

**PRESS RELEASE**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:  
The Art of the Possible**

Featuring Actor Daryl “Chill” Mitchell, *NCIS: New Orleans*

**New York, NY. 30 November 2018.**

New York, 30 November (Department of Management) — The United Nations will be celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) on 3 December. This day aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society— while increasing awareness on the challenges of this community in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life. It presents an opportunity to focus the international community’s collective attention towards an often overlooked demographic and advance the understanding of disability issues.

In observance of IDPD, the United Nations Secretariat will be hosting a series of events including a collaborative effort between the **UN Department of Management (UNDM), UN Office of Human Resources Management (UN OHRM), UN Office of Information Communication Technology (UN OICT), and Kessler Foundation**. This high-level event titled “Art of the Possible” features leaders from both the disability community and the United Nations.

Featured speakers include actor **Daryl “Chill” Mitchell**, star of *NCIS: New Orleans* on CBS and *Fear of the Walking Dead* on AMC. Mr. Mitchell, who has paraplegia, is one of few actors living with a disability actively working on the silver screen. He will share his message “Living your dream with a disability” at UN Headquarters in NYC and will also be streamed online to UN offices across the world ([link](#)). Mr. Mitchell will be sharing the stage with **Under-Secretary-General Jan Beagle (UNDM), UN Assistant Secretary-Generals Martha Helena Lopez (UN OHRM) and Atefeh Riazi (UN OICT)**, as well as, **Xian Horn, Contributor at ForbesWomen** who will deliver opening remarks.

The Art of the Possible conversation is structured as a candid panel, moderated by **Rodger DeRose (President and CEO of Kessler Foundation)**, that aims to frame the challenges of inclusion and true integration for the disabled community. Panelists include **Susan Robinson, TED resident, Jim Sinocchi, Head of Disability Inclusion at JP Morgan Chase & Co**, and **Christina Mallon, Board Member at Open Style Lab**. This conversation will be coupled with a technology exhibition that showcases various solution sets advancing the lives of the disabled.

During the event, Kessler Foundation will present a live demonstration of the **EksoGT**, a robotic exoskeleton from Ekso Bionics one of its marquee innovative solutions. Other technologies and design solutions include the UN Office of Human Resources Management, the UN Office of Information Communication Technology, Open Style Lab and User 1<sup>st</sup> solutions.

**Press Conference** will be held before the panel discussion from 11:00AM- 11:30AM ET with Daryl “Chill” Mitchell, Martha Helena Lopez, Atefeh Riazi, and Rodger DeRose. If you would like to attend only the press conference, please email [communications@zazaadvisors.com](mailto:communications@zazaadvisors.com) for credentials and access to the venue. Press should arrive at the UN Secretariat Visitors Entrance (1<sup>st</sup> Ave and 46<sup>th</sup> Street) by 10:15AM to have enough time to pass through security and enter the building.

**\*\*\*PRESS NOTE:** For any media requests, quotes, or personal interviews please contact Alicia Lewis

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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## **About International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

The annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3) was proclaimed in 1992, by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3. The observance of the day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/disabilitiesday/>

## **About Daryl “Chill” Mitchell**

Daryl “Chill” Mitchell is an actor and accessibility advocate. He plays computer specialist Patton Plame on the hit show NCIS: New Orleans. He has served as a spokesman for the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, and established the Daryl Mitchell Foundation to promote awareness, education and advocacy for survivors of spinal-cord injuries. In November 2001, Mitchell was sidelined by a motorcycle accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down; however, it never halted his forward momentum. Once he was in control of his wheelchair, Mitchell went back to work and signed on as a series regular for the role of Eli on the series “Ed,” and has taken on a number of acting roles in TV and film.

<https://www.cbs.com/shows/ncis-new-orleans/cast/215110/>

## **About Ambassador Kelly E. Currie**

Ambassador Kelley E. Currie serves as the Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Ambassador Currie specializes in political reform, development and humanitarian assistance, human rights, and other non-traditional security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. She previously was a Senior Fellow with the Project 2049 Institute and held senior policy positions with the Department of State and several international and non-governmental human rights and humanitarian organizations. She also served as foreign operations appropriations associate and staff director of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus for Congressman John Porter of Illinois. She holds a JD from Georgetown University Law Center and a BA CUM LAUDE from the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs. She is married to Peter Currie and they have two children.

<https://usun.state.gov/leadership/8316>

## **About United Nations Department of Management**

The Department of Management, based out of UN Headquarters in New York, supports hundreds of United Nations duty stations, offices and locations around the globe on administrative, personnel, policy and reform matters such as: Human resources and recruitment, staff development, training and learning; procurement of goods and services; global logistics and service delivery; financial management, budget

and accounts; travel and transportation processes, facilities management, and more. It strives for reliability, excellence and the highest level of client orientation in all its diverse operations.

<http://www.un.org/en/hq/dm/>

#### **About Under-Secretary-General Jan Beagle**

Ms. Jan Beagle of New Zealand was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres as Under-Secretary-General for Management on 1 June 2017. She succeeded Yukio Takasu of Japan and took up her official duties on 10 July 2017. Ms. Beagle brings to the position more than 35 years of experience in the political, development and inter-agency work of the United Nations Organization, coupled with extensive knowledge and hands-on experience in the management of human resources, finance, budget, information technology, administrative services and operations. She has made important contributions in leading and advancing change management initiatives in the Secretariat and at the level of the United Nations system. Ms. Beagle joined the United Nations in 1979 in the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. Since then, she has served the Organization in various capacities, including as Director of the Division for Organizational Development of the Office of Human Resources Management (1996-2005); Principal Officer in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (1992-1996); Special Assistant to the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (1990-1992); Senior Officer in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management and Special Assistant to the Controller (1989-1990); and Political Affairs Officer and subsequently Senior Political Affairs Officer (1979-1989). Prior to her appointment as USG Management, Ms. Beagle served as Deputy Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Prior to this position, she was Deputy Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (2008-2009) and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (2005-2007).

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/profiles/jan-beagle>

#### **About United Nations Office of Human Resource Management**

OHRM seeks to align the Organization's human resources capacity with its mission and changing mandates and to ensure that the Secretariat can carry out its functions effectively and efficiently. UN OHRM works to create an organizational culture that is responsive and results oriented. The organization rewards creativity and innovation, promoting continuous and constant learning. UN OHRM works with the UN system to development of a dynamic, adaptable and global workforce with the highest levels of competence and integrity. The department is responsible for managing programmes concerning career development, staff mobility, performance management, contractual arrangements and conditions of service. The Department takes and recommends corrective measures or sanctions to improve management practice

#### **About Assistant Secretary-General Martha Helena Lopez**

Martha Helena Lopez is the head of UN Human Resources Management since 2017. Ms. Lopez brings with her a wealth of senior-level international experience in human resources management. Previously, she served as Director of Human Resources at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Prior to that, she held positions as Director of the Strategic Planning and Staffing Division, Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Management at the United Nations; Chief of the Human Resources Policy Service (2006-2009); Chief of the Staff Development Service (2004-2007) at the United Nations; UNDP as Chief of the Policy Unit, Office of Human Resources, Bureau of Management (2001-2004); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Division of Human Resources, as Human Resources Officer, Policy (1997-2001), and Human Resources Officer (1994-1997); National staff member in Colombia for UNICEF (1989-1994) and the World Food Programme (WFP) (1984-1989).

<https://www.un.org/en/hq/dm/hr.shtml>

### **About United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology**

OICT is responsible for defining strategic direction for ICT to the Secretariat. It provides oversight of ICT programmes, budgets and decision-making to ensure alignment with the Secretariat's overall ICT strategy. The team consists of more than 300 people operating global data centers and coordinating services provided by more than 4,000 people in UN offices worldwide. The Office is headquartered in New York and sits within the Department of Management.

<http://www.un.org/en/hq/dm/ICT>

### **About Assistant Secretary-General Atefeh Riazi**

Afetez Riazi was appointed UN CITO in May 2013. Providing strong central leadership, the Chief Information Technology Officer is the most senior manager responsible for the overall direction and performance of information and communications activities in the United Nations. Ms. Riazi has also served as Chief Information Officer of New York City Housing Authority from 2009-2013, Chief Information Officer of New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (implemented the MetroCard) for 16 years, and as Acting General Manager New York City Housing Authority.

<https://unite.un.org/content/leadership>

### **About Kessler Foundation**

Kessler Foundation, a major nonprofit organization in the field of disability, is a global leader in rehabilitation research that seeks to improve cognition, mobility and long-term outcomes, including employment, for people with neurological disabilities caused by diseases and injuries of the brain and spinal cord. Kessler Foundation leads the nation in funding innovative programs that expand opportunities for employment for people with disabilities.

For more information, visit [www.KesslerFoundation.org](http://www.KesslerFoundation.org)

Facebook.com/KesslerFoundation

On Twitter: @KesslerFdn

### **About Rodger DeRose**

Rodger L. DeRose is President and Chief Executive Officer of Kessler Foundation. DeRose, the Board of Trustees, and management make strategic decisions regarding the direction of the Foundation's internationally renowned disability research and grant making program. DeRose instituted processes to improve the workplace environment so employees can work more effectively to change the lives of people with disabilities. As a result of these efforts, Kessler Foundation has been repeatedly named one of the Best Places to Work in New Jersey by NJBIZ and one of the Best U.S. Nonprofit Organizations to Work for by The Nonprofit Times and Best Companies Group.

<https://kesslerfoundation.org/aboutus/rodger%20derose>