



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Disability and Development Report

Realizing the Sustainable
Development Goals by,
for and with persons
with disabilities

Executive Summary

2018



Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Foreword

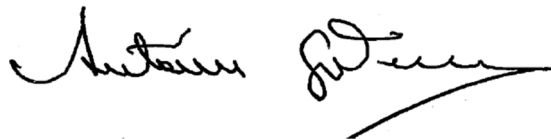
by António Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the world's globally agreed plan for peace and prosperity for all on a healthy planet. But this vision of a better future can only be achieved with the full participation of everyone, including persons with disabilities. Upholding the rights and ensuring the full inclusion of the world's 1 billion persons with disabilities is not only a moral imperative, but a practical necessity.

Despite the strong commitment expressed by the international community for inclusive and sustainable development, persons with disabilities continue to face significant challenges to their full participation in society. These include negative attitudes, stigma, discrimination and lack of accessibility in physical and virtual environments. Our shared duty is to tackle prejudice and misinformation and find new approaches and tools to work for and with persons with disabilities.

The present report aims to advance our efforts to remove barriers and empower persons with disabilities to make positive changes in their lives and communities. This is the first report on progress on disability inclusion in the context of the 2030 Agenda. I commend it to a wide global audience as a useful tool for decision-makers in their ongoing work to design evidence-based policies that leave no one behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

António Guterres

Contributors

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Overall guidance	Daniela Bas, Director, DISD Alberto Padova, Chief, Social Inclusion and Participation Branch
Production coordinator	Akiko Ito, Chief, Programme on Disability Section
Editorial team leader	Maria Martinho
Substantive inputs	<i>Staff:</i> Saeko Kajima, Guozhong Zhang; <i>Consultants:</i> Holger Dieterich, Bjorn Gelders, Xing Lu, <i>Interns:</i> Wei Chang, Joshua Liu, Donald Moratz, Anupreet Sidhu
Reviewers	Carol Pollack, Chief, Programme Planning and Coordination Unit, Marta Roig, Chief, Emerging Issues & Trends in Development Section
Editorial assistance	Anna Satarova and Meriam Gueziel
Administrative assistance	Robert Venne
Assistance with maps	From Department of Field Support: Ayako Kagawa, Chief of the Cartographic Unit, and Guillaume Le Sourd
Copy-editor	Luisa LaFleur

Contributors and reviewers from the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations

Jürgen Menze (ILO); Stefan Tromel (ILO); Valentina Stoevska (ILO); Jose Maria Batanero (ITU); Facundo Chavez Penillas (OHCHR); Grace Sanico Steffan (OHCHR); Victoria Lee (OHCHR); Heidi Ullmann (UN ECLAC); Neda Jafar (UN ESCWA); Maribel Derjani-Bayeh (UN Women); Sara Duerto Valero (UN Women); Valentina Resta (UNDESA/DPIDG); Masahiko Murase (UNDESA/DSDG); Minoru Takada (UNDESA/DSDG); Nikolas Franke (UNDESA/DSDG); Jakub Hrkal (UNDESA/UNSD); Margaret Mbogoni (UNDESA/UNSD); Sarah Rattray (UNDP); Florence Migeon (UNESCO); Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg (UNESCO); Friedrich Huebler (UNESCO Institute of Statistics); Helene Tran (UNESCO Institute of Statistics); Akiko Sakaue (UNFPA); Leyla Sharafi (UNFPA); Marja Edelman (UN-Habitat); Tessy Aura (UN-

Habitat); Kirstin Lange (UNHCR); Aniruddha Kulkarni (UNICEF); Asma Maladwala (UNICEF); Claudia Cappa (UNICEF); Gopal Mitra (UNICEF); Mark Waltham (UNICEF); Natasha Graham (UNICEF); Philippe Testot-Ferry (UNICEF); Robert Bain (UNICEF); Rosangela Berman Bieler (UNICEF); Stefanie Dannenmann-Di Palma (UNISDR); Andrew Lange (UN-OHRLLS); Sreerupa Mitra (UNPRPD); Alarcos Cieza (WHO); Carla Sabariego (WHO); Chapal Khasnabis (WHO); Diane Bell (WHO); Lindsay Lee (WHO); Michelle K. Funk (WHO); Natalie Drew (WHO); Rifat Hussein (WHO); Somnath Chatterjee (WHO); Aleksandra Posarac (World Bank); Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo (World Bank Group); Deepti Samant Raja (World Bank Group).

Contributors and reviewers participating in their expert capacity

David Banes (Access and Inclusion Services); Arvid Lindén (Agency for Participation of Sweden); Hiroshi Kawamura (Assistive Technology Development Organization); Jason Da Silva (AXSMap); David Stapleton (Center for Studying Disability Policy); Soumitra Pathare (Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society); Heiner Salomon (Development Pathways); Patrick Llewellyn (Development Pathways); Vandana Chaudhry (City University of New York); Julia Fleuret (Demographic and Health Surveys Program); Sophie Mitra (Fordham University); Martin Gould (G3ICT); Judith Striek (German Institute for Human Rights); Ramon Cruz (Institute for Transportation and Development Policy); Derrick L. Cogburn (Institute of Disability and Public Policy, American University); Nancy Bolt (International Federation of Library Associations); Stephen Wyber (International Federation of Library Associations); Atsuro Tsutsumi (Kanazawa University); Ellie Cole (Leonard Cheshire Disability); Marcella Deluca (Leonard Cheshire Disability); Maria Kett (Leonard Cheshire Disability); Mark Carew (Leonard Cheshire Disability); Nora Groce (Leonard Cheshire Disability); Ola Abu Alghaib (Leonard Cheshire Disability); Hannah Kuper (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine); Islay Mactaggart (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine); Morgon Banks (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine); Johan Borg (Lund University); Michael Szporluk (MAS Consulting); Alberto Vásquez Encalada (Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities); Stuart Hamilton (Qatar National Library); Arne Henning Eide (SINTEF); Jill Hanass-Hancock (South African Medical Research Council); Rosaly Correa-de-Araujo (United States Department of Health and Human Services); Annie Robb (Ubuntu Centre, South Africa); Beatrice Nabulime Kaggya (Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development); Monica Pinilla (Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia); Dan Mont (University College London); Gregor Wolbring (University of Calgary); Charlotte H. Capri (University of Cape Town); Margie Schneider (University of Cape Town); Julie Hannah (University of Essex); Rannveig Traustadóttir (University of Iceland); Gauthier de Beco (University of Leeds); Cathy Vaughan (University of Melbourne); Mona Paré (University of Ottawa); Leslie Swartz (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa); Takashi Izutsu (University of Tokyo); Tsitsi Chataika (University of Zimbabwe); Elizabeth Ombati (Users and Survivors of Psychiatry Kenya); Michael Njenga (Users and Survivors of Psychiatry Kenya); Jennifer Madans (Washington Group/ United States National

Centre for Disease Control); Mitch Loeb (Washington Group/United States National Centre for Disease Control); Jean-François Trani (Washington University); Parul Bakshi (Washington University); Archana Patkar (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council); Ohyong Kweon (Yein Law Office).

Contributors and reviewers from non-governmental organizations

Mosharraf Hossain (Action on Disability and Development International); Elizabeth Lockwood (CBM); Julian Eaton (CBM); Salam Gomez (Fundamental Colombia); Pauline Thivillier (Handicap International); Ricardo Pla Cordero (Handicap International); Vladimir Cuk (International Disability Alliance); Fred Smith (Sightsavers); Jennie Bell (Sightsavers); Louisa Gosling (WaterAid); Victor Pineda (World Enable); Emma Pearce (World's Refugee Commission).

Five expert group meetings were organized to coordinate the production of this flagship publication, which included additional experts from Member States, United Nations entities, International Financial Institutions and civil society. The lists of participants of these meetings are available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/monitoring-and-evaluation-of-inclusive-development/medd.html>

Acronyms and abbreviations

CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CsocD	Commission for Social Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DISD	Division for Inclusive Social Development of UNDESA
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EPR	Employment-to-population ratio
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
GA	General Assembly
GDP	Gross domestic product
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDPD	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPS	Individual placement and support
IPUMS	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDS	Model Disability Survey
NEP	National employment policies

ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SCRPD	Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SINTEF	Stiftelsen for industriell og teknisk forskning
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Health Survey
WPA	World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons

Executive summary

Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities

Disability and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This report represents the first United Nations systemwide effort to examine disability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level. The report reviews data, policies and programmes and identifies best practices; and uses this evidence to outline recommended actions to promote the realization of the SDGs for persons with disabilities.

Over 200 experts from United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, Member States and civil society, including research institutions and organizations of persons with disabilities, contributed to this report. The report covers new areas for which no global research was previously available, for example, the role that access to energy plays in enabling persons with disabilities to use assistive technology. It also contains the first global compilation and analysis of internationally comparable data collected with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics Short Set of Questions. Reviews of legislation from 193 United Nations Member States were conducted and analysed for this report to highlight best practices and to assess the current status of discriminatory laws on voting, election for office, right to marry and others. More than 12 major databases of disability statistics, from international agencies and other organizations, were analysed – covering an unprecedented amount of data from over 100 countries. In addition, more than 1.2 million data points of crowdsourced data have been examined to inform analysis of the accessibility of physical spaces.

The report shows that despite the progress made in recent years, persons with disabilities continue to face numerous barriers to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. It sheds light on their disproportionate levels of poverty; their lack of access to education, health services and employment; and their underrepresentation in decision-making and political participation. This is particularly the case for women and girls with disabilities. The main barriers to inclusion entail discrimination and stigma on the grounds of disability; lack of accessibility to physical and virtual environments; lack of access to assistive technology, essential services and rehabilitation; and lack of support for independent living that are critical for the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities as agents of change and beneficiaries of development. Data and statistics compiled and analysed in the present report indicate that persons with disabilities are not yet sufficiently included in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs provide a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. The 2030 Agenda pledges to leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, and has recognized disability as a cross-cutting issue, to be considered in the

implementation of all of its goals. The Agenda also includes seven targets and 11 indicators explicitly making reference to persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment, availability of schools that are sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

The 2030 Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and grounded, inter alia, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties. The 2030 Agenda is therefore linked to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and its implementation, by, for, and with persons with disabilities should be in line with the CRPD to incorporate the disability perspective in all aspects of its realization, monitoring and evaluation.

The commitment of Governments to disability-inclusive development has also been demonstrated in other recent development agreements, which provide further guidance in their respective areas of focus. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in March 2015, included persons with disabilities as agents of change. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in July 2015, addressed the needs of persons with disabilities in the areas of social protection, employment, education, infrastructure, financial inclusion, technology and data. The World Humanitarian Summit, held in May 2016, launched the first-ever Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. Habitat III in October 2016 adopted a disability-inclusive New Urban Agenda, guiding urban development with the principles of Universal Design and accessibility for all.

Striving to achieve disability-inclusive development is not only the right thing to do, it is also the practical thing to do. Sustainable development for all can only be attained if persons with disabilities are equally included as both agents and beneficiaries as countries strive for a sustainable future. The success of the 2030 Agenda requires a participatory and inclusive approach in which all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, are engaged. The 2030 Agenda therefore presents an important opportunity to advance the goal of the United Nations: to promote economic and social progress and human rights toward a peaceful and prosperous world for all.

Ending poverty and hunger for all persons with disabilities (Goals 1 and 2)

Persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than persons without disabilities due to barriers in society such as discrimination, limited access to education and employment and lack of inclusion in livelihood and other social programmes. National data on income poverty disaggregated by disability remain scarce, but **available data show that the proportion of persons with disabilities living under the national or international poverty line is higher, and in some countries double, than that of persons without disabilities.** Regarding food security, in developed countries, available data shows that the average percentage of persons with disabilities who are unable to afford a meal with protein every second

day is almost double that of persons without disabilities. More women with disabilities than men with disabilities are in such a situation, and the gender gap between women and men in terms of access to meals with protein is wider among persons with disabilities. In developing countries, data shows that persons with disabilities and their households are more likely to not always have food to eat, than persons without disabilities and their households. While financial inclusion can help persons with disabilities out of poverty, access to financial services such as banks remains restricted by the lack of physical and virtual accessibility of these services. In some countries, persons with disabilities find that more than 30 per cent of banks are not accessible.

Social protection programmes for persons with disabilities, which can be vital in facilitating an escape from poverty, have been adopted in many countries. **At least 168 countries have disability schemes that provide periodic cash benefits to persons with disabilities, while lump-sum benefits are provided in 11 countries.** In half of the countries with periodic benefits, these benefits cover mainly workers and their families in the formal economy, excluding children with disabilities and persons with disabilities who have not had the opportunity to contribute to social insurance for a sufficient period to be eligible for benefits. In 87 other countries however, schemes are fully or partially financed through taxes and have improved coverage. In only one third of these countries, schemes cover all persons with assessed disabilities regardless of their income status. In the rest of the countries, programmes cover only persons or households whose economic means fall below a certain threshold. Despite their existence, many persons with disabilities are not able to access social protection. **In some countries, more than 80 per cent of persons with disabilities who need welfare services cannot receive them.**

To end poverty and hunger for persons with disabilities, a number of actions should be considered:

- Design social protection policies and programmes to include persons with disabilities.
- Remove barriers and obstacles that persons with disabilities face in accessing and fully benefiting from social protection on an equal basis with others.
- Sensitize personnel of grant offices about barriers experienced by persons with disabilities to access social protection and approaches to overcome these barriers.
- Improve access to and accessibility of banking and other financial services, including mobile banking.
- Disaggregate data on poverty and hunger by disability status.
- Establish national monitoring and evaluation systems that periodically assess all social protection programmes regarding inclusion and positive impact on the situation of persons with disabilities.

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being (Goal 3)

Persons with disabilities generally have more health-care needs than others – both standard needs and needs linked to impairments – and are therefore more vulnerable to the impact of low quality or inaccessible health-care services than others. Compared to persons without disabilities, persons with disabilities are more likely to have poor health: **among 43 countries, 42 per cent of persons with disabilities versus 6 per cent of persons without disabilities perceive their health as poor.** In some countries, less than 20 per cent of persons with disabilities report poor health, while in others more than 70 per cent of persons with disabilities report the same. The number of persons with disabilities who report poor health tends to be higher in countries with lower gross domestic product per capita, suggesting that increased availability of financial resources may provide the accessible health, basic and community services needed to achieve better health.

Access to health-care services remains a challenge for persons with disabilities, who are more than three times as likely to be unable to get health care when they need it. Access to rehabilitation services is also a challenge. In some countries, more than 50 per cent of persons with disabilities have an unmet need for these services. Lack of financial resources, lack of access to and accessibility of medical facilities and transport, as well as inadequate training of health personnel to accommodate persons with disabilities remain major challenges. Some countries have endeavoured to reform legal and policy frameworks and/or to address access to health-care services directly, including through anti-discrimination laws related to the health sector, disability laws or policy plans, and laws that guarantee access to health care for persons with specific health conditions (e.g. spinal cord injury) or specific populations (e.g. veterans). Although many of these laws are general and do not target disability-specific barriers, **six countries have explicit laws that guarantee access to health care for persons with disabilities.**

To achieve the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities, the following actions should be considered:

- Strengthen national legislation and policies on health care in line with the CRPD.
- Identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility in health-care facilities.
- Improve health-care coverage and affordability for persons with disabilities as part of universal approaches to health care.
- Train health-care personnel on disability inclusion and improve service delivery for persons with disabilities.
- Empower persons with disabilities to take control over their own health-care decisions, on the basis of informed consent.

- Prohibit discriminatory practices in health insurance and promote health insurance coverage for assistive products and rehabilitation services.
- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen health systems to include and deliver for persons with disabilities.

Accessing sexual and reproductive health-care services and reproductive rights for persons with disabilities (targets 3.7 and 5.6)

Persons with disabilities have equal needs to access sexual and reproductive health-care services as those without disabilities and have similar requirements for family planning and childbirth. However, misperceptions about persons with disabilities and the assumption that persons with disabilities are not sexually active has contributed to little attention being paid to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. **Limited evidence in a few developing countries shows that 29 per cent of births by mothers with disabilities are not attended by a skilled health worker and 22 per cent of married women with disabilities have an unmet need for family planning.** These percentages are higher in rural areas. Without access to sexual and reproductive health, persons with disabilities are at higher risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

Apart from the societal stereotypes, the barriers that persons with disabilities face to accessing sexual and reproductive health services include lack of accessibility of services and information. Persons with disabilities, particularly women and those with intellectual disabilities, also fear abuse and violation of their reproductive rights when accessing these services because many persons with disabilities have been subjected to involuntary sterilization in various countries.

While examples exist of national sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes that are inclusive of persons with disabilities, in most countries, persons with disabilities remain invisible in such frameworks, as well as in their monitoring and evaluation. A number of actions should be considered to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights:

- Develop national policies and laws that guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights for persons with disabilities.
- Make sexual and reproductive health-care facilities and information accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Train sexual and reproductive care workers on disability inclusion, combat discriminatory practices and improve service delivery for persons with disabilities.

- Educate persons with disabilities, including adolescents with disabilities, on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the implementation of policies and programmes on access to sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities.
- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen sexual and reproductive health and services for persons with disabilities.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4)

Persons with disabilities remain less likely to attend school and complete primary education and more likely to be illiterate than persons without disabilities. Available data reveals that, on average, one in three children with disabilities of primary school age is out of school, compared with one in seven children without disabilities. Primary school completion is also lower for children with disabilities. These trends are reflected in the lower literacy rate of persons with disabilities: **54 per cent of persons with disabilities compared to 77 per cent of persons without disabilities are literate. In some countries, more than 10 per cent of persons with disabilities have been refused entry into school because of their disability; and more than a quarter of persons with disabilities reported schools were not accessible or were hindering to them.** Crowdsourced data, mostly from developed countries, indicates that only 47 per cent of more than 30,000 education facilities are accessible for persons using wheelchairs.

Many countries continue to strengthen national policies and legal frameworks to improve access to education for persons with disabilities, with 34 out of 193 United Nations Member States guaranteeing in their constitutions the right to education for persons with disabilities or providing protection against discrimination based on disability in education. Yet, **only in 44 per cent of United Nations Member States, can students with disabilities be taught in the same classroom as other students. Despite this, progress has been made in recent years: 41 per cent of countries in 2017, as opposed to 17 per cent in 2013, provided appropriate materials and communication to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in their schools.**

To achieve Goal 4 for persons with disabilities, in line with the CRPD, efforts are needed to implement and scale up the following actions:

- Strengthen national policies and the legal system to ensure access to quality education for all persons with disabilities.
- Build the capacity of policymakers as well as other decision makers at the community and national levels to enhance their knowledge on disability inclusion in education.

- Make schools and educational facilities accessible by creating an enabling environment for students with disabilities and by making physical and virtual environments accessible.
- Provide training to teachers and other education specialists to gain knowledge and experience in inclusive education for persons with disabilities.
- Adopt a learner-centred pedagogy which acknowledges that everyone has unique needs that can be accommodated through a continuum of teaching approaches.
- Engage civil society and local communities in inclusive education.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the implementation of policies and laws on inclusive education.
- Improve national collection and disaggregation of education indicators by disability.
- Explore online and smartphone crowdsourcing applications to obtain bottom-up information on the accessibility of schools for persons with disabilities.

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls with disabilities (Goal 5)

Women with disabilities are often subjected to double discrimination due to their gender and disability status and continue to be at a disadvantage in most spheres of society and development. Available data suggests that **the gap is stark compared with men without disabilities: women with disabilities are three times more likely to have unmet needs for health care; three times more likely to be illiterate; two times less likely to be employed and two times less likely to use the Internet. Among those employed, women with disabilities are two times less likely to work as legislators, senior officials or managers.** Women with disabilities tend also to be in a worse position than women without disabilities. Moreover, women with disabilities are at heightened risk of suffering sexual violence compared to those without disabilities.

Compared with men with disabilities, women with disabilities are more likely to have unmet health-care needs; more likely to be unemployed or inactive in the labour market; and less likely to work as legislators, senior officials or managers. In poverty, lack of access to education and the Internet as well as physical violence, the evidence does not seem to indicate a further disadvantage for women with disabilities relative to men with disabilities, suggesting that in several countries attitudinal and environmental barriers against disability, not gender, are the major factor driving the disadvantage experienced by women with disabilities. However, for lack of access to employment and sexual violence, environmental barriers and negative attitudes against both gender and disability seem to play a significant role.

Many countries still address gender and disability issues separately without focusing on the intersection between the two, but there are increasingly positive initiatives. For instance, in Latin America, 17 out of 20 countries include disability in their national gender plans. However, only 6 out of 19 countries address gender in their disability laws. To fully achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls with disabilities, efforts should focus on the following:

- Address the needs and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities in national strategies or action plans on disability and on gender.
- Develop policies and programmes focused on women and girls with disabilities aiming at their full and equal participation in society.
- Support the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities by investing in their education and supporting their transition from school to work.
- Raise awareness on the needs of women and girls with disabilities and eliminate stigma and discrimination against them.
- Enhance the collection, dissemination and analysis of data on women and girls with disabilities and disaggregate and disseminate data by sex, age and disability.

Ensuring availability of water and sanitation (Goal 6)

Persons with disabilities, especially those living in developing countries, encounter challenges in access to water, sanitation and hygiene, including physical, institutional, social and attitudinal barriers. This is particularly true for persons with severe disabilities. Furthermore, in many countries persons with disabilities are less likely to live in households with access to improved water and sanitation, and less likely to live in a dwelling with hygiene and sanitation facilities on the premises. This can create difficulties for persons with disabilities who experience difficulties in mobility, in locating the bathroom and in waiting in line. Moreover, **evidence from a limited number of developing countries indicates that more than one in seven persons with disabilities finds the toilet at home hindering or not accessible.** Lack of accessibility of toilets outside the home is also a challenge and prevents persons with disabilities from participating in society. **Crowdsourced data, mostly from developed countries, indicates that only 69 per cent of public toilets are accessible for wheelchair users.** Evidence also suggests that many primary schools do not have sanitation facilities that are accessible by persons with reduced mobility.

Assistive technologies, such as specially designed handles for water pumps or toilets, ramps and handrails, and wider doors that are designed for persons with disabilities, have been used to overcome such challenges and make water, sanitation and hygiene accessible. Some countries have also made communal wells safe and physically accessible for persons with disabilities and have provided moveable toilet seats

to households with latrines, which have helped persons with disabilities and leg and/or back problems by reducing the need to sit or crawl on a wet latrine floor.

To achieve Goal 6 for persons with disabilities, it is imperative to focus on programmes that target challenges in access to water and sanitation through various steps:

- Involve all stakeholders, especially persons with disabilities.
- Invest and allocate financial resources to make water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in households and in settings outside the home accessible, prioritizing schools, workplaces, health facilities and communal facilities.
- Adopt a twin-track approach: mainstream disability in water and sanitation policies and programmes while at the same time developing disability-specific programmes.
- Share information and build capacity about low-cost inclusive interventions to scale them up.
- Raise awareness and end discrimination and stigma.
- Monitor progress through the collection of individual data.
- Collect, analyse and disseminate census and survey data on water, sanitation and hygiene access for persons with disabilities and disaggregate these data by type of disability, age and sex.
- Explore crowdsourcing applications to obtain bottom-up information on the accessibility of water and sanitation facilities for persons with disabilities to inform accessibility policies.
- Mainstream disability in international fora and global mechanisms working on water, sanitation and hygiene.

Ensuring access to energy (Goal 7)

Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is vital for persons with disabilities. Assistive technology, used by many to facilitate equal participation in society and independent living, often requires electricity. Persons with disabilities are more likely to spend longer periods in their homes and therefore to consume more electricity, for example, to maintain adequate room temperature. Higher electricity consumption contributes to higher energy bills.

In many countries, persons with disabilities face more challenges in accessing modern energy than persons without disabilities. In 37 out of 44 developing countries, the percentage of households with access to electricity is lower for households with persons with disabilities than households without persons with disabilities. **In 17 countries, less than 50 per cent of households with persons with disabilities have access to electricity.** In developed countries, persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, are less likely than persons without disabilities to be able to keep their homes warm.

Traditional fuels, such as biomass and coal, are also more commonly used for cooking in households with persons with disabilities than in other households. Longer periods spent at home can lead to greater exposure to indoor pollution from those fuels. **In several countries, more than half of the households with persons with disabilities still use wood and coal for cooking.** Access to clean energy is therefore crucial for the well-being of persons with disabilities.

Initiatives taken to address the needs of persons with disabilities in accessing energy remain limited. Best practices include the provision of financial support for adjusting room temperature in winter and summer and distribution of energy-efficient stoves in refugee camps focusing on persons with disabilities.

The following eight steps could contribute to address energy needs and implement Goal 7 for persons with disabilities by 2030:

- Take into account the extra energy costs that persons with disabilities are faced with in determining social protection measures.
- Include targeted measures for persons with disabilities in energy programmes.
- Close the gap in energy access between persons with and without disabilities.
- Prioritize electricity access for persons with disabilities who require electricity-dependent assistive technology for independent living and for participation in society.
- Reduce use of solid fuels and promote modern forms of energy in the households of persons with disabilities.
- Promote electricity in schools to increase the use of assistive technology in education and enhance the opportunities for students with disabilities to participate equally in educational systems.
- Include persons with disabilities in national governing bodies working on energy access.
- Raise awareness within ministries and promote interministerial coordination to address fuel and energy poverty among persons with disabilities.

Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities (Goal 8)

Persons with disabilities continue to have limited access to the labour market. **The employment-to-population ratio of persons with disabilities aged 15 and older is almost half that of persons without disabilities** and employed persons with disabilities tend to earn lower wages than their counterparts without disabilities. Lack of accessible workplaces and reasonable accommodation pose further obstacles in the employment of persons with disabilities. **In eight developing countries, 32 per cent of persons with disabilities consider their workplace hindering or not accessible.**

To improve the employment situation of persons with disabilities, **quota systems, which oblige employers to hire a certain number or percentage of persons with disabilities, have been adopted by at least 99 countries. Quotas typically range from 1 per cent to 15 per cent.** The most effective quota systems include the payment of a levy by the non-complying company for every position not held by a person with disabilities. These levies typically contribute to a special fund used to finance measures promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. Countries have also adopted employment laws and policies that ensure the right of persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunities and prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability. **In 22 countries, national constitutions explicitly guarantee the right to work for persons with disabilities. More than 60 per cent of countries include provisions in their labour laws prohibiting discrimination in employment and guaranteeing equal pay for persons with disabilities.** Moreover, some national programmes provide financial support for persons with disabilities in accessing mainstream technical and vocational education and training.

To address the current employment gaps and realize Goal 8 for persons with disabilities, States should ensure that:

- National legislation protects persons with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in all matters of employment.
- The public sector hires persons with disabilities.
- Public procurement policies and systems include provisions that encourage the employment of persons with disabilities.
- Public employment services are inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- Mainstream vocational education has provisions to include persons with disabilities.
- Mainstream entrepreneurship development training and microfinance systems include persons with disabilities.
- Policies are in place that facilitate job retention and return-to-work options for persons who acquire a disability, including for persons with mental health conditions.
- Support is provided for persons with disabilities in sheltered employment to benefit and enter the mainstream labour market.
- Social protection systems are designed to provide income security and support for disability-related needs and extra costs to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market.
- Robust evaluation plans are built for the implementation of programmes to improve the employment of persons with disabilities.

- A database of available information and disaggregated data on disability and employment is developed and available in an accessible format.

Moreover, States should encourage the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector. Where employment quota legislation exists, in the public and/or the private sector, the State should ensure its implementation with an effective evaluation system throughout the career development of employees with disabilities.

Increasing access to information and communications technology (target 9.c)

Persons with disabilities have more limited access to information and communications technology (ICT) than persons without disabilities. There is a significant gap between persons with and without disabilities in the use of the Internet. **Among 14 countries, only 19 per cent of persons with disabilities compared to 36 per cent of persons without disabilities use the Internet.** This may be attributed to the lack of accessibility of such technology, as well as the lower capacity of households with persons with disabilities to afford Internet access. For instance, **more than 60 per cent of online national portals include features that are not accessible for persons with disabilities. Evidence from three sub-Saharan countries indicates that only 8 per cent of households with persons with disabilities can afford access to the Internet, about half the percentage for households without persons with disabilities.** Compared to households without persons with disabilities, households with persons with disabilities are also less likely to own a mobile phone.

National initiatives have been developed to promote equal access to ICT for persons with disabilities, including adoption of national accessibility guidelines for ICT, captioning or signing of television and radio programmes and creation of accessible web pages.

Looking forward, the following recommendations offer guidance on how to strengthen the ICT ecosystem to ensure inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities:

- Raise awareness and enhance knowledge of ICT accessibility.
- Involve persons with disabilities at every stage of ICT development.
- Promote the principles of Universal Design in the mainstream ICT industry and the public sector.
- Adopt national ICT accessibility policies and regulations.
- Create dedicated focal points in relevant ministries or departments dealing with ICT accessibility.
- Provide affordable Internet access for persons with disabilities.
- Provide funding mechanisms to support the development of open-source software.

- Involve all relevant stakeholders and increase funding to support Universal Design and low-cost ICTs for persons with disabilities.
- Develop and publish comparable data on access to and use of ICTs disaggregated by disability as well as on accessibility of ICTs.

Reducing inequality (Goal 10)

Persons with disabilities face persistent inequality in social, economic and political spheres and are disadvantaged in all areas covered by the SDGs. **Although gaps between persons with and without disabilities vary among countries, in some countries the gaps reach more than 20 percentage points in income poverty, 15 percentage points in the ability to afford a meal with protein every second day, 50 percentage points in experiencing good health, in literacy rates and in employment-to-population ratios.** Persons with disabilities are also at a disadvantage in terms of accessing and affording essential services including water and sanitation, energy, and the Internet. Besides these gaps, persons with disabilities are underrepresented in political participation.

Combating discrimination is key to reducing inequality for persons with disabilities. Discrimination is a major cause of exclusion of persons with disabilities. **In some countries, more than 50 per cent of persons with disabilities have experienced discrimination.** Even though most countries have ratified the CRPD, discriminatory laws and policies still exist in some countries, especially in the areas regulating the right to marry, legal capacity and political participation. **Only 36 per cent of countries have no legal restrictions for persons with disabilities to marry, only 13 per cent have no restrictions to vote and only 9 per cent have no restrictions to be elected for public office.**

Ensuring access to assistive technology is crucial to enable the independent living of persons with disabilities and their ability to fully participate in society. Efforts have been made by some countries to make this technology more available and affordable for persons with disabilities by developing national plans. However, available evidence shows that **in several developing countries more than half of the persons with disabilities who need assistive products are not able to receive them, mainly because available products are inadequate, unaffordable or no transport is available to the providers of these products.**

Social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities will also require deinstitutionalization. Persons with disabilities living in institutions remain excluded from society and are often unable to obtain education, to exercise the right to vote and to make their own decisions. **In some countries, more than 10 per cent of persons with disabilities still live in institutions and special homes for persons with disabilities.**

Among persons with disabilities, persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities are even more disadvantaged. They are more likely to experience forced institutionalization, poor living conditions and abuses occurring in psychiatric hospitals as well as harmful and coercive treatment practices. In addition, they are less likely to be literate and employed and, are more likely to find health facilities hindering and to be excluded from family and community activities. Only in a few countries does legislation promote the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Making cities and communities inclusive and sustainable for persons with disabilities (Goal 11)

Transportation systems, public spaces and facilities and businesses are not always accessible for persons with disabilities. Available data indicate that **in some countries more than 30 per cent of persons with disabilities find that transportation and public spaces are not accessible**. Persons with disabilities also experience difficulties in accessing adequate housing. Barriers include lack of physical accessibility, discrimination, stigmatization and lack of social housing or community support. Limited access to employment can also pose challenges in securing the financial conditions to rent or finance adequate housing. As a result, a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities are homeless. Furthermore, those who find a home may not be able to afford modifications to make their home accessible. **In some countries, more than 15 per cent of persons with disabilities find their dwellings hindering**. In several countries, persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities face an additional obstacle: they have limited security of tenure because their legal capacity is not recognized, and they are rarely able to obtain a formal housing contract.

Persons with disabilities living in rural areas tend to face more challenges than persons with disabilities living in urban areas: they are less likely to attend school and to live in a household that owns a mobile phone. Births from mothers with disabilities living in rural areas are also less likely to be attended by a skilled health worker.

More and more countries have taken measures to improve physical accessibility in public transportation, public playgrounds, cultural facilities, and sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. Some countries also have guidelines for accessible housing. To make cities and communities inclusive and sustainable for persons with disabilities, more efforts are needed to:

- Ensure that national policies and laws on accessible housing, public infrastructure, transport and services are in place and implemented.
- Develop national policies and laws that guarantee access to adequate and affordable housing for persons with disabilities.

- Raise awareness on disability among communities and decision makers and create the enabling environment where persons with disabilities are included without discrimination and can participate equally in their communities.
- Share knowledge and best practices and build capacity to implement measures promoting accessibility and inclusion.
- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen urban development to be more accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities.

Building the resilience of persons with disabilities and reducing their exposure to and impact from climate-related hazards and other shocks and disasters (targets 1.5, 11.5 and Goal 13)

Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable during natural disasters, extreme climate events, conflict and humanitarian emergencies. They are often unprepared as 72 per cent have no personal preparedness plan for disasters and 79 per cent would not be able to evacuate immediately without difficulty in the event of a disaster. Persons with disabilities tend to be left behind during evacuations, are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of disasters and suffer higher death rates. Moreover, they are often underidentified in humanitarian and post-disaster contexts. The needs of persons with disabilities are often overlooked in the early phases of response to humanitarian emergencies and difficulties are often faced in accessing services and assistance, including rehabilitation and assistive products which are critical for recovery. Refugees with disabilities are often exposed to discrimination in the places where they seek to live.

The needs of persons with disabilities should be factored into disaster risk reduction planning and response. Many countries are taking measures to do so, for example, by incorporating the needs of persons with disabilities in national policies, laws, plans on humanitarian actions and in post-disaster reconstruction processes. In addition, countries are engaging persons with disabilities in disaster risk analysis and assessment. Guidance on disability-inclusive humanitarian responses have also been developed and are available for humanitarian actors to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are met.

The following steps can contribute to ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and response as well as disability-inclusive humanitarian action:

- Ensure that persons with disabilities participate in decision-making processes and are active stakeholders at all stages of disaster response and humanitarian action from planning to implementation, evaluation and monitoring.
- Ensure that national policies and programmes include operational standards and indicators for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness, planning and response.

- Ensure that emergency information, commodities, infrastructures and services are inclusive and available in accessible formats.
- Mobilize adequate, timely and predictable resources to operationalize commitments for inclusive emergency preparedness and response.
- Raise awareness among persons with disabilities on disaster management planning at the local level.
- Enhance the capacities and knowledge of aid workers on the needs and strengths of persons with disabilities in humanitarian actions.
- Undertake evidence-based research and develop a data collection system on persons with disabilities relevant to conflicts and disasters.

Furthermore, States should ensure that:

- All post crisis recovery efforts, including reconstruction and rebuilding, are inclusive of persons with disabilities, protection mechanisms are in place in emergency and post crisis contexts to recognize and respond to the heightened risk of persons with disabilities, particularly women and children with disabilities, to violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Accountability mechanisms are implemented at the national level for acts or omissions leading to discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities in the context of humanitarian action and disaster response.

Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16)

Persons with disabilities experience a heightened risk of violence, in part as a result of stigma, discrimination and exclusion from society. **Evidence from five developing countries suggests that about one in five persons with disabilities has been beaten or verbally abused because of their disability.** In several developed countries, persons with disabilities are more likely to live in a household or area of residence where crime, violence and vandalism are common. Persons with psychosocial disabilities experience even more violence than persons with other forms of disabilities. Likewise, women and girls with disabilities experience higher exposure to sexual violence compared to women without disabilities and men with and without disabilities.

Equal recognition before the law and legal protections that guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities are fundamental for equal access to justice for all. While some countries explicitly guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities in their constitutions, some allow for exceptions. Issues that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing justice also include lack of accessibility in courts and of legal documents, and

limited disability awareness among those who work in the justice system. **In some countries, more than 30 per cent of courts and police stations are not accessible and more than 90 per cent of persons with disabilities who need legal advice are not able to receive it.**

Public institutions need to be inclusive of persons with disabilities but, too often, are not. **In some countries, more than one in ten persons with disabilities experiences discrimination in public services. Globally, only two thirds of countries have online government services for persons with disabilities.** Persons with disabilities tend to be underrepresented in decision-making bodies. Their participation in politics, including voting and being elected for office, is key for inclusive decision-making. However, many persons with disabilities, particularly those with psychosocial disabilities, are frequently denied their rights to political participation due to discriminatory laws that deprive them of their right to vote and to be elected for office. Public sector employment can also promote inclusive and effective institutions, and quota requirements for the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector have been enforced in many countries.

Participation of persons with disabilities is also hindered by a lack of access to information. Many countries adopt and implement freedom of information acts, which secure access by the public to data and information held by the Government. Yet, few countries have considered the needs of persons with disabilities regarding the accessibility of information in these acts.

Children with disabilities are often not registered at birth because of stigma and families' decisions to hide family members with disabilities. Although some countries have already managed to achieve similar levels of registration for children with disabilities, they still remain largely unregistered in some communities.

Increasing the availability of disaggregated data by disability (target 17.18)

National disability statistics are increasingly available. This is, in part, due to the growing number of countries that collect disability data in censuses. **At least 120 out of 214 countries or areas that conducted a census during the 2010 round included a set of questions on disability, a significant increase from the approximately 19 countries or areas that did so during the 1970 census round.** Moreover, there has been a positive trend in using internationally recommended methodologies in data collection, such as those developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

A number of United Nations entities have been working on methodologies to improve the quality of disability statistics worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) helps countries collect data on disability and functioning through the Model Disability Survey. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics developed a short set of disability questions and an extended set of questions on functioning for the identification of persons with disabilities, as well as, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a child functioning module to identify children with functional difficulties and an inclusive education module to

assess school environment and participation. Efforts have also been made to build capacity in countries to use these methodologies.

To increase the availability of data disaggregated by disability, there is a need to:

- Continue building capacity in countries to collect, process, analyse and disseminate data disaggregated by disability.
- Regularly update international guidelines on the production of data disaggregated by disability.
- Invest in an international repository of disability data, compiling data at the country level to monitor progress towards the SDGs for persons with disabilities.

A way forward for disability-inclusive development

The evidence in this report demonstrates that persons with disabilities are at a disadvantage in comparison to those without disabilities in the attainment, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. Although progress has been observed in terms of the adoption or harmonization of existing laws and policies in line with the CRPD, progress in implementing such measures has been slow. Discriminatory laws are also still in place in many countries.

To meet the SDGs by 2030, international and national development programmes will need to prioritize inclusive development. In particular, concrete action is needed to make persons with disabilities and their situations visible in policymaking and to build just and inclusive societies. This action should focus on the following four fronts.

1. Addressing fundamental barriers causing exclusion of persons with disabilities. The fundamental barriers causing the exclusion of persons with disabilities need to be urgently addressed: discriminatory laws and policies; lack of accessibility in physical and virtual environments; negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination; lack of access to assistive technology and to rehabilitation; and lack of measures to promote the independent living of persons with disabilities.

2. Mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the SDGs. Areas of particular importance for the realization of disability-inclusive development include social protection (target 1.3), education (Goal 4), employment (Goal 8) and basic services, including health-care services (Goal 3), water and sanitation (Goal 6), and energy (Goal 7). Accessible infrastructural development in urban and rural environments, public spaces and facilities (Goal 11) is also of paramount importance to the participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. Progress in these areas can catalyse progress across all SDGs.

3. Investing in the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the SDGs for persons with disabilities. The lack of data and research on the situation of persons with disabilities severely constrains

the international community from monitoring the situation of children, youths and adults with disabilities. Countries should focus on establishing indicators to be collected and disseminated regularly to assess the situation of persons with disabilities and the challenges they face (such as lack of accessibility), including disability-specific indicators to capture progress in implementing policies and programmes aimed at their inclusion. Studies on the impact of policies and programmes will also be needed to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities, in particular to help policymakers design new policies and decide to scale up, refine or discontinue existing policies.

4. Strengthening the means of implementation of the SDGs for persons with disabilities: finance, technology, capacity-building, policy and institutional coherence, and multi-stakeholder partnerships. On finance, adequate resources should be allocated to support (i) the enforcement of laws protecting the rights of persons with disabilities; (ii) the implementation of national disability policies and plans; and (iii) the delivery of essential services to persons with disabilities. Member States, donor agencies and international organizations should regularly monitor financial commitments to include persons with disabilities. On technology, the promotion of accessible technology, following the principles of Universal Design, should be prioritized. Incentivizing research and development of assistive technology can help further accelerate the availability of these technologies. International trade policies and agreements can also facilitate access to affordable assistive products in developing countries. Capacity-building is urgently needed for policymakers to formulate disability-inclusive laws and policies, for organizations working on programmes related to the implementation of SDGs, for service providers to increase the quantity and quality of their services for persons with disabilities, for persons with disabilities themselves to gain knowledge to exercise their rights and to better access available services and products that may benefit them, and for development and humanitarian actors on how to address the needs of persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises and disasters. To promote policy and institutional coherence, a national institutional mechanism promoting the rights, inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities is critical for the effective implementation of the SDGs, as is the participation of persons with disabilities in the institutional arrangements. This institutional mechanism should also coordinate the work of the various ministries at the national level. In addition, as countries revise laws and policies to align them with the CRPD, there is a need to ensure that national legislation and development plans are coherent and that legal and policy provisions do not contradict each other. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have an important role in the realization of the SDGs for persons with disabilities. Such partnerships may involve Member States; United Nations agencies; development, humanitarian and human rights actors; peace and security actors; local authorities and communities; the private sector; and civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. These partners can collectively ensure that development activities and programmes include the perspectives and consider comprehensively the needs of persons with disabilities.

Disability-inclusive development is an essential condition for a sustainable future. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pledging to leave no one behind in the global efforts to realize the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Without the world's one billion persons with disabilities - 15% of the world population - being included as both agents and beneficiaries of development, these Goals will never be achieved. Yet, persons with disabilities are still invisible and often left behind.

This United Nations flagship report is the first publication to address, at the global level, the nexus between disability and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also the first global analysis based on an unprecedented amount of data, legislation and policies from over 100 countries to understand the socio-economic circumstances of persons with disabilities and the challenges and barriers they face in their daily lives. This report examines new areas, like the role of access to energy to enable persons with disabilities to use assistive technology, for which no global research was previously available. And explores the linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as other international relevant norms and standards relating to disability. Against the backdrop of all the available evidence, the report identifies good practices and recommends urgent actions to be taken for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities.