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>> Welcome to the webinar. Please stand by. The webinar will begin shortly. Please remain on the line.

>> The broadcast is now starting. All attendees are in listen only mode.

(standing by).

>> Good morning, everybody. Good afternoon. My name is Vladimir Cuk, executive director International Disability Alliance. We are ready to start. But we will give a couple of more minutes for people to join, usually people have some technical problems, etcetera. So let's start at 10:04. Thank you. (pause).

Very well. Okay. Thank you very much for waiting patiently for a couple of minutes. So that we can maybe wait for a couple of more people to join. Once again, my name is Vladimir Cuk. I'm Executive Director of the International Disability Alliance. Thank you all for joining. We have quite a large group right now. We expect that many more will be connecting very soon.

There was more than 60 people signing up for this call. Right now, we have 20. So once again, thank you. I would like to go super quickly through the people who joined the call, so say your name your organizations, very briefly, we have 20 people. Please be cautious of time. Let's start with Andrew. Can you hear us, Andrew? Can you unmute everybody, to try to hear people? Yes?

>> Can you hear me all right?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, I can. Please go ahead.

>> Hi, this is Andrew from SightSavers, head of advocacy and work on SDGs in 2015.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Welcome, thank you. Anthony.

>> Hi, it's Anthony here, co‑chair of the IDDC health group and until recently with handicap international, doing work on health and disability advocacy.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. Catherine. I don't think Catherine hears the connection. Elizabeth.

>> Hi. This is Elizabeth from CBM International, and International Disability and Development Consortium. Good morning, good afternoon.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Hello. Ernesto. Do we have you? No. John Pierre.

>> I am here. Good morning.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Good morning. Welcome, Jean‑Pierre. Who do you represent, please? Okay. This did not work. Juan.

>> Hello. I work as officer at treaty International Disability Alliance based in Geneva.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you, Juan. Lisa.

>> Hi, this is Lisa, I'm the program director for Disability Rights Fund. Hi, everybody.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Hi, Lisa. Maria. Can we hear Maria?

>> Hi. This is Maria, from association Asun from Argentina.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Welcome. Mary Kay.

(I'm your captioner, Mary Kay is your captioner, hi there).

Okay, we will try later. Mia.

>> I am Mia from the Swedish Disability Federation, policy officer there.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Welcome. Mohammed. Mohammed, are you with us? We will try later. Ola.

>> Hello. Hi, good morning. Good afternoon. My name is Mohammed from the Arab forum for the rights of persons with disabilities, Disabled People International regional office.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Welcome. OLa. No. We will try later. Let's try Radosh.

>> Hello, can you hear me? I'm recently working for Disability Rights Promotion International for Europe and co‑chair of task group on disability.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Jimena.

>> Hello. I am Executive Director of Latin‑American network of DPOs in the Latin America region.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Welcome. Ukiko.

>> I'm from Tokyo, Japan. I'm researcher from the DPI women's network Japan. Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: That is all for now. If people are joining in the future, it will be great that they introduce themselves if they are speaking. I'd like to go to the agenda. That I will introduce quickly. First I would like to review the 2016 high level political forum, results and basically feedback from that session. Then I would like to go to what to expect from 2017 high level political forum. And then a third point of today's conversation is preparatory process towards 2017 HLPF. Finally, 4 will be draft terms of reference of the stakeholder group 4 persons with disabilities, and finally, finally, any other business.

Do we have any comments to the agenda? Please raise your hand, you have on the left‑hand side of the panel, you have a little log of the hand, please, please press hand so that I can see you wanting to speak. If nobody wants to speak we can accept this agenda and move forward. Let me briefly review the 2016 HLPF and we can seek your feedback as well.

High level political forum in 2016 was attended by 22 representatives of the stakeholder group of persons with disabilities, consisting of twelve persons with disabilities and ten nondisabled advocates. Position paper, official position paper by the stakeholder group, titled ensuring that no one was left behind, was translated into six languages, and endorsed by more than 370 organizations. This is really significant result, and demonstration of good coordination among organization. More than 370 organizations, it's really spectacular.

Two representatives from the stakeholder group of persons with disabilities were invited to be official presenters at the high level political forum. Representatives of the group gave 17 interventions during official sessions, which is really high level. From the 22 volunteer national reviews by member states, 17 written submissions and eight oral presentations explicitly elaborated on situation of persons with disabilities. This is really something that we can be very proud with and satisfied.

The stakeholder group of persons with disabilities co‑organized and hosted six side events, and representatives of the group presented at ten different side events. So these are numbers. I think that we achieved a lot in the high level political forum. I think that in New York, the atmosphere was great. I think that it was very successful in terms of the meeting itself. Beyond this, I need to raise also my reading into the event since I was not there, my reading besides this huge success in New York at the global level, that there was quite significant disconnect with the national level in terms of the participation of civil society organizations in general, and people with disabilities in the preparation for this, and in the development of the action plans, etcetera.

I believe that we are achieving significant progress in terms of the New York and the show time let's say, and the highest possible representation by member states. But I think that we need to invest significantly in bringing that and working with the national level to empower and to hold governments accountable. So let me stop here with this comment from my side, and open up the floor.

Who would like to say something about 2016, or maybe raise a question? I see Andrew. Yes, please. Floor is yours.

>> Hi, thanks very much for that. I think it's absolutely great summary of what happened. I think it was noticeable, really noticeable how much profile people with disabilities had in that process. I had comments from, I work with lots of other advocacy groups who don't necessarily focus on disability. A number of them commented to me how organized the disability group was, and how active it was in the profile that it had in the process and I think that was really good. To be honest, at the moment, the high level political forum is at a stage where it's unclear what the outcomes, the official outcomes will be, and I think it's, it was there were good parts and there were less good parts. Some of the country reviews were a little weak and there was a lack of consistency across. But I think using it in the way that this constituency used it in was actually the right way, which was to improve the profile of that constituency and make sure that when people are thinking about when 30 countries, however many there will be come for review this coming year, they will know that there will be a very active disability community and that they will be asked questions on disability. They must make sure there is something in their review about disabilities and therefore, they must think about how to engage with DPOs in different disability groups at the national level before they come to New York.

I think to me, that's a outstanding outcome. In general I wanted to reflect, there is a challenge with the HLPF which is what can it achieve for us. I think that there is, to me, an interesting reflection is that the countries where we had engaged most actively at the national level promoted good policies at a national level, were the ones that came to New York and were progressive in their thinking, whereas those who maybe there wasn't such an active society network and wasn't a active disability lobbying effort at a national level came to New York and gave pretty dreadful reviews and didn't, haven't really thought it through. I particularly, from sight service side we worked a lot with both Uganda and Syria and from my perspective, those two were one of the strongest if not the two strongest, and had a lot of mentioning of disability.

I think the second, sort of third point is the need for follow‑up and thinking about follow‑ups, and not seeing the HLPF as the end, but actually thinking of it as part of the process, and need to think about the next step. For me, I think that is quite a challenge, particularly when you look at capacity. I think people take a lot of time and effort when it comes to the HLPF because there is this specific and tangible outcome which is a report and a review and meeting in New York. But after, it's how do you take that back to the national level and how to create change. We have seen different sides of that in the two examples I gave earlier, and we have seen that grow and develop, but, Uganda, I think there hasn't been as much follow‑up as there could have been.

There is that element as well. Anyway, yeah. I thought it was definitely a really worthwhile endeavor and really made a difference and will hopefully be able to, as we move forward, use it in a increasingly smart way.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much, thank you very much, Andrew. I would agree with what you have said and that we should not be seeing HLPF as a final outcome but really as part of the process. We need to look into the follow‑up with countries that actually made commitments during a meeting. And I would really echo what you said about disability, we heard later on that some of the representatives of the significant organizations actually, of the children rights organizations, were complaining, they were not feeling right about us having so much visibility. But what they say, tough luck, what can we do, not our fault. I will give floor to Mohammed now.

>> Mohammed, can you hear us?

>> You hear me now?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, please talk.

>> Thank you. I would like just to second Andrew's points about the strength that we showed and I felt the unity within the disability group. We were all working as a one group, and it was due to the excellent coordination and support from IDA, IDA team. Thank you very much. I would like also to highlight the strong presence that the disability group had during the caucus group meetings with other civil society organizations.

Yes, on one hand, we heard lots of complaints about our visibility, but on the other hand, other groups were very happy and very collaborative, such as the group on elderly people, women group, I think were very helpful, were very supportive and very collaborative.

I think, yes, we had a strong presence. Our voice was very well heard. And the comments we made during public sessions and round tables or side events were very well received. And also, I would like to just give one suggestion that we need to work early, way in advance in terms of coordinating the bilateral meetings with countries, and this is going to help us a lot with follow‑up after the HLPF meetings with countries that would support, submit reports about the implementation of the SDGs.

I recall this year we were supposed to meet with some countries, but unfortunately, maybe because of the loss minutes chance of communicating with them, unfortunately we were not able to get hold of them or have enough time to schedule things with them.

(voice in background).

I would also like to suggest that we need to keep the momentum of our coordination efforts as a group, I recall that after the meeting we as a disability group started series of meeting for structuring our governance body, which was a very important step. But I'm sure we will talk about this later in this meeting. But at some point, we did not hear anything about the group.

We should keep the momentum, because lots of other things were happening and we didn't know what the position of the HLPF or like our, the disability group of the HLPF meeting with regard to other initiatives such as the habitat 3 and that created some sort of confusion with other coordination, or, yeah, coordination groups.

These are my thoughts. And definitely we will talk more. Thank you very much.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much, Mohammed. You raised a number of good points. I would reflect for a second, we will be talking more about this working groups and the terms of reference a little bit later. Both of your points about bilateral meetings and about the habitat 3 will be tackled in a minute.

Let's try to hear two more people, and then we can close on this issue. Please make it short. Anna McGuire followed by Jose Vierra.

>> Hi, thanks. Quick apologies. I was late jumping on. It's possible that some of this has already been addressed. I will keep it short because most of my points have been spoken to. The piece, a huge thanks to IDA, for those of us who were in New York it was really fantastic, support and IDA team support made a big difference. I think what Mohammed, my question was more about the bilateral meetings piece and also how I think we better work with the other stakeholder groups. I know there was some criticism, I know some people did take it on, but in terms of meetings, I think how do we better foster some of those links and those relationships so we can begin to infiltrate some of those groups as well, so that our strength gets a bit broader and deeper.

I'll pause there, because I think that is going to come up later anyways.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. Yes, we are setting up working groups, so on bilateral meetings, we will get back to that in a couple of minutes. Jose. (pause).

Jose? Can you hear us? Not quite. Okay. Let's come back to Jose later maybe. Try Jose, to fix your situation there.

You can join us a bit later.

So, with this, I think that we can close the point 1, and to move to point 2. Just to go back for a second, if Jose can hear us now actually. Jose? Because I see that now he is green. No. Okay. Sorry, guys. We tried.

So what to expect from 2017 HLPF. It will be held between 10th and 19 of July, 2017 in New York. The theme of 2017 is eradicating poverty, and promoting prosperity in a changing world. The goals under review at this time are, goal 1, end poverty, goal 2, end hunger, goal 3, on health, goal 5 gender, goal 9, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and building resilient infrastructure, goal 14, conserve and sustainably use the oceans and seas, and goal 17, revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

So these are goals that we are planning to have this year. 31 countries have volunteered thus far to produce and present VNRs, voluntary national reviews. Eight from Latin America which is the biggest number, Asia, five, EU, twelve, Africa, three, Middle East, three. Before high level political forum, there will be meeting on information and technology, as well as meeting on financing and development, financing for development.

For these two meetings we have to be ready as well, and we will propose in the next point of the agenda formulation of the working group on these meetings. U.N. will organize the regional meetings that will feed into high level political forum. We expect that these meetings are to be open for all stakeholders. Again we have to prepare for this at the regional level.

There will be national platforms for consultations, in volunteering countries we are hoping for participation of the DPOs here. There will be again like last year workshop at the global level for stakeholders to participate. Last year, if you remember, it was quite a successful participation of people with disabilities. And time and application to attend will be decided in January 2017. We stop here about what to expect for next year. Do we have comments, please? Raise your hands. Anybody?

I don't see any hands. Okay. I see Jimena for the second, do you want to speak?

>> Yes. Can you hear me?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, go ahead.

>> Thank you. My question is, where can you find a list of the countries that, for these national reviews, the volunteer countries that you mentioned?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: We are just copy/pasting, and we can share E‑mail. We will copy/paste into the chat box. Jamie, please.

>> Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: We have anybody else who would like to comment on 2017?

Okay. Andrew. The floor is yours.

>> Thank you. I've got just one comment and a question. First comment is, it's disappointing that the African countries have put themselves forward for reviews, numbers, at least last time I checked, there is a lot more countries than that and in the Middle East. The second point, is a question. Do you think that there is likely to be an increase in the number of countries reviewing? Last year it was up until, if I remember right it was March or April, they were putting themselves forward for review. But is there a sense that where we are is where we will be in July? Or that more countries will put themselves forward in the coming months?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yeah, this is a very good, it looks like this is a great question, and you are right. Last year it was increasing constantly, and we are, I'm actually hoping that there will be not too many countries because I need to, I don't know how we will fit all this in 7 days.

We are thinking that it looks now that the end of February, and the beginning of March, will be the deadline for submission of VNRs, and for stakeholders submissions. So this is yet to be confirmed but this is what we know right now.

Do you want to say a couple of words.

>> This is Orsolya from IDA office. As for now we have very limited information, because the General Assembly is occupied with the work of its main committees. We are hoping that in January, we will receive much more information, because countries are also in the process to figure out how they will be conducting the national level consultations, and what kind of consultations they are going to hold with stakeholders.

Just to assure you that we are working very closely with the U.N. Secretariat, and we are also working with the consultants hired by the U.N. Secretariat who puts together a guide for volunteering countries with regards who to contact from the disability group.

We have been appointed as focal point. Then when we receive any requests from member states that they want to reach out and they want to hold a consultation with the disability group, we will immediately disseminate this kind of information. Nothing happened so far. But I wanted to give you an idea that we hope that from January on, we will have much, much more information on our hands. Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. I see Jean‑Pierre Agripo and I have again Anna McGuire.

>> I am Jean‑Pierre from Italy. I am the chair of the Italian Network on Disability and Development. I want to inform that because Italian government, in particular minister of foreign affair that are competent in the international cooperation, have approved an action plan on disability international cooperation.

(phone ringing).

We are in a particular contact direct with the person that works in the field at the international level in different agenda dossier. In this sense, one of the goals the next year, to work on SDG, and maybe I can help the group, this group towards some information in the future, and to have some knowledge about the different countries and at the same time I think we can influence Italy to have a good position in the discussion. You know that Italy is member of the high level group, and the that is a good tools to working on this field. So when I have the information, I can send to you.

But we need to organize exactly the information that the whole group must receive in different moment, and the action to do in the moment that we need to influence or make lobbying different level.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much, John Pierro, all good proposals, and let's follow up on that when you have more information. And please share with us.

Anna.

>> Hi there. Just a relatively quick question that, appreciate comments and appreciate we might not have a answer. Do we have anticipation that they might for the voluntary reports might be focused or skewed by the particular theme? And are there ways to ensure that despite the goals that they have set as the theme for this HLPF that reports aren't missing, for example, article ‑‑ sorry, goal 4 on education or other issues along those lines.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: I believe there is a guidelines provided for the, in terms of which goals they will be responding on. Countries are free to respond to whatever they want, and to prioritize whatever they want within this, and there are some that are relevant for us, and we will try to find a way how we can continuously, we need to continuously include disabilities.

And this is coming from like national consultation. So that is why we need to be coordinated and present there.

>> Yes, okay.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: That makes sense. I think, do you want to add something, Orsolya.

>> Sorry, pretty much the same, the national consultations are conducted in order to influence the report that will be discussed at the global level. So whoever is attending the national consultations between governments and the society will have a say what the country should be reporting in New York. Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. Let's move on. Again Jose raised his hand. Can we try again Jose? Jose.

>> Hello.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, Jose, please.

>> Thank you. I'm really sorry, I had some technical difficulties. But first of all I would like to second all the comments made by my colleagues before, and I do have one question to Orsolya about what she explained in terms of the guidance that is being produced by U.N. I want to know what is the status of that guideline, and if you can clarify maybe I understood wrong, that is why I need clarification, is this guideline aim to have also a list of national DPOs that the U.N. can suggest the government to contact with, when doing the national consultation? Or I understood it wrongly?

>> Thank you, Jose, for asking the question. Let's separate. There is a guideline which is under construction right now by the Secretary‑General, which will provide some instructions to member states how to put together the national voluntary reports. However the guideline by the Secretary‑General is going to give lots of flexibility and ownership to member states. A part of the guideline is going to recommend to hold national consultations with civil society, with stakeholders.

As a help, and here I'm coming to the second point, the U.N. Secretariat decided to engage a consultant, a outside consultant which role is to identify the different major groups and other stakeholders who will be able to provide with their constituencies contacts at the national level.

The way it looks like is, we have been approached. We understand that this consultant will put together a list of major groups and other stakeholders for member states that, when they are preparing for national report, they can go to this list and say we want some major group, disability groups in a given country, can you provide the contacts. Then they will come to us and we will be providing with them with all these contacts that they are requesting. This has not yet happened. This is not yet finalized. We don't know how it looks like, how it will work in the practice. As John Pierro mentioned in some countries there will be a very well functioning system between DPOs and governments and some other countries, governments might be interested to find out which DPO's to work together, so for the time being everything is unclear. But we are very much looking forward to work on it.

And we will try to ensure that all the information goes immediately we are approached out with our research. Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you, Orsolya. Please when you finish speaking, colleagues, put your hand down so that I know that you are not raising a hand again and wanting to speak again, unless that is the case. But I believe that you did not put your hand down accidentally.

Let's move on, do we have anybody else who would like to speak on this issue? I don't see any more hands. We can close the point 3. Sorry, point 2, and move to point 3, which is a preparatory process towards 2017 HLPF, as launched by IDA, and discussion on working groups.

So, there was a survey that was developed by IDA IDDC inviting participation and contribution of persons with disabilities to 2017 HLPF. In consequence this resulted in the making a different working groups. Thank you to those that completed the survey.

As a result, we have eight working groups right now, but I will speak a little later when we talk about terms of reference, we might need to have a little bit more.

At this stage, we have working group A drafting of the official submission on behalf of the stakeholder group of persons with disabilities. If you remember, last year, it took a lot of time, so this will be very active group. Working group B, drafting position papers on sub teams in line with sustainable development goals under review. Working group C planning and organizing side events. Group D, information and technology events, so this is what I meant at the beginning, it will need a group of people to prepare for this high level meeting.

Group F ‑‑ group E, organizing of bilateral meetings, so this was issue raised by Mohammed and also Anna, again please join these groups so that we can work on it. Accessibility of high level forum is group F. Group G is communication. Group H is financing for development, yet another meeting that we need to prepare for.

Now we are proposing that each of these working groups will have two focal points. One individual that will be based in New York to follow up their activities, in terms it will act as Secretariat almost, and the other one from a national level or regional level DPO.

Working groups shall define their own work plan and timetable, and we propose that the focal points of all working groups hold monthly calls, so that we arrange synergies between different layers of work. We should open the group to whomever want, but primary objective is really to have all the focal points present at the same time.

So, clearly, for New York, this person can be IDA, IDDC person but if we have any other recommendations, we are more than welcome to welcome that, I mean definitely. So, this is slightly going into the terms of reference discussion.

So I will stop here and review your comments. I would just close by saying that we have 160 people that signed already. So we need to definitely organize this group within different working groups, because it will not be possible to want 160 people, right? So can you please make a general comments at this stage, having in mind that the next topic is actually terms of reference, that we have actually something to propose.

Anybody?

Maria, Mohammed. Let's go with Maria.

>> Hi. I volunteer to cooperate with any group I sign on, just let me know if you need somebody as a focal point in some of the group. I volunteer. You can see what you can, you need from me.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Maria. Mohammed.

>> Yes, I volunteer as I'm based in New York to also serve as a focal point on any of the groups, if possible. And if I may just quickly ask something that I was trying to ask before, about the themes. Are we going to work on all themes suggested? Or we can choose, we are going to decide on choosing themes?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Well, we have to decide, I don't know if we have much to say about sea and ocean. I mean, we could a little bit. But definitely.

(voice in background).

Not priority. We could be, we would be definitely choosing. I would like to say just on the topic of focal point, because people start volunteering, I would say that the groups, working groups will be choosing their focal points. We don't have to now spend time in volunteering and accepting, and just to say that like IDA and IDDC will not have anything to say in this. It is for focal groups ‑‑ for working groups to really decide who their focal points are.

I have John Pierro, no, not anymore, I have Maria, Dell Los Angeles, etcetera ‑‑ long name ‑‑ Maria, can you hear us? No. Then I go to John Pierro.

>> Hello? Can you hear me?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, Maria, please.

>> Oh, why thank you. It's wonderful to have the opportunity to meet you all. I'm from Guatemala. I'm glad, and I would like to if you can send a E‑mail with the groups, because I had some troubles with the sound, I couldn't hear the first part of it.

My question is (background noise) if you can join in a specific group or IDA is going to set some people in a specific group or about regions or how is it going to be that. Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much, Maria. Absolutely, IDA will not be assigning anybody to anything.

That is not the nature of this group. You will be able to volunteer. We will send kickoff E‑mail tomorrow. So from tomorrow, expect concrete start of the work let's say, in which we will first of all outline the working groups and invite people to join. You can join as many working groups as you have capacity. So it's up to you. It's nothing with IDA really.

So please join, and then we will follow up with a meetings of the groups, etcetera.

>> Okay, great. So we can, as many groups as we may want to.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, absolutely.

>> That is wonderful. Because sometimes you just don't have like a, well, idea for one specific issue but you may have as many ideas to work in different themes and also that is the strength of working together, because we can give a supporting these kind of themes, and special, I'm a Spanish speaker, but I understand English so. If you may need help translating or so, but you can count on me. Thank you very much.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: You will not need to say that twice, believe me (chuckles).

Thank you very much. We will definitely come to you. We need always translation into Spanish and vice versa. John Pierro, did you want to speak again?

>> Yes, I want to suggest a forum to work in, because we have 7 items that we need to discuss, frequently this item in discussion, the goals I speak of the, I shall be frank, are interconnected. In my point of view, it's very important that all the group that we speaking now have some form to share information about the different activity. I don't know if it's possible to make some Dropbox or some form to have concrete information, because frequently, the information in one issue can be useful to influence another issue. I don't know. If I know exists an event in particular moment, I can suggest people can be involved, or I can suggest the government to be part, you know.

I think that we need to have a formal coordination where all participants, but I don't know if it's possible to do like Dropbox or work site, I don't know. But what I can understand exactly all the job in action, because this summarize better working all part of the volunteer activity that we do, and sometime there needs to have a overview can be useful to make lobbying, to make activity, to present some action to the government or other stakeholder involved in the discussion.

(banging noise).

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. You raised a couple of important points. First of all, to say that we will develop a position papers on different goals, right, and teams. So we will need to have these documents open in front of the Google docs like we did last year. I think like any given time people will be able to see and to contribute.

But I like your idea about Dropbox or something like that, that could further maybe invade people to suggest documents and resources to inform certain discussions.

Most importantly, I wanted to explain that council of the working groups, but that will bring me to the next topic, which is draft terms of reference. So if you agree, I would dive into that straight, unless you have some burning issues to discuss.

But before that, I am reminded by my colleagues that we should take a five minutes break just for sign language interpreter to rest. So, sorry, guys. Consider this bathroom break of five minutes. And see you in five minutes again. Okay? Thank you.

(break).

Okay. We can continue. Thank you very much, dear friends, for waiting a couple of minutes. Now we come to the meeting, most important part of the meeting and that is to discuss briefly terms of reference.

So group of people volunteered to establish, to draft terms of reference. And as a result of the work of this group, we got a very good, very good outline with different sections. Based on this outline, nothing happened after that from this working group, simply people are too busy, and there was nobody who pushed and to lead actually.

So then we worked on it a little bit, IDA, what it will support this process and to bring us forward.

We worked from that outline that was prepared. And we prepared draft, draft, draft, draft version of terms of reference that we will share with you tomorrow, or this week. It is now very long, I feel, and Orsolya needs to shorten it, and she will do so and send to you for first rounds of comments. I would hope that we will be able to close the terms of reference by mid‑January.

So please when you receive E‑mail, start making comments. I just want to introduce to you the proposed structure that we just shared with you in the handouts, so you can open in the panel, you will see by the bottom of the panel, there is a subsection of handouts, please click on it, and you will be taken to the page that has a draft proposed chart.

I want to explain to you this chart. This is a stakeholder group of persons with disabilities. We believe and this is for consultation with you, obviously, this is not decision being posed by IDA or anything like that. We believe that this is not organization. This is not political necessarily group. This is a working group. So we are jumping, we are proposing several levels in the stakeholder group. First level is stakeholder General Assembly, that is everybody. That is open, so this is for example 160 people that signed up for survey, which can be less, it can be more, whatever happens.

Stakeholder General Assembly on this kind of calls, general calls, will select permanent and alternative representatives. To remind you, this is a responsibility that we took when we joined the coordination mechanism of major groups and the other stakeholders. We have to have some components in our terms of reference, one of which is permanent and alternative representative.

Then we are not having steering committee. We are not having concrete political body that will make decisions. We are going straight into the working groups. There are external and internal working groups. This is all proposal.

And all working groups are formulating their focal points, as we mentioned previously, and then permanent and alternative representatives together with working groups focal points, formulate what we propose now, council of working groups. This is not steering committee. This is just for exchanging of information.

Decisions beyond who will be permanent and alternative representatives are going to be taken at a level of the working groups, because it is, this is generally one big working platform, one big working group. We are not starting a new organization, right?

So, within external representation working groups, we have one on partnership, proposed one on disaster risk reduction, habitat 3, financing for development, etcetera. Then we have one on political forum voluntary national reviews, that can be at the country specific obviously. If somebody wants to take the lead, this is, nothing of this is mandatory. This is just proposal. But if somebody wants to take the lead, it will be great.

Then we have internal working groups, so we have drafting position papers, communications, drafting official submission, that one, main one, side event organization, bilateral meetings and accessibility.

This is all supported by technical support officers from IDA IDDC.

Now, the obvious question about the external representation groups are, that for example, disaster risk reduction and habitat 3 already has coordination mechanism, or is in place to formulate one. Why don't we just align our work with them, and embrace them as one of the external working groups, high level political forum, I think that makes sense. That is proposal.

So, this is where I would like to leave you, I mean, leave you, to like open the conversation, to see what you think about it. Stakeholder General Assembly, permanent and alternative representative, then we have working group, focal points and together permanent and alternative representative with the working group focal points formulate council of working groups.

Comments?

Let's start from the top. John Pierro again.

>> I think we need to take into account the complex system of decision. This mean we have a number of country.

(phone ringing in the background).

They are in the high level social forum. They are competent that we have in different area. At the same time we have the focal point coordinator of each group. In this sense maybe we need to take in account this different item to decide who is the member of this council of the stakeholder, because the question is we are representative of the country, representative of the activity. So we need to reflect about this issue to decide how it's possible to be good system to improve all information or include all capacity.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. Orsolya would like to make comment.

>> Thank you for highlighting this. These are technical working groups. We have established one working group which is on the voluntary national reviews. However, that group has subgroups. We hope that, and subgroups are each of the volunteering country. We are striving to identify in each country DPOs and to work with the DPOs. We believe, so that will mean that, for example, we will have a small group that will only work on issues in Argentine because Argentine is volunteering in 2017, so we will have a handful of DPOs that will only be working on contributing to the national voluntary reviews from the DPO perspective. So we will have a Argentine. But whatever is proposed in the working group will be discussed in the bigger working group which is on the voluntary national reviews. That will be a complex work. Then all the messages from these two working groups will be brought to the table at the council of working group. That will be the council of working group will be establishing the synergies together with all the other focal points who will be coming from technology consultation working group, coming from the financing development working group, who will be coming from the working group that they are drafting submission on behalf of persons with disabilities, and it will ensure in the council of working groups to align the messages and to establish synergies.

I hope this helps answer your question.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: To follow up on what she said we will not expect to have 31 subgroups or anything like that. We will have to see how many people will be active and how many people can dedicate time so we have to be objective about it. One of the reasons, one of the goals of this group, I believe, will be to exchange between countries what is happening. For example, in one country is having open consultation process with civil society including DPOs and the other is not, maybe we can find a way to influence that process between countries or to motivate them.

Last year, we worked with 19 countries, actually, so it is possible to try to exchange this, between countries, and to generate some learning and to motivate others to do more.

Let's go to Maria de Los Angeles.

>> Yes. I'm thinking about the high level political forum, is there in specific, any specific requirement for that? Or could we, like a team of each country, the leader of that team, what would you recommend? We do that part and also be in other team, like reducing risk or disasters or so?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Maria, I'm sorry I did not catch your question. I did not understand what you are saying. I'm sorry. Can you restate, please?

>> Yes. About the high level political forum, can you hear me well?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Can you respond, please, yes?

>> I think you are asking, still trying to establish which working group to sign up to. We would recommend you to sign up to those working groups that you are interested in. Then when the work is going to start, you will, yourself, define where you can input the most, and to which one you have most of the capacity. Each working group is going to define what is going to be the substance. But that discussion is within the working group. So what is going to be the main topic, of course, the disaster risk reduction group will be discussing that issues. How far, if you will be interested what the working groups on Latin America are doing with regards to the Latin America national reviews, you can also engage in those working groups. It is up to your personal capacity, and how much you can contribute and which topics you are interested in, and the definition of substance will be always discussed within the respective working group.

I hope this helps. Thank you.

>> Okay, thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you, let's go to Maria Reyna and then Mohammed. Maria.

>> Yes. My suggestion is to work by regions, and then also, if it's possible, I volunteer to do this, to do maybe within the working of coordination, among reports, or position papers, to do some fact checking and crossing fact checking to make sure there is coherence, between what people say and the data available.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, yes, thank you very much. Good. Good points. Very good points. Mohammed.

>> Yes, hi. I have a question. I understand that there is no steering committee, and there will be working group council. And this is as you said, this is not a political structure. But the question is, how, what is the mechanism for determining the political position or standpoint of this structure, if there is no political body for the structure?

>> VLADIMIR CUK: For the main, for the main principles, etcetera, there is a General Assembly. So we are now General Assembly. Everybody who are at this call belongs to General Assembly. So it is from this 160 people that volunteered, whoever joins the call, that will be General Assembly. I mean we have to a little bit embrace this kind of modern technology fluid organization type of the work.

We will not have face‑to‑face meetings of General Assembly, with voting, etcetera. But it will be all done virtually. That is how we will do the main like decisions.

The decisions within the working groups will be done by working groups, and I think that voting, because there will be voting on the speakers, etcetera, will be done within General Assembly as well.

>> Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: That is proposal. We have Jose Vierra. Jose, can you hear us? While Jose is setting up, do we have anybody else that wants to speak that did not speak today? We have quite a few people that are repeating participation. But which is great. But I'm wondering if somebody else would like to say something. This is a moment, Jose, please, go ahead.

>> Okay. I hope you are hearing me. I'm still having some difficulties in terms of accessibility to the platform.

Quick confirmation, if you are hearing me okay.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Yes, yes, great, perfect.

>> All right. I do have several questions, but please Vladimir, if the answers are going to be on the draft version of the term of reference that you will circulate next week, just let me know, so we maximize the time here.

It's my understanding, and I need a confirmation, that at the General Assembly any organization, national organization, regional organization, global organization, can be member. That is the first question.

The second question I have is, in terms of functioning, and maybe in terms of adopting, for example, a position paper, which I assume will be draft, for example, by one specific working group, which would be the body of the group who will be, adopt this working, this position paper, is going to be the council, is going to be the general simply, it is going to be the working group who elaborates the paper who will be adopt as a official paper?

The third question, and I'll stop for now, is that, well, no, those two questions, if we can hear more about those questions.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Right, right. Basically, last year and how we did it thus far, it can be global or national or regional organization member, so we had this conversation last time. And some people believe that had there should be some differentiation, some people believed it's good to have the voices of the national organization at the same level with the global, etcetera.

I think that pretty much whoever can volunteer and dedicate time should be part of this conversation equally. That is what we did thus far.

In terms of the position paper, like last year we had a working group that was composing a position paper. Then this paper is put on the Google doc and is shared with the listserv with the entire body, to make comments. Then when the time is like finished for commenting, then we go to the adoption, and to the endorsement.

And that's it. So I think that would be proposed process. Orsolya, did you want to make any more comments?

>> No, it's pretty much the same. One more addition. The working group does the groundwork, and there is one group that ‑‑

(someone coughing).

All the working groups and all the work is carried out in line with the U.N. CRPD, and also in line with the 2030 agenda. That is the absolute baseline.

Then all becomes when the working group is ready with one poses position paper or statement it all goes into, undergoes a larger consultation process. Thank you.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Okay. Do we have any other comments from, maybe from people that did not speak? Jose, you can mute yourself, and I have Anna McGuire. Can you hear us, Anna?

>> Yeah. There we go. So, thank you for this and for walking through it in such detail.

I want to confirm that there is going to be sort of a bit of digestion opportunity. I know we are getting to the terms of reference, which is going to help us better understand this, and I'm just, I don't know about others but I'm, it's really huge and really a little bit overwhelming which I know it kinds of needs to be, but I'm hoping that obviously this is just a information call at this point, but that we can, this isn't going to be our only opportunity to give some feedback on this, and I'm just really, as we are going through it, trying to wrap my head around in practice what will it look like. I know the next part of the conversation will help inform that as well, but I wanted to confirm that we will have a chance to come back to comments around this, as we all get a chance to think about it a little bit more.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Certainly, certainly. We will share, I believe in a day or two, we will be sharing with everybody a proposed terms of reference draft. Then everybody will be able to make comments, and then hopefully, like I said, I'm seeking January 15 as the deadline for finalizing the terms of reference. We need to be done.

So yes, fully agree with you. And we should do that.

>> Thanks.

>> VLADIMIR CUK: Thank you very much. If we don't have any other comments, I would, especially if it is from the new people, I don't see anybody, okey‑dokey, just a couple of comments at the end from my side.

I would like to propose that, first of all, the group that will be the working on the accessibility, I think that it is important that this group gives some guidelines and to motivate people to join. We had sign language interpretation today, and if I, and I think that I knew almost everybody from this call, that we did not have any deaf people, any deaf participant. I might be wrong. Which means that we wasted resources. And we did not have deaf people which is not good news.

So either we have pushed to have more diverse group, or we sign up for the kind of E‑mail notification system that people explain if they, what are their reasonable accommodation needs. That is one comment.

Second comment that I have to similar group but now to the GA before we formulate the working groups, I would like to invite you to volunteer for funding the next call. So you can send E‑mail to Orsolya and Jamie to see if you want to volunteer to pay for sign language and for, and/or for closed captioning. I believe it's approximately four or $500 per call. So I would like that from next time, IDA does not pay. (chuckles) as simple as that.

So please volunteer. And let's stay in touch, and thank you very much for a good call. And thank you very much, everybody, for staying so long at this call, and see you soon. And if we don't talk before New Year's Eve and Christmas and holidays, I would like to wish you happy holidays and a wonderful and successful new year, and that we work even closer and even better if it is humanly possible next year.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. And talk to you in 2017. Bye‑bye.

>> Bye and thank you.

(end of call at 10:25 a.m. CST)

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