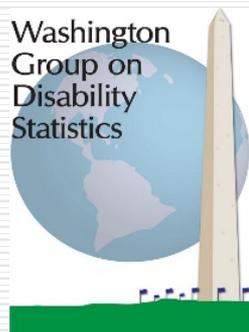# Disability Measurement and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics

Jennifer Madans

Acting Director,

National Center for Health Statistics, USA

and

Chair, Washington Group on Disability Statistics

Washington Group Objective

Develop questions that capture a part of the ICF model and can be used in an important, meaningful, and internationally-comparable manner.

While these questions may only capture a part of the social model of disability, they can be used in conjunction with other data to undertake analysis consistent with the social model of disability.

WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS)

Because of a Health problem:

1) Do you have difficulty seeing even if wearing glasses?
2) Do you have difficulty hearing even if using a hearing aid?
3) Do you have difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
4) Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5) Do you have difficulty with (self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
6) Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating (for example understanding or being understood by others)?

Response categories:

No difficulty; Some difficulty; A lot of difficulty; Cannot do at all

WG Short Set Objectives

- Identify persons with similar types and degree of limitations in basic actions regardless of nationality or culture;

- Represent the majority (*but not all*) persons with limitations in basic actions; and

- Represent commonly occurring limitations in domains that can be captured in the census context.

Intended Use of the Data

- Compare levels of participation in employment, education, or family life for those *with* disability versus those *without* disability to see if persons with disability have achieved social inclusion.

- Monitor effectiveness of programs and policies to promote full participation.

- Monitor prevalence trends for persons with limitations in specific basic action domains.

Advantages

- Functional approach
- Tested successfully in many countries (low, middle, and high income)
- Designed to be internationally comparable
- Identifies most people with disabilities
- Can easily be added to existing censuses and surveys or to project based data
- Approximately 1.25 minutes to administer.

Mainstreaming Disability Statistics: The Path to Disaggregation

- Identify which data collection systems will be used for monitoring population-based SDG indicators.

- Include one of the Washington Group question sets in each of these data collection systems.

- Once the questions become integrated into core statistical systems:

  - Core information on disability becomes available for use by all government agencies and civil society; and

  - Disaggregating outcomes (education, employment etc.) by disability status becomes routine and sustainable.

Standardized Approach to Monitoring

- By standardizing disability data collection instruments it will be possible to provide comparable data cross-nationally for populations living in a variety of cultures;

- Data can be used to assess a country's compliance with development goals and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, over time, improvement in meeting these goals.

Monitoring the UN CRPD and SDGs through data disaggregation

WG questions fulfil two specific data needs:

- to describe disability data as a continuum of functioning based on graded responses to questions in the functional domains, and

- to define a cut-off (or a set of cut-offs) that can be agreed upon internationally in order to disaggregate outcome indicators (e.g. access to education, employment) by disability status

This allows for the calculation of prevalence rates and disaggregation.