. And there have been very little, if no, data disaggregation on how SDGs impact, the Sustainable Development Goals impact Persons with Disabilities and the deaf community in general. We are talking about, you know, the goal No. 10 on reduce inequality and goal No. 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. And these two Sustainable Development Goals have not seen any improvement at all since 2000 for deaf women and girls. And, you know, I mention about the case of ours. So that's one concrete example of that.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. So more to be done I think is coming from you as the key message. Yes. Barbra, we might come to you next then and then Barbra and Tendai, please come in in terms of your thoughts on this.

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: Thank you very much. I think the SDGs are a very important tool for equalizing and increasing access to development for countries. And unfortunately for Zimbabwe their knowledge about SDGs among the community are very, very limited. We

did a survey as Zimbabwe Trust I think in 2020 on the knowledge of SDGs. They do not know them. So how do you aim for a target that is not known by the people who are supposed to benefit from, you know, these SDGs? So I think one of the things that needs to happen is to promote them from elite spaces where they are to the grassroots spaces in terms of awareness because there is a very important role that Persons with Disabilities can use to hold Governments accountable to them because they are signalled to reach those SDGs. And 2030 is not very far. But I would say that as we are right now we are still very far from achieving them, Especially the ones that Carolyn alluded to, issues of reducing inequality, as long as children with disabilities, 90% of children with disabilities in Zimbabwe do not access education.

How do you work to reduce inequality when the basic things like education are not accessible for children and Persons with Disabilities? We talk about higher education. In Zimbabwe less than 1% of Persons with Disabilities have access to higher education. How do you reduce inequality when you have such low numbers of inclusion? Tendai is one in four of social workers in our country is deaf in our country. We have four social workers who are deaf. How do you reduce inequality with those levels? So I think we're very far and I would agree with Carolyn, we have a lot of work to do. And I think -- the political will is not there. There is excitement to sign in these Treaties and yet when we come to the grind of actually working and getting to reality, we don't see that happening.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you, Barbra. Before I come to Tendai, if Tendai wants to add, I want to come back to Carolyn for a moment, Carolyn, you have been through the bridge program which is the program with the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium which is training capacity building Persons with Disabilities around the connection between the Sustainable Development Goals and the CRPD, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Can you maybe share really quickly how critical it has been for you and how you have used going through that program for your activism and advocacy?

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: Right. I'm very grateful to IDA, the International Disability Alliance for that opportunity to be included in the bridge training program. So they have really extensively explained to us the connection between the SDG and CRPD. And look at their common points and see how this could be used as the framework. For example, talking about access to justice, in which Article that would respond to CRPD and which goal in SDG we could actually use that.

So I think these legal frameworks, the learnings that I had and rich training it is really crucial, especially in doing advocacy work. Knowledge awareness about these policies, about these frameworks in terms of how we could encourage, how we could convince the Government to take action in,

you know, the things that we are fighting for. I think these are really strong legal basis for our advocacy work.

>> MARY KEOGH: Okay. Thank you, Carolyn. It struck me it was important to raise that because I know it's a program that's being done with many grassroots activists of Persons with Disabilities. I am going to come back to see if Tendai had anything to add in there before I ask the last question. If not I'm keeping an eye out on -- I don't want to pressure people to be answering questions when they don't need to be. I'm going to come to the last question unless there is any other burning questions in the chat room on this. So I mean, you know, wrapping up this really detailed conversation which has gone from like the systemic issues that we need to challenge and look at in terms of inclusion and the whole concept of how inclusion is done in a Nothing About Us, Without Us as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obligates Governments to do. It is not -- it is not voluntary. It is obligatory.

So and I think there is so much around kind of access to justice accesses as Barbra spoke about education being really key. It is very multi-faceted. We can feel like it is a bit too much to do but we have a lot of activists and a lot of people who are able to come to the table to support on inclusion. And it is not having to be only every one person's role. It is everyone's role in society to do this.

On kind of a closing message to each of our panelists, what message or vision would you like people from this webinar to leave with in terms of all of what we've discussed? So whoever would like to go first with that would be great. Whoever. Put your hand up. Yep, Carolyn, there is a hand. Go ahead.

>> CAROLYN DAGANI: All right. I believe it is truly important that we do have more trainings on empowerment and to take note of the importance of intersectionalities, that this doesn't just occur in one -- at one level. And yes, to empower deaf women, all women with disabilities as well. For us in the Philippines, yes, that's a role. We are pushing everyone that IRR be enacted or implementing rules and regulations of the law, the Philippine sign language law that we have already.

Because this is our legacy to the future deaf or future of deaf. And that we should engage with each other, form bonds, partnerships, interact with each other and make sure that you are included always. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you. Very important messages, Carolyn. Barbra and Tendai, have you anything you would like to add as your final messages before I go back to Siobhan for some closing remarks as well?

>> TENDAI MADONDO: My message is inclusion is an attitude. Fight against gender-based violence for women and girls with disabilities. We have to work together as communities, families, Governments, and international communities. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you so much. Barbra.

>> BARBRA NYANGAIRI: I think for us in Zimbabwe I would say that I think even globally and also continentally sexual and gender-based violence is the leading pandemic among women and girls with disabilities. It is a very serious threat to enjoyment of their rights and achievement of their full potential. And we need to take it very seriously. Take the political, the economic and the will by all of us to fight gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities. So that they are able to fulfill their potential and live a life that is enjoyable and happy for them. Thank you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Great. And that's a really important message to finish on. I think I want to say thank you so much to our fantastic panelists who have shared a breadth of knowledge and people coming with representative views, coming from the movement and having voices heard. Siobhan, I see your camera is back on. So I am going to say a quick thank you to everyone -- all of the sign interpreters and the behind-the-scenes people because you make it a lot easier. Doing these webinars are much easier face to face, even though Zoom is incredibly inclusive to have us all together when we can't be. Siobhan, over to you.

>> SIOBHAN MCGEE: Yes. Thank you. Appreciate all the sign expertise. And to Tendai and Barbra and Carolyn, heartfelt thanks for taking the time to be with us and to share your insights with. And I can see that the exchanges are going to follow. And connections are being made. And I liked one of the most recent things that was said, there was a lot I liked, inclusion is an attitude. I thought what was a powerful statement. I want to thank Mary for convening us and bringing the conversation forward. So constructive. And also to the Ambassador and her colleagues for joining us.

The Consortium is pleased to partner with the Department of Foreign Affairs. And thank you to the staff for bringing us all together. So thank you. And I think let's stay in touch and take the conversations and our work together forward. Thank you, everyone.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you, everyone. And there will be a recording of this webinar made available. And a really big thanks to Abby and Brianna behind the scenes. There has a huge amount of work behind the scenes. Take care. And stay safe, everyone.

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