**High Level Political Forum**: **Ensuring that no one is left behind: envisioning an inclusive world in 2030**

Ibrahim Abdullah

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, it is an honor to take part in this critical discussion here today. Firstly, in 2015 we celebrated the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. For persons with disabilities—a population of one billion, 80% of which live in developing countries, the 2030 Agenda was a crucial step towards a more inclusive society. For the first time, a global development framework was adopted in which persons with disabilities were explicitly recognized.

The 2030 Agenda is considered “of the people, by the people and for the people”. Persons with disabilities took this seriously and we undertook an intensive advocacy campaign to ensure that our one billion-strong population would not be left behind.

All persons with disabilities, and particularly those from underrepresented groups, across both rural and urban areas, including persons with psychosocial, intellectual and developmental disabilities, **as well as children, women, older persons and indigenous persons with disabilities** must have equal opportunities to participate and to contribute to sustainable development. And the best way to achieve this participation is through having all underrepresented groups, including persons with disability, are involved in the making of decisions related to development and the implementation of the SDGs. Political participation in government and Parliament is the best way forward to insure this involvement. Only then can the SDGs be realized.

**For us persons with disabilities the tool to do this already exists, it is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (or ‘CRPD’) and other UN treaties and conventions that should be respected all along the making of strategies and programs related to the implementation of the SDGs. They must be utilized as a guiding framework to implement the SDGs. Only then will we be able to build a world by 2030 where exclusion and inequality are no longer created or perpetuated.**

**I would like to take this opportunity to describe a few key recommendations how persons with disabilities visualize the world in 2030 for ALL:**

* Member States Introduce measures and policies to ensure that persons with disabilities, including women, children, youth, older persons and indigenous persons are protected from poverty and benefit equally from mainstream poverty alleviation and wealth-creation programmes.
* Member States eliminate laws, policies and practices that segregate persons with disabilities, as well as those from underrepresented groups, from society, and reinforce such persons’ personal and economic dependency on others;
* Member States make all levels of existing health care and social protection systems inclusive, and public healthcare policies, programmes, facilities and information accessible;
* Member States introduce measures, through devising longer-term inclusive education plans at global, national, regional and local levels, to ensure that all children, including children with disabilities, are included within the mainstream educational system;
* Member States ensure equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation facilities for all by providing access to accessible latrines, bathing facilities and water points;
* Member States remove barriers to employment for all, including persons with disabilities through mechanisms including non-coercive legislation and regulation, tailored interventions, internships and apprenticeships, vocational rehabilitation and training, self-employment and microfinance schemes, social protection, and working to change discriminatory attitudes, especially in rural areas;
* Promote universal design and remove barriers to public accommodation, transport, information, and communication to facilitate the participation in society, , in order to enable communication, promotion of sign languages and forms other than traditional written and verbal communication;
* Climate resilience programmes and disaster risk reduction strategies and policies should make inclusive and have disability a core, cross-cutting theme;
* Carry out global, regional and national data collection, capacity building and disaggregation of data by age, sex and disability.

**Through participation, consultations and partnerships with underrepresented groups, such as as children, women, older persons and indigenous persons with disabilities,** **governments will receive technical assistance, a better understanding of underlying issues and will be able to make better decisions. The consultations and partnerships are essential elements to achieving inclusion and the SDGs’ overarching commitment: to leave no one behind.**