

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Report No: 118

Query title	Opportunities for disability rights and inclusion advocacy in Latin America and the Caribbean
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Query	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What opportunities are there to advance disability rights in Latin America and the Caribbean through international events and fora in the next two years? 2. How do these opportunities relate to the priorities outlined in FCDO’s Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy? 3. How can teams promote the accessibility and inclusivity of bilateral and multilateral events?
Enquirer	Education and Gender Equality Directorate

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Introduction

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are about 85 million people with disabilities (Garcia Mora et al., 2021). Progress on disability rights and inclusion has been achieved in the region in recent years, however people with disabilities still face discrimination and barriers that prevent their full and effective participation in societies, including accessing education, employment and health services (Martin et al., 2024; Hassan and Andrae, 2024).

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy reaffirms the UK's commitment to act as a global leader on disability inclusion across diplomatic and development efforts. The strategy sets out a vision for a sustainable, inclusive and equitable future where: "People with disabilities in all their diversity - including marginalised and under-represented groups - are meaningfully engaged, empowered and able to exercise and enjoy their full rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others, without discrimination and across the life-course. They are full and active members of society and decision-makers in all aspects of life, including diplomatic and development efforts."

This report identifies international and regional events over the next two years where the UK FCDO can advocate for increased focus on disability rights in the region. Key details such as the event names, dates, locations, and thematic focuses, are presented. These opportunities are mapped against the key outcomes, intervention areas, and enablers for inclusion that are outlined in the FCDO's Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy. By linking the identified events with these priority areas, the report provides a targeted approach for the FCDO to leverage upcoming events to further disability rights in the region.

FCDO's Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy highlights the importance of meaningfully engaging with people with disabilities and their representative organisations. It states that concrete actions will be taken so that people with disabilities have greater voice through full and meaningful participation, representation, and leadership in society. It is important that people with disabilities and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) are able to fully engage with international and regional events so that they are represented, can raise key issues of importance to them, and can provide expertise and leadership. However, there can be many barriers to participation in these events, including inaccessible facilities, lack of accessible communications, and high entry costs. To support the meaningful engagement of people with disabilities, this report finishes with recommendations on promoting the accessibility and inclusivity of events.

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Opportunities to advance disability rights in LAC

The tables below show key regional events and international events taking place in Latin America and the Caribbean, with details such as the event names, dates, location, and thematic focus. Linkages with the key outcomes, intervention areas, and enablers for inclusion outlines in the FCDO's Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy, and opportunities for promoting disability inclusion in these areas are highlighted. All of these events represent opportunities to raise awareness, share best practice on disability inclusion, and advocate for systemic change.

At these events there are opportunities to build partnerships with people with disabilities, civil society, and OPDs and support their engagement through advocating for their inclusion as speakers on panels or in decision-making fora, providing financial support, or advocating for events to be more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. Guidance on creating more inclusive and accessible events is given in the following section.

Bilateral and Multilateral Events

Event	Details	Event Description	Linkages with FCDO's Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy	Opportunities
UN Biodiversity Conference 2024	<p>Date: 21st October – 1st November 2024</p> <p>Frequency: Every 3 years</p> <p>Organiser: Secretariat of the CBD</p> <p>Location: Cali,</p>	The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which is the international legal instrument for "the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive climate action • Inclusive humanitarian action • To support people with disabilities in all their diversity: including Indigenous people with disabilities and people with disabilities in remote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To highlight the disproportionate impact that biodiversity loss, climate change, and related disasters have on people with disabilities. • To discuss disability inclusion in agriculture, food production and access to natural resources. • To advocate for the inclusion of disability rights in policy recommendations.

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	Colombia		communities	
ThinkTwenty (T20) Summit	<p>Date: November 2024 (TBC)</p> <p>Frequency: Annual</p> <p>Organiser: T20</p> <p>Location: TBC</p>	<p>The T20 is a G20 engagement group that brings together think tanks and research centres from G20 members, guest countries, and organisations.</p> <p>The ThinkTwenty (T20) Midterm Conference is being held in July in Brazil.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support full and equal participation in social and political society. • Inclusive economic empowerment. • Inclusive access to health and education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage the inclusion of research and data on disability issues in thematic discussions and policy recommendations. • To support people with disabilities to speak or participate in the events.
G20 Summit	<p>Date: 18-19th November 2024</p> <p>Frequency: Annual</p> <p>Organiser: G20</p> <p>Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</p>	<p>The Group of Twenty (G20) is the main forum for international economic cooperation. It plays an important role in defining and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues. Initially, the G20 focused mainly on general macroeconomic issues, but expanded its agenda to include topics such as trade, sustainable development, health, agriculture, energy, the environment, climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving political and social participation • Universal human rights, freedom and democracy • Inclusive economic empowerment • Inclusive health • Inclusive social protection • Inclusive climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the priorities of the Health Working Group in the Sherpa Track is health equity. The Finance Track also has a Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFi) which works as a platform for peer learning, knowledge sharing, policy advocacy and coordination. These can be opportunities to advocate for disability inclusion. • A Virtual Workshop on Digital Government and Inclusion (18-19th June 2024) is an opportunity for discussion on digital inclusion.

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		and the fight against corruption.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other side events can be organised to focus on grassroots organisations and disability inclusion on different levels, including decision-making processes.
Foro de los Países de América Latina y el Caribe sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible 2025	<p>Date: 15-18th April 2025</p> <p>Frequency: Annual</p> <p>Organiser: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)</p> <p>Location: Santiago, Chile</p>	<p>The Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development was established as a regional mechanism for the follow-up and review of the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their targets, their means of implementation and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal human rights, freedom and democracy Inclusive education Inclusive health Inclusive social protection Inclusive economic empowerment Inclusive humanitarian action Inclusive climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advocate for disability inclusion and the SDGs. To promote inclusive economic opportunities and the adoption of accessibility standards in infrastructure developments and urban planning. To build long-lasting partnerships to promote disability rights and inclusion in sustainable development efforts.
UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC)	<p>Date: 10-21st November 2025</p> <p>Frequency:</p>	<p>The COP is the main decision-making body of the UNFCCC. It is an opportunity to negotiate new measures, and review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive climate action Inclusive humanitarian action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advocate for increased focus and evidence on the impacts of climate change for people with disabilities.

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COP30	Annual Organiser: UNFCCC Location: Brazil	Parties' progress against the overall goal of the UNFCCC to limit climate change.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work in partnership with key allies to accelerate global attention and action on disability-inclusive climate action.

Private Sector and Civil Society Events

Event	Details	Event Description	Linkages with FCDO's Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy	Opportunities
Conferências Internacionais das Favelas (CIF20)	Date: Between April and July 2024 Organiser: Central Única das Favelas (CUFA) Location: 41 countries	The International Favelas' Conferences (IFC20) aims to gather inputs and proposals from people living in favelas (Brazilian term for slums) and peripheries worldwide to share with heads of state who will be travelling to Brazil for the G20 summit. In September 2024 the Fórum Mundial das Favelas will be launched.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting people with disabilities in all their diversity Universal human rights, freedom and democracy Inclusive social protection Inclusive economic empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise the profile of people with disabilities living in favelas by asking relevant questions of panellists and supporting the engagement of people with disabilities living in favelas. To highlight the challenges and opportunities faced by people with disabilities relating to infrastructure, access to social services, and economic empowerment.
IV Juegos Latinoamerica	Date: 1-15 th October 2024	The mission of the Special Olympics is to provide year-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with disabilities in all their diversity are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise awareness through media outreach and

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nos de Olimpiadas Especiales	<p>Frequency: Every 7 years</p> <p>Organiser: Olimpiadas Especiales</p> <p>Location: Asunción, Paraguay</p>	round sports training and athletic for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and share gifts, and skills, and friendship.	<p>meaningfully engaged, empowered and able to exercise and enjoy their full rights and freedoms</p>	<p>campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To foster collaborations with governments, civil society and disability rights groups in Latin America.
Dis-CAPACIDAD: De la Inclusión a la Convivencia	<p>Date: 17th September 2024</p> <p>Organiser: Universidad Austral</p> <p>Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina</p>	This event is organised by the Centre for the Study of Interpersonal Relationships of the Institute of Family Sciences of the Austral University in Argentina. The themes proposed relate to inclusion in education, sports, the labour force, and public policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal human rights, freedom and democracy Inclusive education Inclusive economic empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a locally led event, which allows for a more localised approach to disability rights. It can provide networking opportunities that lead to partnerships for local action and an avenue for understanding local trends. Advocating for increased disability inclusion in education, sports, labour force and public policy.
Caribbean Disability Conference	<p>Date: 9-13th October 2024</p> <p>Organiser:</p>	The conference is organised by the Authentic Caribbean Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation focused on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal human rights, freedom and democracy Inclusive education. Inclusive social protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn from disability focused organisations and think tanks. To support the generation of

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	<p>Authentic Caribbean Foundation</p> <p>Location: St. George's, Grenada</p>	<p>Caribbean children with disabilities. A comprehensive white paper will be developed and presented as part of the commitment to lasting impact. It will provide insights and recommendations to support the achievement of the SDGs.</p>	<p>systems.</p>	<p>evidence on the needs and opportunities for children with disabilities and contribute to learning on best practice for disability inclusion in education programming.</p>
<p>Discapacidad, Equidad e Inclusión Latin America (DEI LATAM)</p>	<p>Date: TBC</p> <p>Frequency: multiples times a year</p> <p>Organiser: Incluyeme.com</p> <p>Location: TBC</p>	<p>DEI LATAM is dedicated to creating a space to discuss progress, challenges, benefits and good practices on social and labour inclusion of people with disabilities. Previous events have focused on themes such as the global perspective on diversity, the role of culture in inclusive employment, quota laws and inclusive leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing universal human rights, freedom and democracy • Inclusive economic empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning on disability inclusion from OPDs and disability-focused organisations in the region

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Recommendations for promoting accessibility and inclusivity in events

Ensuring accessible events is essential to fostering inclusivity and meaningful participation for all attendees. By implementing specific recommendations, organisers can create environments where people with disabilities can meaningfully engage with and lead discussions rather than being excluded from discussions and decision-making processes. Key aspects of inclusive access can be found in the table below (Sightsavers, 2022; Timely, 2024). When not hosting events, participants can promote accessibility and inclusion by asking what accessibility measures have been put in place. It is important to remember that people with disabilities are not homogenous; different people will have different needs so it important to ask about accessibility requirements.

Phase	Recommendations
Pre-event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask attendees about any accessibility requirements at registration, • Use disability inclusive language in all communications, • Share accessibility guidelines for panellists to follow – for example, minimum font sizes and colour contrast, or speaking guidelines, • Where possible, share with participants any materials ahead of the meeting, • Ensure the location and premises are accessible to all – for example, consider the accessibility of entrances, meeting rooms and toilet facilities, • Include accessibility in communications about the event, both external and with participants, • Provide free attendance for support persons, • Invest in online solutions like closed captioning and sign interpreters.
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mobility devices and assistive tools, • Use microphones and provide one for audience Q&A sessions, • Make sure there is a clear view of the speaker’s face and mouth, • Be aware of the time, staying within the allotted time in the agenda and ensuring scheduled breaks are taken on time, • Turn off projectors and other equipment that make noise/emit light when not in use.
Post-event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce brief, clear notes which cover discussions, what decisions were taken, who is going to take action and by when, • Ensure all documents shared are accessible, use plain language and avoid acronyms or jargon, • Ask for feedback regarding accessibility and inclusion and look at what could be improved next time.

Additional resources:

- Disability Inclusion Helpdesk, Accessibility Good Practice Note
- Sightsavers, Accessibility Guidelines for [in-person meetings](#) and [online meetings](#)
- United Nations, [Disability Inclusive Language Guidelines](#)

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References

Garcia Mora, M.E., Schwartz Orellana, S. and Freire, G. (2021) *Disability Inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Path to Sustainable Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/36628> (Accessed: 31 May 2024). License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

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Sightsavers (2022) [Accessibility guidelines for in-person meetings](#), Sightsavers.

Timely (2024) *Guía de accesibilidad para eventos 2024: planificación de eventos accesibles*. Available at : <https://time.ly/es/blog/gu%C3%ADa-de-accesibilidad-para-eventos-planificaci%C3%B3n-de-eventos-accesibles/> (Accessed: 21 May 2024).

About Helpdesk reports: The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), contracted through the Disability Inclusion Team (DIT) under the Disability Inclusive Development Inclusive Futures Programme. Helpdesk reports are based on between 3 and 4.5 days of desk-based research per query and are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues and expert thinking on issues around disability inclusion. Where referring to documented evidence, Helpdesk teams will seek to understand the methodologies used to generate evidence and will summarise this in Helpdesk outputs, noting any concerns with the robustness of the evidence being presented. For some Helpdesk services, in particular the practical know-how queries, the emphasis will be focused far less on academic validity of evidence and more on the validity of first-hand experience among disabled people and practitioners delivering and monitoring programmes on the ground. All sources will be clearly referenced.

Helpdesk services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations and individual experts on disability, including Social Development Direct, Sightsavers, ADD International, Light for the World, Humanity & Inclusion, BRAC, BBC Media Action, Sense and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Expert advice may be sought from this Group, as well as from the wider academic and practitioner community, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk or any of the contributing organisations/experts.

For any further request or enquiry, contact enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk

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