Speaker: Megan Smiths, International Disability Alliance, msmith@ida-secretariat.org

COMPROMISE STATEMENT

We would like to begin by congratulating the Maltese government for a number of policy reforms that are essential for sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. To tackle poverty amongst Persons with Disabilities the Government provided several services, such as the disability allowance. We also believe that the recently introduced bill for 16-year old’s to be able to vote in all Maltese democratic election is a key step ultimately boosting lifelong participation rates that should be followed by all member states.

However, much of the policy and legislation relevant to fulfilling the SDGs was in fact put in place before these were agreed and Malta lacks a comprehensive national strategy for SDG implementation, which is visible across policy areas. Economic growth does not reach the most vulnerable groups, who are at a considerably higher risk of poverty. Further, Malta lacks  physical environments accessible for all, especially pavements. Finally, there is a need for a holistic national health strategy that should include sexual health plans, mental health provisions and the safeguarding of the most vulnerable.

Further, we are concerned by the lack of institutionalised mechanisms to include civil society in the implementation and follow-up and review processes. Neither the National Youth Council of Malta, nor SKOP, the National Platform of Maltese Development NGOs, had an opportunity to get involved in the VNR process and Malta, in contrast to several other European countries, lacks a UN Youth delegate.

We have the following questions

1. Your VNR refers to a “comprehensive process of consultation” with “all stakeholders”. Given the marked absence of any structured dialogue with civil society in the drafting of the VNR report, it would be useful for the government to explain its understanding of consultation processes.
2. Given its current shortcomings, will there be an updated version of the Sexual health National plan?
3. What is being done to make sure that Malta provides universal access to persons with disabilities? What do you do to ensure persons with disabilities do not fall into the poverty trap?