



# Sir Robert Martin

New Zealand's candidate

United Nations  
Committee on the  
Rights of Persons  
with Disabilities  
2021-2024



NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Manatū Aorere



# Why Sir Robert?

## A lifetime advocate

Born with an intellectual disability, Sir Robert's own lived experience led him to begin a civil rights campaign in small-town New Zealand that grew into a lifetime of international advocacy for persons with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. In 2020, Sir Robert received a knighthood for his services to persons with disabilities.

## A valuable perspective

Meaningful implementation of the Convention should be for all persons with disabilities. As the first and only person with an intellectual disability to have served on the Committee, Sir Robert brings a valuable perspective. It is important the Committee continue to represent the diversity of persons with disabilities.

## Active and effective

As a Committee member, Sir Robert has raised the profile of persons with intellectual disabilities, created a deeper understanding of issues such as the inclusion of Easy Read as an accessible information format, institutionalisation and the differences between intellectual and psychosocial impairments. Sir Robert has been effective as a Co-Rapporteur, working group member and chairing roles during his first term on the Committee.

# Sir Robert, on his priorities

## The autonomy to make one's own decisions

*“It is very important that Article 12 is understood and implemented around the world so persons with disabilities can make decisions for their own lives as much as possible. Persons with disabilities must have their legal capacity and rights as citizens protected.”*

## Full and effective participation in society

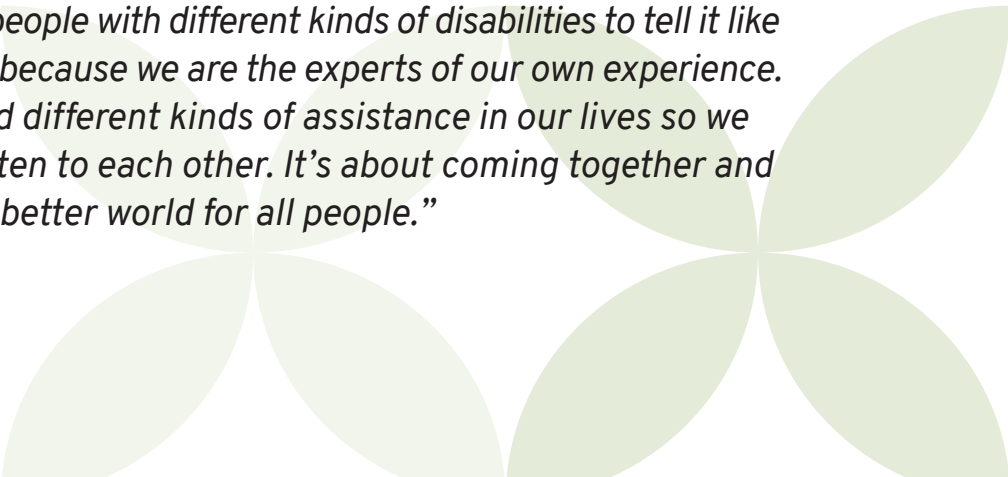
*“Persons with disabilities have the right to feel like they are part of their community and be seen, not segregated. That means participating in activities like art, culture, sports and relationships. Just like everybody else.”*

## Equality of opportunity

*“Persons with disabilities should have the same opportunities as everyone else. We can achieve anything if we are given the right assistance and the right accommodations. With the right accommodations, persons with disabilities can make a real impact on the world around them and achieve things that our communities can be proud of.”*

## Broadening the understanding of issues impacting different segments of the disability community

*“We need people with different kinds of disabilities to tell it like it really is, because we are the experts of our own experience. We all need different kinds of assistance in our lives so we need to listen to each other. It's about coming together and creating a better world for all people.”*



# Sir Robert's biography

- Current member of the CRPD.
  - First person with an intellectual disability on any UN Human Rights Treaty body and the first to chair a UN session.
  - Co-Rapporteur for three countries, appointed member on procedures under the Optional Protocol to the Convention and member of CRPD-CRC joint working group.
- Panel member of Spanish Congress of Deputies' event (2018) on the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in Spain.
- Panel member speaking on the impact of institutionalisation at Conference of State Parties (2019).
- Committee member of Frozen Funds Charitable Trust dedicated to funding projects for people who use intellectual disability or mental health services.
- Sought-after national and international speaker.
- Life member of People First New Zealand, a national Disabled Persons Organisation run by and for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Fellow of the New Zealand Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability.
- Knight Companion of The New Zealand Order of Merit for services to persons with disabilities.

## A New Zealand candidate

The rights of persons with disabilities is a long-standing international priority for New Zealand, dating back to New Zealand's chairing role in negotiating the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006. New Zealand is committed to furthering the rights of persons with disabilities and will continue to display global leadership in the efforts to make the Convention a reality for all.



*“I am honoured to endorse Sir Robert Martin as a candidate for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He brings a positive influence to the work of the committee and a unique mix of lived experience with a disability, passion for disability rights and a wide range of international experience.”*

**Hon Carmel Sepuloni**  
New Zealand Minister for Disability Issues