

CPwD Press Release

For immediate release, 2 December 2020

Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities network celebrates International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network have joined together virtually to mark International Persons with Disabilities Day 2020 with a series of messages and videos.

International Day of People with Disabilities is marked by people, organisations, agencies, charities, places of learning and Parliaments on 3 December each year - all of whom have a vital role to play in identifying and addressing discrimination, marginalization, exclusion and inaccessibility that many people living with disabilities face.

The **Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network, Hon. Kevin Murphy MLA**, Speaker of the Nova Scotia Legislature released a video message to Commonwealth Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff for International Day of People with Disabilities 2020 in which he highlighted the 2020 theme of *'Not all Disabilities are Visible'* that focuses on spreading awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as mental illness, chronic pain or fatigue, sight or hearing impairments, diabetes, brain injuries, neurological disorders, learning differences and cognitive dysfunctions, among others. The CPwD Chairperson also highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities and the isolation, disconnect, disrupted routines and diminished services that have greatly impacted the lives and mental well-being of people with disabilities right around the world.

Please [click here](#) to view video message or visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) World Report on Disability, 15% of the world's population, or more than 1 billion people, are living with disability. Of this number, it's estimated 450 million are living with a mental or neurological condition— and two-thirds of these people will not seek professional medical help, largely due to stigma, discrimination and neglect. These are just some examples of the millions of people currently living with a disability that is not immediately apparent, and a reminder of the importance of removing barriers for all people living with disability, both visible and invisible.

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network has recently launched its nine new CPwD Regional Champions, who have been chosen to represent each of the CPA's Regions and will promote the rights of Commonwealth Parliamentarians with disabilities in their respective Region and represent disability interests within the CPA. **To view profiles of all the CPwD Regional Champions, please visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/disabilitieschampions.**

The CPwD network has also recently published two new toolkits as part of its Disability Inclusive Communications Guidelines which provide guidance to Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures on how to enhance and sensitize their communications with persons with disabilities. These guidelines provide various examples of best practices that can be adopted by both Parliaments and Parliamentarians in order to continue to ensure that they sensitively address Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with disabilities. **Please visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/disabilitiesresources to download a copy.**

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The **Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD)** supports elected representatives with disabilities in Parliaments and legislatures across the Commonwealth and ensures that issues of persons with disabilities are brought to the fore in parliamentary debate and legislation. The network campaigns for equality for persons with disabilities in all spheres. Visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/disabilities.

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)** exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Visit www.cpahq.org | Follow Twitter @CPA_Secretariat or find us on Facebook.