



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere



New Zealand Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
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19 February 2026

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Thank you for your email of 3 January 2026, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"On or around December 17th 2025 at the United Nations General Assembly, a vote was passed to remove "sexual orientation and gender identity" from a UN resolution concerning rights of persons with disabilities.

The RESOLUTION concerning rights of persons with disabilities was led by New Zealand and Mexico.

An AMENDMENT to the resolution, sponsored by Egypt was passed. New Zealand voted against the amendment.

Please provide the name of the New Zealand representative that placed New Zealand's vote on this resolution, and all communications, memos and documents that provides context and background to support New Zealand's involvement in championing the resolution, and why New Zealand voted against the amendment to remove the words "sexual orientation and gender identity" from the resolution.

Background

You provided a link to the resolution, and a press release on the outcomes as context for your request.

Response to your request

Who voted on this resolution

New Zealand's vote on this resolution and on the amendment proposed by Egypt (on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) group of United Nations members), was cast by the Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, who also delivered a statement explaining the position of New Zealand and Mexico on the proposed amendment (attached). The statement was delivered on behalf of both countries due to our shared

role as 'co-facilitators' of the resolution with joint responsibility for developing the resolution and leading negotiations on the text. Like all actions and statements by New Zealand diplomats at the United Nations, the voting decision and statement were undertaken consistent with government policy and in an official capacity, rather than in a personal capacity.

Background and context for New Zealand's involvement in this resolution

The background and context for New Zealand's role in the 2025 resolution, dates back to the development of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is not possible to provide the background and context you requested without impairing the efficient administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry). Accordingly, under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA, a summary of the information you have requested is provided below.

New Zealand played a leadership role in the development of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New Zealand ratified the Convention in 2008. The Convention affirms that persons with disabilities are entitled to the same human rights as all other persons. Non-discrimination and equality of opportunity are among the key principles of the Convention. This was an important development because persons with disabilities were previously often viewed through a medical or charity lens as having less than full capacity, leading to widespread failure in fulfilling their rights.

You can find more information about the Convention and New Zealand's leadership on these issues on the Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People website: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/the-uncrpd/about-the-uncrpd>

Since 2006, New Zealand has co-led biennial resolutions at the United Nations through the Third Committee focused on the implementation of the Convention, in partnership with Mexico, which is also a strong supporter of the rights of persons with disabilities.

These resolutions, which are non-binding and cannot change the text of the Convention, support the implementation of the Convention by highlighting challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the fulfilment of their rights, and provide ideas on how countries might address these challenges consistent with their human rights obligations. Previous resolutions have covered the following topics:

- In 2017 the resolution focused on implementation of Articles 6 and 7 on the situation of women and girls with disabilities:
<https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/72/162>
- In 2019 the resolution focused on implementation of Article 9 on Accessibility:
<https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/74/144>
- In 2021 the resolution focused on implementation of Articles 29 and 30 on participation: <https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/76/154>
- In 2023 the resolution focused on implementation of Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies for persons with disabilities:
<https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/78/195>

In 2025, the resolution focussed on how diverse contexts can present amplified barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing their rights. It proposed actions states can take to reduce these barriers.

Egypt's amendment to the resolution

Egypt called a vote on a preambular paragraph which set out the background and context to the resolution. It provided a list of examples of the diverse contexts which can trigger additional obstacles for persons with disabilities in accessing their rights. One of the contexts listed was discrimination including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The original paragraph presented to the United Nations General Assembly in the resolution read as follows:

Noting that diverse contexts may refer to a range of social, environmental, political, economic and cultural conditions that influence how persons with disabilities experience and access their rights, including but not limited to situations of poverty, humanitarian emergencies, armed conflict, post-conflict, environmental and climate change-related challenges, forced and internal displacement, rural or remote living, neocolonial contexts, migration and refugee contexts, care and support contexts, institutionalization, digital divides, lack of access to justice and quality inclusive education, and discrimination based on disability, sex, age, race, colour, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity and national or social origin,

Egypt, on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation proposed an amendment to delete the words 'sexual orientation and gender identity' from the list of examples of discrimination that persons with disabilities can face.

The amendment was adopted by vote in the General Assembly, with 81 votes in favour, 77 against, and 15 abstentions. Accordingly, the reference was deleted from the final resolution.

Why New Zealand voted against the proposed amendment

As noted in the attached statement, New Zealand voted against the amendment because we had concerns with the process followed by Egypt, and with the substance of the amendment.

On process, it is the established practice of the General Assembly to uphold the decisions of its main Committees. In this instance, the Third Committee had already voted on the resolution and on the proposed amendment and rejected it. New Zealand therefore did not support voting on the same amendment twice.

On substance, New Zealand voted against the amendment because singling out the reference to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity for removal was inconsistent with New Zealand's human rights law, which includes sex and sexual orientation as a prohibited grounds of discrimination. It would also have been out of step with New Zealand's thematic human rights priorities which guide our international engagement, which include non-discrimination of LGBTIQ+ persons (<https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/peace-rights-and-security/human-rights>).

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal

information removed) may be published on the Ministry website:
www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Annex A

Co-chairs explanation of vote on amendment to Resolution on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 17 December 2025

New Zealand and Mexico

Thank you Chair.

I deliver this explanation of vote on behalf of our co-facilitator Mexico, and my own country New Zealand, regarding the amendment tabled by Egypt on behalf of a group of countries to the resolution on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We have concerns with both the process and the substance of this amendment. We will therefore be voting against it and encourage other delegations to do the same.

On process, it is the established practice of the General Assembly to uphold decisions of the Main Committees, particularly when full negotiations and a formal vote have taken place.

Mexico and New Zealand have facilitated this resolution through a transparent and inclusive process, marked by constructive engagement and good faith negotiations by delegations over the past two months. The resolution, as adopted by the responsible Committee of this Assembly, has the overwhelming support of the membership.

We therefore regret that an amendment that has already been examined and rejected by Member States in the Third Committee has been tabled once again.

On substance, this year's resolution is focused on how diverse contexts can amplify the barriers faced by persons with disabilities, particularly those who are subject to discrimination or whose rights are not upheld. In that regard, many delegations recognised that sexual orientation and gender identity can be relevant grounds of discrimination for persons with disabilities, often compounding stigma, exclusion, and vulnerability to violence.

We recognise that delegations come from different legal and cultural contexts. For that reason, this reference is placed under the human right to non-discrimination, which is universally agreed. This prohibition applies equally to all persons, in all contexts, and lies at the very core of the Convention and the international human rights framework.

Attempts to selectively remove specific grounds of discrimination through this amendment risk undermining the universal nature of this human right. Such an approach would set a dangerous precedent by implying that protection from discrimination can be arbitrary or negotiated, contrary to established international human rights law.

The language contained in the resolution does not create new obligations, nor does it reinterpret the Convention. It simply reflects long-standing principles consistently reaffirmed by the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and aligns with the perspectives conveyed by organisations of persons with disabilities.

As co-facilitators, we remain firmly committed to preserving the integrity, coherence, and universality of the Convention and the international human rights framework. We therefore strongly encourage delegations to consider the broader implications of this amendment for the principle of non-discrimination and for the lives of persons with disabilities.

Thank you.