

## **POLICY PAPER**

### **The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

#### Recommendations

- Ensure that persons with disabilities are included in all relevant future goals, targets and indicators in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Allocate budgetary resources to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development framework
- Ensure that implementation and accountability mechanisms of the post-2015 development framework are developed and carried out in partnership with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations
- Include disaggregation of data by disability status across relevant goals and targets

I.

**The International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium present recommendations and examples on how to include persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development framework**

This policy paper makes recommendations on how to include persons with disabilities in the future goals, targets and indicators of the post-2015 development framework. The first section of the paper provides recommendations for Member States, highlights gaps and defines bottom-line requirements of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. The second section provides background and rationale for each key area, including recommendations for implementation and existing examples.

**Background**

Persons with disabilities were absent from the Millennium Declaration and remained so in policies and processes related to the Millennium Development Goals. As a result, the one billion-strong population of persons with disabilities has remained excluded from a framework that sought to eradicate the precise conditions this population continues to face.

Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries and are overrepresented among those living in absolute poverty. The [\*Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals\*](#) (A/RES/68/309) included nine references to persons with disabilities, which is a significant achievement. The post-2015 development framework must include explicit elements ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including in accountability mechanisms, to ensure that persons with disabilities are not left behind.

**Recommendations for the Next Phase of Inter-Governmental Process, Including Financing, Accountability and Implementation**

- Ensure that persons with disabilities are included in all relevant future goals, targets and indicators in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) by maintaining explicit references in line with the Report of the Open Working Group (on inclusive education, employment, reducing inequalities, inclusive cities, disaggregation of data by disability status)
- Allocate budgetary resources to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development framework
- Ensure that implementation and accountability mechanisms of the post-2015 development framework are developed and carried out in partnership with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations
- Develop indicators inclusive of persons with disabilities for all relevant goals and targets. Include process indicators (in addition to outcome indicators) that will measure the development and implementation of policies that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Include disaggregation of data by disability status across relevant goals and targets

- Include persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the Global Partnership, as well as regional and national partnerships
- Encourage Member States to support the development of statistics on persons with disabilities to monitor the implementation of goals
- Promote accountability through the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

#### **Recommendations to Overcome Gaps in the Report of the Open Working Group**

- Poverty eradication goal: include a target that explicitly references persons with disabilities
- Health goal: include a specific reference to access to universal health coverage (UHC) for persons with disabilities
- Gender goal: include a specific reference to the empowerment of women with disabilities, including ending all forms of violence

#### **Interlinked Processes that can further strengthen the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Post-2015 Development Framework**

- Disaster Risk Reduction Framework: Maintain references to persons with disabilities in the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) outcome document in line with the post-2015 development framework
- Beijing+20 Global Review: Encourage Member States to renew their commitment to women with disabilities in the Beijing+20 Global Review process
- UN Climate Change Processes: Include persons with disabilities in climate change discussions and processes occurring within the United Nations

## II.

### Inclusive and Sustainable Development

Persons with disabilities are largely excluded from sustainable development; in particular they encounter pervasive exclusion from development programmes and funds, education, employment, healthcare services, communication, information, infrastructure, economic empowerment programmes and transport services. In addition, the effects of climate change, such as natural disasters and food insecurity as well as conflict situations, make persons with disabilities especially vulnerable. This imposes costs on them, their family members and the whole community. Equal opportunities must be ensured so that all people can participate in society, therefore an international framework on development inclusive of persons with disabilities must be strengthened.

**Solution:** The focus on development that is inclusive of persons with disabilities must be explicit and included in both human rights law and development action plans. In recent years a number of countries have adopted legislation that promotes the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, including non-discrimination clauses. The effectiveness of this legislation can only be achieved if the inclusion of persons with disabilities is ensured across all government entities. Implementation should be further strengthened by the development of national action plans with specific and time-bound targets as well as resource allocation. These plans must simultaneously address the development of support services for persons with disabilities and the removal of physical, informational and attitudinal barriers.

**Examples:** The Asia region has adopted the Incheon “Making the Right Real” Strategy. This strategy has a comprehensive set of 10 goals that span most sectors of development, combining support services and barrier removal as well as an agreed-upon set of targets and indicators. A number of countries in the region have begun taking steps to implement the strategy by developing their own implementation plans. For example, Bangladesh has a coordinating committee to oversee the implementation of the strategy and is working with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to develop a national action plan on producing the Incheon indicators.

#### ▲ Indicators:

- ▲ The adoption of a national action plan on inclusive development
- Additional indicators are needed to (a) monitor whether the plan is being put into action and (b) whether it is having the desired effect on the outcomes for persons with disabilities

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### Disaggregation of Data by Disability Status

When setting goals for the post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations Secretary-General recognised that persons with disabilities must be taken into account and conceived in a cross-cutting way when designing goals and targets. Lack of disaggregated data by disability status is one of the significant barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. In the past, many quantitative instruments, especially in developing countries, employed methodologies that greatly undercounted persons with

disabilities. Only through disaggregation of data will it be possible to measure the inclusion of persons with disabilities across the development agenda and thereby ensure that no one is left behind.

**Solution:** Recent advances in methods of identifying persons with disabilities in censuses, surveys and administrative data systems have improved the ability to develop, monitor and evaluate policies aimed at promoting inclusion in an internationally comparable way. The UN Statistical Commission recommended that a short set of six questions on disability, created by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (Washington Group), be used as an internationally comparable method for identifying persons with disabilities on censuses and surveys. These questions were tested in many low-, middle- and high-income countries. UNICEF and the Washington Group have also been developing a similar set of questions to effectively address children with disabilities. In addition to the progress mentioned above, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been working on the development of a model disability survey that will develop a specific and in-depth analysis on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

### **Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Effective Learning Environments for All**

Children with disabilities are less likely to start and attend school and have lower rates of remaining and being promoted in school than their peers without disabilities.<sup>i</sup> UNESCO reports that of the 75 million children of primary school age in the world who are out of school, one-third represents children with disabilities. Consequently, inclusive education and school environments inclusive of children with disabilities are essential for a truly inclusive society. Inclusive and quality education requires the elimination of physical and communication barriers that thwart participation of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. In addition, the education system's culture, policies and practices must accommodate the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.<sup>ii</sup> The inclusion of all children in mainstream schools adds to the investment in children, including children with disabilities, which is a fundamental means to eradicate poverty, boost shared prosperity and enhance inter-generational equity.<sup>iii</sup>

**Solution:** Inclusive education comprises many aspects: an accessible school environment; inclusive curriculum; teacher-training programmes; support for children and their families; accessible transport; and assistive devices. As demonstrated in many countries, inclusive education is better for all children, including those with disabilities.

**Examples:** Examples of more inclusive environments exist throughout the world, including in developing countries. Regional programmes such as *Care and Support for Teaching and Learning in South Africa*—led by the South African Ministry of Education—have supported successful efforts to make schools more inclusive. Low-resource areas such as the slums of Mumbai (e.g., a project by ADAPT) have also established inclusive preschools that assist children with disabilities to enter mainstream schools.

#### **Indicators:**

- The percentage of primary, secondary and tertiary schools that have accessible entrances, classrooms, and toilet facilities

- The number of qualified sign language interpreters and percentage of teachers proficient in sign language employed by Ministries of Education and the private sector

### Full and Productive Employment Inclusive of Persons with Disabilities

The exclusion of persons with disabilities from employment opportunities results in an cost for national economies. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the higher rates of unemployment and labour market inactivity among persons with disabilities due to barriers to education, skills training and transport resulted in a loss of 7 per cent of national GDP.<sup>iv</sup> On an individual and community level, income earned from productive employment can substantially mitigate the incidence of extreme poverty among persons with disabilities and their families. The actual poverty experienced by persons with disabilities is even higher than typically reported because it does not take into account that persons with disabilities need to spend a significant percentage of their income and resources to cover additional costs related to their disabilities.

**Solution:** There is a need for a twin-track approach: targeting persons with disabilities and at the same time creating more inclusive mainstream initiatives to promote full and productive employment for persons with disabilities. The result would reduce economic costs for individuals, their families and society as a whole. Such initiatives need to focus on the expansion of anti-discrimination provisions in labour and labour-related laws. Emphasis also needs to be incorporated into labour statistics inclusive of persons with disabilities, vocational education and training (adapted to market demand), microfinance, self-employment and incentives, as well as support for employers to recruit and retain employees with disabilities. Moreover, it is essential to create social protection schemes to provide basic income support to cover additional disability-related costs and to encourage persons with disabilities to seek employment.

**Examples:** The ILO's 2014 *Achieving equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities through legislation*<sup>v</sup> assists policy makers and drafters of legislation to improve the effectiveness of national laws concerning vocational training and employment of persons with disabilities.

#### Indicators:

- Percentage of employed and economically active persons with disabilities
- Percentage of mainstream vocational education and training centres admitting students and trainees with disabilities
- Percentage of labour and labour-related laws containing provisions with respect to disability status as prohibited grounds for discrimination

### Reducing Inequalities

Today most States are making significant investments in the development frameworks of their countries, but often inadvertently leave behind persons with disabilities. All persons with disabilities must - young and old, women and men, in rural or urban areas - have equal opportunities to contribute to development. A number of high-level commitments have been made, globally and regionally, to promote equality and inclusion of persons

with disabilities in development and give recognition to the UN CRPD as both a human rights and development instrument. However persons with disabilities are overrepresented among poor people and often have less resilience and coping mechanisms. While efforts to promote overall inclusion will have an impact, it is critical to take steps to provide targeted support to persons with disabilities to reduce the inequality and marginalisation that they encounter.

**Solution:** Combined with policies in other sectors—such as inclusive education, economic empowerment, and accessible infrastructures and information services—social protection schemes can contribute to the reduction of inequalities faced by persons with disabilities. The Outcome Document of the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development (HLMDD) acknowledged this and calls on Member States to “strengthen social protection for meeting disability-related needs and promote access to relevant schemes based on social protection floors, on an equal basis with others, including income support, and access to appropriate and affordable services, devices and other assistance” OP4 (f).

**Example:** Countries in different regions and of different levels of economic development, such as South Africa, Namibia, Nepal and Brazil have developed non-contributive social protection schemes supporting persons with disabilities and their families in or at risk of poverty.

**Indicator:**

- Current surveys, including the Washington Group short set of questions on Household Income and Expenditure Surveys and Living Standard Measurement, will allow for the disaggregation by disability status of all currently used indicators on poverty and equality

<b>Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements</b>
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As cited in the UN CRPD, “to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas” (Article 9, Accessibility). In addition, the Outcome Document of the HLMDD calls on States to “ensure accessibility, following the universal design approach, by removing barriers to the physical environment, transportation, employment, education, health, services, information and assistive devices, such as information and communications technologies, including in remote or rural areas, to achieve the fullest potential throughout the whole life cycle of persons with disabilities” OP4 (h).

**Solution:** Accessibility should be an integral part of building codes, urban planning, transportation and rural infrastructure development, including water and sanitation. Public procurement of infrastructure, goods and services, applied across domestic resources and international cooperation, should include accessibility requirements to ensure that public funds do not contribute to the creation of new barriers. Including accessibility requirements in public procurement is a cost-effective way of building

barrier-free societies as it creates new levels of expectations in terms of accessibility and supports enforcement of accessibility standards in the private sector.

**Examples:** Accessible rapid transit systems have been constructed in: Curitiba, Brazil; Bogota, Colombia; Quito, Ecuador; Ahmedabad, India; and Dar es Salaam. United Republic of Tanzania.<sup>vi</sup> The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has published accessibility standards for built structures, transport, and information technologies. Accessibility audits are common in some countries and these can easily be adapted to be in line with ISO standards.<sup>vii</sup>

**Indicators:**

- The percentage of public transport routes that meet national accessibility standards
- The percentage of public facilities that meet national accessibility standards

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<sup>i</sup> Ortoleva, S. (2013). Women Enabled. From: <http://www.womenenabled.org/publications.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Thematic study on the right of persons with disabilities to education. Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/25/29).

<sup>iii</sup> UNICEF. (2014). A Post-2015 World Fit for Children Issue Brief: Early Childhood Development – The Foundation for Sustainable Development

<sup>iv</sup> ILO. (2009). The price of exclusion: the economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work, Employment working paper No. 43

<sup>v</sup> ILO. (2011). From: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_162169.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_162169.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> WHO and The World Bank. (2011). World report on disability, page 181. From: [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240685215\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240685215_eng.pdf?ua=1)

<sup>vii</sup> International Organization for Standardization. From: <http://www.iso.org/iso/home.html>