# **CONCEPT NOTE**

# **SIDE EVENT ON SDG MOBILIZATION DAY**

# ***Together towards a disability-inclusive future: From the SDG Summit to beyond 2030***

**Date**: September 16, 2023

**Time**: 1415-1545 EST

**Organized by**: Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the UN, Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the UN, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN, UNICEF, UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), International Disability Alliance, International Disability and Development Consortium, Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, Women’s Major Group, Major Group on Children and Youth

**Venue**: CR 7

## **Background**

Persons with disabilities, 16% of the global population, remain one of the most excluded and marginalized populations in the world. Persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, and accounting for 20% of the world’s population living in poverty, they face multiple and intersecting discrimination in education, employment, health – all of the key areas directly impacting on the material conditions of their lives. The right to live independently and be included in the community is a central part of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, requiring the provision of rights-based care and support, but this remains far from a reality for most persons with disabilities. With the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation is only getting worse, compounded by conflict and humanitarian settings, financial and the cost-of-living crises among others. Evidence released since the pandemic shows that while the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have slowed down or even regressed in some cases, persons with disabilities remain at a higher risk of being left behind. According to UNICEF (2022), of the 240 million estimated children with disabilities, 49% have never attended school and 42% are less likely to have foundational reading and numeracy skills.[[1]](#footnote-1) ILO data on employment shows that globally 7 in 10 persons with disabilities are inactive, meaning they are neither in employment nor currently unemployed. This figure is higher for women with disabilities.[[2]](#footnote-2) The lack of health equity for persons with disabilities is a major concern – they have poorer health outcomes and die earlier than others, this is caused in large part by the discrimination and barriers faced in all aspects of their lives (WHO, 2022).[[3]](#footnote-3) Persons with disabilities are a diverse group, with many intersecting identities, but are united by the experience of exclusion, discrimination and systemic marginalization, and the need to transform to society to ensure inclusive equality for all.

**2023 marks the midpoint of the SDGs**. The United Nations and member States are now putting their efforts to accelerate their implementation and cover lost ground in the remaining 7 years, while also preparing beyond 2030 when the SDGs come to an end. One thing, however, is clear that the systemic barriers that have existed for persons with disabilities, which have been acutely highlighted by the challenges of the past few years, need far greater attention. We can no longer afford to continue as business as usual. The Secretary General’s Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 states that only 12% of SDGs are on track and close to half are moderately or severely off track, and some 30% have either seen no movement or have regressed below the 2015 baseline.[[4]](#footnote-4) Even for the SDGs on track, it will be fair to assume that they are not being met for persons with on an equal basis with others. **If the SDGs are to be met, then they have to be met for everyone including persons with disabilities**.

As world leaders, UN agencies, donors, INGOs, private sector, academia and civil society actors gather at the UN HQ for the SDGs Summit, we must renew our commitment to meaningfully including persons with disabilities in SDGs Mobilization and SDGs Acceleration. Our collective action for transformative progress has to be truly inclusive, bold and concrete. We welcome the commitment in the draft Political Declaration **to ensuring that persons with disabilities actively participate in and equally benefit from sustainable development efforts.**

This side-event aims to raise the urgency to ensure that we do not once again miss the chance to meaningfully include persons with disabilities, including from the lens of multiple intersecting forms of discrimination. It will also highlight the critical need to ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) participate meaningfully in all events and mechanisms as we approach 2030 and plan for beyond, including at the SDGs Summit itself.

The event will follow a Davos style conversation and will address the following themes:

* Overview of how the SDGs delivered or fell short for persons with disabilities
* Lessons learnt from the advocacy leading up to the Summit so far, including during the drafting of the Political Declaration
* Key priorities emerging from the disability movement for now and beyond 2030
* Strengthened inclusion of persons with disabilities in the acceleration of the SDGs, Our Common Agenda, and beyond

## **Speakers:**

1. Shk. Alya Ahmad Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations
2. Ambassador Carla Maria Rodriguez Mancia, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations
3. Guy Ryder, USG Policy
4. Christian Rogg, Director for Development and Open Societies, FCDO
5. Ruth Warick, Vice-Chair, International Disability Alliance
6. Jose Viera, Director Advocacy IDA/SGPwD
7. Gopal Mitra, Global Lead on Disability, UNICEF
8. Ola Abualghaib, Manager UNPRPD Technical Secretariat
9. Abia Akram, Board Member, Sightsavers
10. Ayshka Najib, Women’s Major Group
11. Nayem Molla, Youth with Disability
12. Daphne Frias, Major Group for Children and Youth
13. Marc Workman, CEO World Blind Union
14. Elizabeth Lockwood, IDDC representative/SGPwD

For more information, please contact Dorodi Sharma at [dsharma@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:dsharma@ida-secretariat.org).

1. UNICEF, [Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities](https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-with-disabilities-report-2021/), 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ILO. [New ILO database highlights labour market challenges of persons with disabilities](https://ilostat.ilo.org/new-ilo-database-highlights-labour-market-challenges-of-persons-with-disabilities/), 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. WHO. [Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities](https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/global-report-on-health-equity-for-persons-with-disabilities#:~:text=Achieving%20health%20equity%20through%20disability,health%20as%20those%20without%20disabilities.), 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Report of the Secretary General. [Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/SDG%20Progress%20Report%20Special%20Edition.pdf), 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)