



Written Comments to the SDGs Summit Political Declaration "Elements Paper" Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities

An estimated 1.3 billion people – or 16% of the world's population¹ have a disability. Of this, 80% live in countries of the global South. Persons with disabilities are overrepresented among the poorest in the world. The lack of social protection, compounded by the low employment rates for persons with disabilities lead to further marginalization.² Persons with disabilities are also disproportionately impacted by climate change and humanitarian crises. For example, the lives of 2.7 million persons with disabilities are at risk in Ukraine where they face abandonment in homes and institutions with no access to sustenance or emergency information.³ The overall situation has only been alarmingly aggravated due to the impact of COVID-19. Yet despite this evidence, proposals for financing pandemic response and rebuilding rarely include persons with disabilities.⁴

Given that persons with disabilities have been historically left out of development and that progress achieved thus far have been lost due to the pandemic, it becomes critically important that any and all efforts to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must put inclusion at its heart.

[Our Shared Resolve]

The Political Declaration must be action-oriented, clearly committing to inclusion of those who have been systematically excluded from our development and humanitarian agenda, including persons with disabilities. This commitment must be supported by demonstrated political will and enhanced investment. The acceleration of the SDGs must be underpinned by human rights with the principle of non-discrimination and 'do no harm' at its core, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities among others.

[Our Changed World]

Acknowledging that the SDGs will not be implemented without realizing them for 16% of the world's population who has a disability, efforts must move away from business as usual towards transformative changes.

[Turning Our World toward 2030]

Acknowledging that the rights of persons with disabilities are cross-cutting issues, the Political Declaration must build on the commitments made by Member States, including the Outcome

¹ WHO, *Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities*, 2022
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600>

² UNGA, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar*, 2015
<https://undocs.org/en/A/70/297>

³ OHCHR, *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2022
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/04/ukraine-27-million-people-disabilities-risk-un-committee-warns>

⁴ Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, *Financing rights and social justice for persons with disabilities in the era of COVID-19 and beyond*, 2021 <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/financing-covid19-beyond>



Document of the Forum for Financing for Development,⁵ Security Resolution 2475,⁶ as well as the Call to Action for Disability Inclusive Education at the Transforming Education Summit⁷, among others.

Given that persons with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the global financial crises, the Political Declaration must contain concrete actions to address disability inclusion through a twin track approach: integrate disability in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all mainstream policies and programs on international cooperation and complement them with disability-specific policies and programs.⁸

Ensure a human rights-based approach to persons with disabilities in the implementation of the SDGs and refrain from funding or implementing projects that are contrary to the rights of persons with disabilities.

Community inclusion of persons with disabilities remains a major global development and human rights challenge. The Political Declaration should recognize community-based support systems and services as an essential function of development, reaffirming global obligations and commitments to ensure community inclusion for all persons with disabilities.

Design social protection systems aimed at inclusion and empowerment to support inclusion of persons with disabilities across the life cycle. As specified in the Joint Statement⁹ on inclusive social protection systems, Member States should progressively ensure access to a set of benefits in cash and in kind providing basic income security as well as coverage of health care and disability related costs, including community care and support services.

Recognizing that access to quality assistive technology facilitates inclusion in education, work, family and community life, and helps reduce health inequities, and that currently only 10% of those who need an assistive product have access to it, take steps to make assistive products affordable, available in all regions, with support provided for overcoming environmental barriers in the specific context where they are used.

Acknowledging that persons with disabilities die earlier, have poorer health and are more affected by health emergencies than persons without disabilities, Member States must act on their obligation

⁵ ECOSOC, Outcome Document of the 2022 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, 2022, https://www.un.org/development/desa/financing/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.financing/files/2022-04/2022%20ECOSOC%20FfD%20Forum%20outcome%20document_0.pdf

⁶ S/RES/2475 (2019), [http://undocs.org/s/res/2475\(2019\)](http://undocs.org/s/res/2475(2019))

⁷ IDA, IDDC, GCE-US, *Transforming Education for Disability Inclusion: A Call to Action for All Children*, 2022 <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/blog/transforming-education-disability-inclusion-call-action-all-children>

⁸ UNGA. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar*. 2020. <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/186>

⁹ Joint Statement: Towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities, 2019, https://socialprotection.org/discover/legal_policy_frameworks/joint-statement-towards-inclusive-social-protection-systems



under international human rights law and include health equity for persons with disabilities at the centre of any health sector action.¹⁰

Ensure that DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) related policies, strategic frameworks and plans of action are inclusive, covering the diversity of disability, and informed by disability, ethnicity, gender and age analysis to prevent the expansion of inequalities exacerbated by climate change.¹¹

Ensure that all disability-related policies, strategies and action plans include protection and safety of all persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian crises in line with Article 11 of the CRPD.¹²

Invest in data collection for inclusive development in all sectors, using internationally comparable tools such as the Washington Group short set of questions and the UNICEF Child Functioning Module; data disaggregation by disability, gender, age and other relevant characteristics to adequately assess the impact of programs and projects on persons with disabilities;¹³ and recognize citizen-generated data efforts led by Organizations of Persons with Disabilities to complement official statistics to measure progress on the SDGs and CRPD for persons with disabilities.

Recognizing the unique role played by Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and the adverse impact of COVID-19 on their capacities,¹⁴ ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all efforts, including by establishing formal consultative mechanisms that are accessible and inclusive, in decision-making processes related to international cooperation.

Ensure that localization of the SDGs and development programs is inclusive of persons with disabilities, including supporting Organizations of Persons with Disabilities to access funding and opportunities to develop their organizations, and invest in and learn from OPDs' technical capacities.

¹⁰ WHO, *Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities*, 2022, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600>

¹¹ Stakeholders Group of Persons with Disabilities Thematic Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action, *Statement at the Seventh Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2022 <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/statement-adopted-thematic-group-disaster-risk-reduction-and-climate-action-global-platform>

¹² *ibid*

¹³ UNGA. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities*, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar. 2020. <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/186>

¹⁴ FCDO, *Consequences of Exclusion: A Situation Report*, 2021 <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/blog/covid-19-exacerbated-existing-inequalities-%E2%80%93-research-shows-how-systems-can-do-better>