

## Building on the Bridging the Gap experience: strengthening policies and practices for inclusion and leaving no one behind

### Brief biographies of the speakers

#### Moderator: María Soledad Cisternas Reyes

Since 2017 María Soledad is the Special Envoy of UNSG on Disability and Accessibility.

She holds a Degree in Law and a Master's in Political Sciences. She worked as Lawyer, Law Professor and Researcher.

María Soledad was the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations from 2013 to 2016 and was awarded Chile's National Human Rights Award in 2014



#### Speaker: Jesús Celada Pérez

State Engineer, Jesús joined the National Geographic Institute in 2005 before moving in 2011 to Spain's Royal Board on Disability (Real Patronato de Discapacidad) as Technical Advisor.

In 2015 he was designated Deputy Director-General for Civil Dialogue in the Directorate General for Disability Policies. Since July 2018 he is Director-General of this DG, which is part of Spain's Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030.

He is a member of the Council of the Protectorate of ONCE, the Protection Council of the Spanish Red Cross and chairs the jury of the Reina Letizia Awards for Disability. He is also a member of the Spanish Paralympic Committee and a trustee of the ONCE Foundation.





### Speaker: Facundo Chávez Penillas

Human Rights and Disability Advisor of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and based in Geneva since 2013, Facundo is a lawyer with graduate studies on business law and human rights law.

Before his current position, Facundo worked in the Disability Department at the Ombudsperson Office of the City of Buenos Aires in Argentina and in a corporate law firm.

He was member of organizations of persons with disabilities at national, regional and international levels before working for the United Nations.



### Speaker: Rahma Mohammed

Rahma is Technical advisor of the Sudanese National Council of Persons with Disabilities and member of the Sudanese National Union of Persons with Physical Disability.

She holds a Master of Law from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Rahma has extensive experience in the humanitarian field and mainstreaming disability rights in public policies and programmes. She has worked for several agencies in Sudan in the field of disability inclusion including the “Bridging the Gap II”, the British Council, the International Disability Alliance and ADD International.



### Speaker: Mariela Soledad Ramírez Burgos

Ministry Secretary for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Paraguay, SENADIS.

Minister Ramírez Burgos has a degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology and Education from the National University of Asuncion.

She is a university professor holding several chairs in public and private institutions. She studied Neurolinguistic Programming and Educational Psychology, with experience in rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

She also worked at SENADIS in Coronel Oviedo.

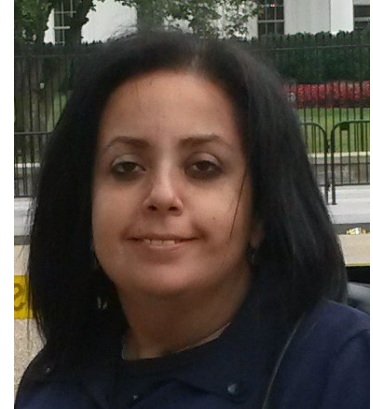




### Speaker: **Nadia Hadad**

A human right activist from young age, Nadia became a Disability Inclusion Policy Officer in the field of development cooperation with NGO PHOS. She gives lectures and trainings on inclusive cooperation, the UN CRPD and SDGs at universities, ministries, NGOs, DPOs and more.

Nadia is the Vice President of the Brussels City Advisory Council of Persons with Disabilities, a member of the Brussels Region's Advisory Panel and of the Belgian Supervising Commission of the independent mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the UN CRPD. She is also Co-chair of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) and a member of the Executive Committee of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and of the Academic Network of European Experts on Disability (ANED). Nadia has a degree in Electromechanical Engineering, specialising in "Mechanical conception".



### Speaker (final remarks): **Katarina Ivanković Knežević**

Since September 2018 Katarina Ivanković Knežević is a Director for Social Affairs in the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Her area of activity is modernisation of social protection systems and wider social policies fostering social and labour market inclusion, through the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and other relevant social policies of the European Union.

Before joining the European Commission, she was State Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System of the Republic of Croatia. For the last 20 years her professional interests have been on human rights and gender equality, social policy and employment.



### Speaker (final remarks): **Leonardo Bencini**

Italian diplomat, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy in 1993 and has served in Rio de Janeiro, Oslo, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

He has spent almost half of his career dealing with UN issues, from human rights to sustainable development. He is currently the Head of Strategy, Global Processes and International Organisations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for Development Cooperation.

He is also the MFA's representative in the commission at the Italian Prime Minister's office on the condition of people with disabilities ("Osservatorio nazionale sulla condizione delle persone con disabilità").

