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New York



Permanent Mission
of the Republic of Poland
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in New York



Permanent Mission of
the Republic of Korea
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United
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Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



Bangladesh, Brazil, Kuwait, Poland, State of Qatar, Republic of Korea, UNDESA, Autism Speaks

Autism and the Covid-19 Pandemic: How Technology Can Support Equitable Global Response and Recovery

ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION, Tuesday, 6 April, 8:30 to 10:00 (EST)

Welcome Remarks

H.E. Ms. Alya Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the UN

H.E. Mr. Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN

Introductory Remarks by Co-sponsors

H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN

H.E. Mr. Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the UN

H.E. Ms. Joanna Wronecka, Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN

H.E. Mr. Cho Hyun, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN

Issue Framing

Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Roundtable Panel Discussion

Dr. Noof Mohammed Alsiddiqi, Health Lead, National Autism Plan, Ministry of Public Health, Qatar

Ms. Saima Wazed Hossain, Chairperson, National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Bangladesh

Dr. Dena Al-Thani, Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar

Ms. Ursula Wynhoven, ITU Representative to the United Nations, New York

Mr. Mohammed Mohsin, Director Strategy and Sustainability, Qatar Assistive Technology Center

Dr. Kerry Magro Ed.D, CAS, Professional Speaker, Best-Selling Author, Autism Entertainment Consultant & Autism Self-Advocate

Dr. Chiara Servili, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, World Health Organization, WHO

Dr. Bhisma Chakarbarti, Research Director, Centre for Autism, University of Reading, UK

Dr. Manasi Kumar, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, University of Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. Paul Kotler, Self-advocate

Ms. Joanna Burgieł, Psychotherapist, Synapsis Foundation, Poland

Moderator: **Dr. Andy Shih**, Ph.D., Senior Vice-President, Public Health&Inclusion, Autism Speaks

Event will be streamlined on the UN Web TV Website

Click here to register: [Link](#)

BACKGROUND

A conversation to explore technology platforms and content that support and enhance equitable access to evidence-based services, including ascertainment and intervention, as well as capacity building

On 12 June 2019, on the Occasion of the 12th Session of the Conference of the States Parties (COSPP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the State of Qatar held a landmark event on How Assistive Technology Can Help People with Autism. The side-event addressed the many ways by which technology can be helpful supporting individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) both in education and workplace settings and on how technology can transform services to enhance functioning.

The conversation will continue with an event on 2 April 2021, on the Occasion of World Autism Awareness Day 2021. With a focus on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on people with autism and other developmental disabilities, the event will explore the many ways technology can be effectively leveraged to address the COVID-19 pandemic's disparate impact on the global autism community, as well as the role of partnerships can play in supporting families during the ongoing crisis. Moreover, as we consider and plan global recovery priorities, broad, cross-sectorial collaborations and concrete steps are needed to make sure these already often marginalized individuals and families are not left further behind.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the essential importance of technology in people's life. With lockdowns and other social distancing measures in effect in many countries, more people are relying on the Internet and effective digital technologies for information, advice, education and health.

Unfortunately, the global autism community have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Reduction or suspension of intervention and support services have resulted in specific difficulties for individuals on the spectrum and their families. Studies conducted by Qatar Foundation demonstrated that a pause in intervention activities led to increased regression of skills, with many children forgetting or losing proficiency with things they had learned before the pandemic. Recent surveys suggest this lack of resources and remote access to services is a global challenge and that many families, including those in high income countries, also struggle with basic necessities such as food and housing, along with worsening psychosocial wellbeing and mental health.

The pandemic has also highlighted the need to build robust partnerships among governments with private technology companies, social entrepreneurs or other national and international organizations to make use of existing and new technologies to meet the needs of the global autism community, soften the impact of the ongoing crisis on their well-being and support the implementation of an equitable recovery.



LOGISTICAL NOTE FOR PARTICIPANTS

How to Join Meeting/Webinar:

- 1- **Register:** To participate in the meeting, PRIOR registration is required. [Please register here](#) You will then receive a confirmation email that includes the Meeting ID and password.
- 2- **Log In:** At the time of the meeting, you will be able to participate by one of the following methods:
 - If you have the **zoom desktop client** software or app installed on a computer or mobile device, you can launch it, log in, and enter the **Meeting ID and password** to be provided in the confirmation email.
 - Simply click on the to be provided in the confirmation email.
 - Go to join.zoom.us on an **Internet browser** (Chrome, Mozilla, Safari) and enter the meeting ID provided in the confirmation email. You will be asked to open the Zoom client or use a plug-in to join the meeting.

Important: Zoom now requires Zoom users to upgrade their desktop client apps to version 5.0 or above before being able to join meetings. Please ensure that your version is up-to-date prior to the meeting so as not to delay your login. You can upgrade through this following link: zoom.us/download. (More [info](#))
- 3- **Enter the Meeting/Webinar:** Please “arrive” 15 minutes early. After you log in, you will be admitted to the meeting by the host. Please take advantage of this time to test your camera, microphone and speakers. A good practice is to include your country/organization in your username before you join to be easily identified by the host and other participants.
- 4- **Participate:** Please mute your microphone unless you are speaking. Panelists will speak according to the meeting’s program before the floor is opened for interventions/questions from other attendees. You can request the floor by sending a message on the Chat function. Please indicate your country/organization and title when doing so. Protocol will be observed in giving the floor for interventions.

Notes

- A quick reference guide for new Zoom users can be found [here](#).
- Tips and best practices for video teleconferencing can be found [here](#).
- The meeting will be recorded.
- For substantive inquiries about the meeting, please contact Ms. Sharifa Al-Nesf at snesf@mofa.gov.qa.
- For technical inquiries before or during the meeting, please contact the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the UN tech support at +1-347-414-3566.