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Markus Schefer
Switzerland's candidate for the
Committee on the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities

“I stand for a world where people with disabilities can fully and equally participate in all aspects of life. I am convinced that working within the UN family is the best way to achieve this objective”.

Markus Schefer is professor of constitutional and administrative law at the University of Basel and is Switzerland's leading expert on the rights of persons with disabilities. He has in-depth experience in drafting, evaluating and implementing disability legislation. He regularly and closely works with governments and civil society organizations on disability issues. In line with the vision and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Prof. Schefer strives for the greater inclusion of people with disabilities to ensure no one is left behind.

Fighting Discrimination

The deep injustices many people face simply because of their race, disability, gender or other characteristics have led Prof. Schefer to devote his entire career to combating them. He has made the fight against discrimination of people with disabilities and the promotion of anti-discrimination laws his primary focus for the past two decades.

Assuring Legal Expertise

Prof. Schefer has a deep understanding of the legal complexities of the rights of persons with disabilities, and recognizes the problems impeding their implementation. He has acquired academic expertise and extensive practical knowledge so as to better address the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Strengthening Multilateral Know-How

Prof. Schefer has spent extended periods of time in India and South Africa, where he taught students on human rights and interviewed a broad range of social and religious leaders. From these experiences he gained insights into the workings of societies and legal systems other than his own, which convinced him that working within the UN family is the right path to improve the lives and defend the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide.

Reinforcing Governmental Expertise on National and Subnational Levels

Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the national and subnational level is a challenging task. Prof. Schefer successfully participated in workshops and conferences on the relationship between the federal, state and local levels in India and forcefully promoted the drafting and implementation of disability laws in that country. Currently, he is drafting CRPD implementation legislation at the subnational level in Switzerland.

Including Civil Society

Civil society organizations of persons with disabilities are crucial for the effective implementation of the CRPD. Therefore, in close cooperation with the Swiss umbrella organization for people with disabilities, Prof. Schefer initiated classes on disability law at Basel University and organizes a well-respected annual conference on the issue. He frequently advises civil society organizations on questions of litigation, for example in cases where the rights of persons with disabilities have been violated.

Resume

2015–2016	Visiting Researcher at the Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town, South Africa
2014	Publication of a comprehensive treatise on disability law
2013–2015 and 2003–2004	Dean of the Law Faculty, University of Basel, Switzerland
since 2013	Participation in various governmental bodies drafting and evaluating disability legislation
since 2013	Organization of an annual conference on disability law
since 2011	Various publications on a broad range of disability law issues
2009–2010	Visiting Professor at the University of Advanced Legal Studies, Kochi, India
since 2009	Consultant on the following aspects of disability law: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– enabling level entry on bus stops for persons with disabilities– retrofitting railway carriages with folding steps– privatizing schools for children with mental disabilities– licensing persons with disabilities as medical doctors– developing a database on disability law
2008	Publication of a landmark treatise on constitutional rights
since 2001	Professor of constitutional and administrative law, University of Basel, Switzerland
