**It Can be Done ! : Three-Day International Summit on**

**Legal Professionals with Disabilities**

**(1-2-3 December 2020 : 06.00 to 08.00 pm-IST)**

**1st December 2020 : Panel discussion - Interaction with legal academics with disabilities.**

* **Keynote : Professor Gerard Quin, Professor of Law University of Leeds**

**Topic : Constitutionalizing International Standards of Disability Rights and Jurisprudence vis-à-vis Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties**

* **Panelists : Professor Michael Stein, Professor Peter Blanck, Professor Paul Harpur, Professor Shirish Deshpande, Dr. Sanjay Jain**
* **Moderator : Professor Sandra Fredman [TBC].**

**Talking points [prompts for remarks by panelists and moderator questions]:**

Even in 2020, legal academics with disabilities have to confront a number of additional obstacles, relative to their able-bodied counterparts, to thrive in the profession. These range from addressing concerns about their capacity to effectively manage and teach large batches of students to the challenges faced in accessing and producing academic content. From finding a way to develop an effective referencing system to discharging the administrative duties that are a part of the job. In this panel discussion, it will be our endeavour to shed light on the pathways that can be adopted to effectively counter these challenges. What practical strategies have our panelists deployed to address the roadblocks in their paths posed by their disability? How difficult is it to gain the confidence of students and administrators, and how can this be achieved? How do these challenges change depending on the stage of one’s academic career? Have our panelists faced any obstacles for which no answers have yet been found by them?

**2nd December 2020 : Panel discussion featuring lawyers with disabilities:**

* **Keynote : Ms. Maria Soledad Cisternas, UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility (video message)**

**Topic : Towards Accessible Judiciary vis-à-vis Access to Justice**

* **Panelists : Adv. Zhang Wanhong, Adv. Laura Wolk, Adv. S.K. Rungta, Adv. Amar Jain and Adv. David Lepofsky [TBC].**
* **Moderator : Adv. Rahul Bajaj**

**Talking points [prompts for remarks by panelists and moderator questions]:**

What does it take to be a successful lawyer (either litigator or a corporate lawyer) with a disability in 2020? What unique challenges do lawyers with disabilities have to face in the infancy of their careers? How can they effectively secure the confidence of clients, their colleagues and the bench in their competence? – here, practical examples of interactions that our panelists may have had with clients or the bench would be instructive. What have our panelists found to be the appropriate balance between seeking help from others and discharging their functions independently? What has helped them remain equally productive as their sighted counterparts? Can they share any pointers on having difficult conversations about their needs with different stakeholders in a constructive fashion? Do they think that any branches of the law, or any aspects of the work profile of an able-bodied counterpart in their position, are out of bounds for them? Does the mental exhaustion of always having to fight for inclusion sometimes get overwhelming and, if so, what keeps them going nonetheless? Can they highlight some cases/projects in their careers thus far?

**Fireside chat: Haben Girma.**

About her book, her journey to Harvard Law School, her message for legal employers in India and her disability rights work in the US.

**3rd December 2020 : Panel discussion featuring judges with disabilities**

* **Keynote : Mr. Danlami Umaru Basharu Executive Director, ANWAB; Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

**Potential topic : Making the convention real in countries like India. Translation from principle to practice; Use of strategic litigation in advancing disability rights. Applying disability laws to the private sector.**

* **Panelists: Judge Ronald Gould, Justice Z.M. Yacoob [TBC], Judge Yousaf Saleem [TBC] and an Indian judge [TBC].**
* **Moderator: Justice Madan Lokur or Justice K.M. Joseph**

**Talking points [prompts for remarks by panelists and moderator questions]:**

A disabled lawyer aspiring to become a judge can expect to face many attitudinal, infrastructural and logistical barriers. Can our panelists share a robust template for facing up to these challenges in a constructive, productive way? How would they respond to those who think that a blind judge cannot assess a witness’ demeanour or that a judge with a disability lacks the wherewithal to effectively manage a court? How have they been able to maintain the confidence of the bar in their capacity to discharge their mandate effectively? What concrete accommodations and resources have they found helpful? In their view, how can legal restrictions on those with certain disabilities becoming judges be dismantled? Can they highlight some best practices from their jurisdiction?

**Valedictory speech: Justice D.Y. Chandrachud [TBC].**