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SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

PRESS RELEASE

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India Meets UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Supreme Court to Set Up a Permanent Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Supreme Court Legal Services Committee to Constitute Panels of Young Lawyers and Sign Language Interpreters to Assist Advocates with Disabilities

New Delhi, 18 November 2026

Ms. Heba Hagrass, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, called on Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant, at the Supreme Court of India. Lawyers with disabilities and representatives of civil society also took part.

Hon'ble the Chief Justice acknowledged the work of the judiciary and civil society in advancing disability rights. He thanked young lawyers with disabilities for bringing questions of disability rights before the courts and drawing wider attention to them. Noting the courts' heavy workload, he stressed that the judiciary and the State Governments must work together on these concerns.

He said that equality is a fundamental principle of the Constitution and that giving effect to the rights of persons with disabilities is a constitutional obligation. He called for identifying gaps in implementation so that persons with disabilities can exercise these rights in practice. Referring to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, he noted the steps taken by the Government and the judiciary over the past decade.

Hon'ble the Chief Justice said that where administrative delay prevents persons with disabilities from receiving the benefits of laws and schemes, courts can issue writs of continuing *mandamus* directing public authorities to discharge their statutory duties and monitoring compliance until they do so. He highlighted how public interest litigation has helped persons with disabilities enforce their rights, and encouraged the Special Rapporteur and the UN officials present to share India's experience with other countries. He also referred to Article 142 of the Constitution, which empowers the Supreme Court to do complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

He spoke about measures within the judiciary, including reservation for persons with disabilities in the judicial and higher judicial services, and the relaxation of

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qualifying marks for eligible candidates with disabilities. He encouraged courts across jurisdictions to share effective practices.

Hon'ble the Chief Justice said that the Supreme Court would set up a Permanent Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He also directed the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee to constitute panels of young lawyers and sign language interpreters to assist advocates with disabilities in proceedings before the Court.

Officials from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in India also attended the meeting, along with representatives of Saksham Trust, iProbono, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, the Politics and Disability Forum, and Mission Accessibility. Indian Sign Language interpreters and support persons helped make the meeting accessible to all participants.

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