

- \* I am honoured to welcome you to this side event about inclusive education for all.
- \* My name is Nora Eklöv and I am the secretary general of the Swedish Federation of Young Persons with Mobility Impairments.
- \* I also represent the Swedish Youth for Accessibility Network.

\* When I went to school, I was always told that I had the right to dream as big of my future as my classmates, that I had the same opportunities and possibilities, and that I was an equal.

\* The most important pre-condition to make it possible for me to attend an ordinary school was the access to personal assistance for pupils and students.

\* Without that student assistant, I wouldn't have been able to go to school on the same conditions as my friends. But I did, so in line with the ambitious Swedish policy for inclusive education, I had the opportunity to go to school and university studies. Having the experience and merit of university studies is more important for a young disabled person than for others. Not least when competing in the employment sector.

\* In Sweden there are still challenges to secure a fully inclusive school. We have still some faults and preconceptions to work with.

For example, in Sweden you have the right to choose which school you want to go to, but not all schools are accessible enough for students with accessibility needs. Private schools even have the right to say no to disabled students because of the costs of providing a student assistant or mobility aids. Hence, the freedom of choice for pupils and students with disabilities is restricted in comparison to their abled friends.

\* Inclusive and accessible education does not only benefit the student, but also the classmates, the teachers, the school and our future society. It is a human right.

I am very grateful to have this opportunity to speak here.

Bringing this topic to the table here brings hope for the future and I am looking forward to listening and learning from good examples and reflect on what can be improved. I have high expectations that our countries can come together and create a world where disabled children are not left behind.

Thank you, tack!