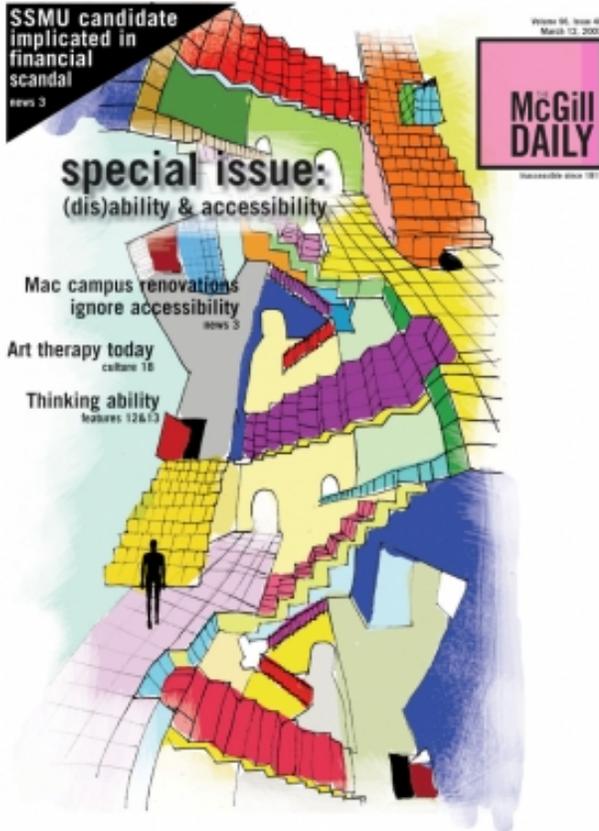




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Disabled women's groups demand rights

By Jesse Rosenfeld
The McGill Daily

Disabled women's rights groups are accusing the federal government of dragging its feet on signing and ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The DisAbled Women's Network Canada (DAWN), a federal advocacy organization for disabled women, is calling on citizens to tell their representatives to pressure the government into signing the convention, which calls on governments to protect the rights of disabled people.

DAWN is also writing a letter to the Prime Minister's office demanding that Prime Minister Stephen Harper sign the convention, which was released two months ago.

"DAWN is very concerned and [we] will certainly be writing the Prime Minister's office, asking him to change his mind and do the right thing and sign," acting DAWN President Carmela Hutchison said. "Its very important that people have their rights protected."

The convention contains a specific clause addressing the multiple forms of discrimination that women and girls with disabilities face, and stating that signatories "shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms."

It goes on to argue that governments have a duty to protect these rights.

"State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention," it reads.

Hutchison said that, because current human rights legislation does not protect the specific rights of disabled women enough, Canada must sign on to the convention.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science + Technology	<p>“[We need] a convention...[because] women, children and refugees have fared far worse than other groups,” she said.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Hipless Boy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand to Mouth	<p>Maria Barile, former DAWN co-president and current co-Chair of l’Action des femmes handicapées de Montréal, a local advocacy group for disabled women, pointed to some concrete examples of discrimination specific to disabled women, and said they had fought hard in order to have a clause specific to them included in the convention.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Archives	<p>“Despite the fact that all statistics show that women with disabilities have a higher education levels than men with disabilities, when it comes to employment and salary it is men with disabilities that have more employment and higher employment,” said Barile.</p> <p>“Also, there seem to be less women with disabilities receiving disability pension,” she added.</p> <p>She also said that women with disabilities are more likely to face violence than men with disabilities.</p> <p>Barile pointed out that this convention is the first act by any governing body that recognized the specific rights of women with disabilities.</p> <p>Hutchison encouraged everyone in Canada to push for the convention to be signed, arguing that the rights of women with disabilities are everyone's concern.</p>