



REALIZATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY, FOR AND WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

UN Flagship Report on Disability and
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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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 UN 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 good practices; and uses the evidence it reviewed to outline recommended actions to promote the realization of the SDGs for persons with disabilities.

Over 200 experts from UN 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 of access to energy to enable persons with disabilities to use assistive technology. It also contains the first global compilation and analysis of internationally comparable data using the Washington Group on Disability Statistics short set of questions. Reviews of legislation from 193 UN Member States were conducted and analysed for this report to highlight good 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 crowd-sourced 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, employment, their under-representation in decision-making and political participation. This is particularly the case for women and girls with disabilities. Main barriers to inclusion entail discrimination and stigma on the ground of disability, lack of accessibility to physical and virtual environments, lack of access to assistive technology, essential services, rehabilitation and 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 sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building 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 outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference - "The future we want" - underscored the importance of accessibility and disability-inclusion in supporting strategies for sustainable development. 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 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 (SDGs 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 lack of physical and virtual accessibility of these services. In some countries, persons with disabilities find that more than 30% 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. But in other countries – 87 countries – schemes are fully or partially financed through taxes and have improved coverage. Only in 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% 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 (SDG 3)

Persons with disabilities generally have more healthcare needs than others – both standard needs and needs linked to impairments – and are therefore more vulnerable to the impact of low quality or inaccessible healthcare services than others. Compared to persons without disabilities, persons with disabilities are more likely to have poor health: **among 43 countries, 42% of persons with disabilities versus 6% of persons without disabilities perceive their health as poor.** In some countries, less

than 20% of persons with disabilities report poor health, while in others more than 70% of persons with disabilities report so. 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% 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 healthcare 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 healthcare 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 devices and rehabilitation services.
- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen health systems to include and deliver for persons with disabilities.

Access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and reproductive rights for persons with disabilities (SDGs 3.7 and 5.6)

Persons with disabilities have equal needs to access sexual and reproductive health 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. **Limited evidence in a few developing countries, shows that 29% of births by mothers with disabilities are not attended by a skilled health worker and 22% 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 infection 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, 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 (SDG 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% of persons with disabilities compared to 77% of persons without disabilities are literate. In some countries, more**

than 10% of persons with disabilities has 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. Crowd-sourced data, mostly from developed countries, indicates that only 47% 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 UN 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, **in 44% of UN member States, students with disabilities cannot be taught in the same classroom as other students. But progress has been made in recent years: 41% of countries in 2017, as opposed to 17% in 2013, provided, in their schools, appropriate materials and communication to support the inclusion of students with disabilities.**

To achieve SDG 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 for ensuring access to quality education for all persons with disabilities.
- Build capacity of policy makers as well as other decision-makers at both 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 crowd-sourcing 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 (SDG 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 internet as well as physical violence, the evidence does not seem to indicate a further disadvantage of 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 be playing 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 gender national 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:

- Addressing 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 (SDG 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 or 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. **Crowd-sourced data, mostly from developed countries, indicates that only 69% of public toilets are accessible for wheelchair users.** Evidence also suggests that many primary schools do not have sanitation facilities accessible for 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 provided moveable toilet seats to households that had latrines, which helped persons with disabilities having leg and/or back problems and reduced the need to sit or crawl on a wet latrine floor.

To achieve SDG 6 for persons with disabilities, it is imperative to focus on programs 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 accessible water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in households and in settings outside the home, prioritizing schools, workplaces, health facilities and communal facilities.
- Adopt a twin-track approach, i.e. 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 crowd-sourcing 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 (SDG 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% 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. Good 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 the energy needs and implement SDG 7 for persons with disabilities by 2030:

- Take into account the extra energy costs which persons with disabilities are faced with in determining social protection measures.
- Include targeted measures for persons with disabilities in energy programs.
- 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 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 inter-ministerial coordination to address fuel and energy poverty among persons with disabilities.

Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities (SDG 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 poses further obstacles in the employment of persons with disabilities. **In 8 developing countries, 32% 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 100 countries. Quotas typically range from 1% to 15%.** 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% 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 SDG 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 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 employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector and, 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 (SDG 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% of persons with disabilities compared to 36% of persons without disabilities use the internet.** This may be attributed to 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 a third of online national portals includes features that are not accessible for persons with disabilities. Evidence from three sub-Saharan countries indicates that only 8% of households with persons with disabilities can afford 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 policies and programmes have been developed to promote equal access to ICT for persons with disabilities, including captioning or signing of television programmes, ensuring accessible government websites, accessible public electronic kiosks or automated teller machines and provision of telephone services for persons who are deaf and/or speech impaired.

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 (SDG 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 disadvantage in terms of accessing and affording essential services including water and sanitation, energy, and the internet. Besides these gaps, persons with disabilities are under-represented 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% of persons with disabilities have experienced discrimination.** Even though most countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, discriminatory laws and policies still exist in some countries, especially in the areas regulating right to marry, legal capacity and political participation. **Only 36% of countries have no legal restrictions for persons with disabilities to marry, only 13% have no restrictions to vote and only 9% have no restrictions to be elected for public office.**

Ensuring access to assistive technology is crucial to enable 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 devices are not able to receive them, mainly because available devices are inadequate, unaffordable or no transport is available to the providers of these devices.**

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% 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 (SDG 11)

Transportation systems, public spaces and facilities and businesses are not always accessible for persons with disabilities. Available data indicates that **in some countries more than 30% of persons with disabilities finds transportation and public spaces not accessible**. Persons with disabilities also experience difficulties in accessing adequate housing. Barriers include lack of physical accessibility, discrimination and stigmatization and lack of social housing or community support. Limited access to employment can also pose challenges in securing the financial conditions for renting or financing 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% of persons with disabilities find their dwelling 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 mother with disabilities living in rural are also less likely to be attended by a skilled health worker.

More and more countries have been 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 the communities.
- Share knowledge and good 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 resilience of persons with disabilities and reducing their exposure to and impact from climate-related hazards and other shocks and disasters (SDGs 1.5, 11.5 and 13)

Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable during natural disasters, extreme climate events, conflict and humanitarian emergencies. They are often unprepared as 72% have no personal preparedness plan for disasters and 79% 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 adverse impacts of disasters and suffer higher death rates. Moreover, they are often under-identified 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 devices 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, and plans on humanitarian actions and in post-disaster reconstruction processes and by engaging persons with disabilities in disaster risk analysis and assessment. In addition, guidance on disability-inclusive humanitarian response have 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 operationalise commitments for inclusive emergency preparedness and response.
- Raise-awareness amongst persons with disabilities on disaster management plan 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 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 (SDG 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 vandalisms 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 amongst those who work in the justice system. **In some countries, more than 30% of courts and police stations are not accessible and more than 90% 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' decision 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 (SDG 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) supports countries to 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 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 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 (SDG 1.3), education (SDG 4), employment (SDG 8) and basic services, including healthcare services (SDG 3), water and sanitation (SDG 6), and energy (SDG 7). Accessible infrastructural development in urban and rural environments, public spaces and facilities (SDG11) is also of paramount importance to 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 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 policy makers in designing new policies and in deciding 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 the inclusion of persons with disabilities. On technology, the promotion of accessible technology, following the approach 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 where assistive devices are often limited. Capacity-building is urgently needed for policy makers to formulate disability-inclusive laws and policies, for organizations working on programmes related to the implementation of SDGs and 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, 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 wellbeing of persons with disabilities and coordinating at the national level is critical for the effective implementation of the SDGs, as is the participation of persons with disabilities in the institutional arrangements. 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 realization 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, private sector actors 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.

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