**MARY talking points**

Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities official HLPF side event

"Will the SDGs Still be Relevant after the Pandemic for persons with disabilities?"

July 8, 2020, 12-1:30pm EDT

Link to register:<https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1KJdYROMSaKNIMO3HJevqw?_x_zm_rtaid=IATMUmxARIKAjniZ4xmBTg.1593533609761.4037204a496fdf1c4f42947b2ab0775f&_x_zm_rhtaid=208>

More information<http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/hlpf2020-side-event>

**Building back better**

On Monday the UN Secretary-General called on leaders to “build back better” with the following key messages. He recognized that the worst affected by the pandemic are those living in poverty, persons with disabilities, refugees, and women and children. He also emphasized that the pandemic response must stay true to the 2030 Agenda. And a people-centered recovery must be shaped on human rights.

As governments lay the foundations for recovery, it is vital that they consider the words of the UN Secretary-General. While the immediate focus is on the coming months, we must be ambitious and start laying the foundations now to build our future societies. As we are turning to next steps, we must first tackle long-standing issues such as inequality that are undermines resilience in order to make true change.

Negative effects on poverty and inequality, worsening of economic and financial conditions, vast unemployment in the formal and informal sectors, major disruptions in education, fragility of health systems, limited coverage of social protection systems are the immediate challenges. The pandemic has shown that more comprehensive regional strategies and national structural changes must be put in place if the recovery is to succeed in a globalized world of major disruptions.

There are factors that have thwarted reform in the past, these are exacerbated with the new challenges due to the pandemic, the question now is how can we overcome and transform our societies hoping for a better future? The answer is and are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While the crisis is imperiling progress towards the SDGs, it also makes their achievement all the more urgent and necessary. It is essential that recent gains are protected as much as possible. A transformative recovery from the pandemic should be pursued, one that addresses the crisis, reduces risks from future potential crises and relaunches the implementation efforts to deliver the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. Achieving the SDGs necessitates a transformation of economies, societies and human behavior. It is known that certain policy changes or specific breakthroughs around key challenges have the potential to catalyze progress on several SDGs simultaneously. However only through collaboration and partnerships can we ensure that those changes and breakthroughs are advanced as a matter of priority.

Some urgent steps from the disability movement:

* Ensure a rights-based inclusive approach to rebuild our societies;
* Ensure a rights-based approach to development finances, including ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are reflected in all fiscal policies and programs aimed to reduce inequalities;
* Carry out evidence-based policymaking and increase disability data collection and disaggregation by using the Washington Group Short Set of questions, particularly to measure the implementation of the SDGs;
* Ensure that national policies and programs that intend to implement the SGDs are inclusive of intersectionality and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities;
* Carry out a twin-track approach to policymaking, emergency response plans and any rebuilding efforts at all levels to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and if necessary to uphold protection and rights;
* Make universal design and accessibility as a pre-condition to any inclusive society; and
* Invest in DPOs and their capacity so they can effectively sit at the decision making tables.

Jointly we can overcome these unprecedented challenges and build a better, greener and inclusive world for all. ***It's time to build a better world!***