rights more broadly. For instance, Chinese and U.S. officials collaborated to improve the lives of disabled people through an event in China in November 2014 called Equal Access, Inclusive Development for Persons with Disabilities. The two economies then co-sponsored the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) "Group of Friends on Disability Issues," which seeks to improve inclusion of disability across the economies in the free trade organization. At its inaugural meeting in September 2015, in Cebu, the Philippines, Heumann joined other APEC members to discuss regional cooperation to improve educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Moreover, U.S. cooperation with Vietnam on disability rights since the normalization of diplomatic relations demonstrates closer collaboration between the two governments. For instance, Vietnam's historic ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was the first voting session of the National Assembly that U.S. Embassy personnel were allowed to attend.

Heumann has since pledged U.S. cooperation as Vietnam moves to implement the CRPD and involve civil society in the development and enforcement of regulations.

While there are many areas for improvement on the rights of the disabled in EAP countries, EAP is working to advance those rights in partnership with host-nation governments and civil society. Together, we can promote a global society marked by inclusion, respect and prosperity for all persons. ◻