



Front row for the most vulnerable

A call for equitable and inclusive COVID-19 vaccination roll-outs

COVID-19 spurs long-term social, economic and environmental disruption in countries both rich and poor. The pandemic deepens existing inequalities and constitutes a serious setback in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals. People with disabilities face continuous discrimination, barriers to services and information and enhanced risk of contraction and health issues during the response to the pandemic.¹

The World Health Organisation categorises people with disabilities as vulnerable populations during public health emergencies. Their basic rights are increasingly restricted as institutional, environmental and social barriers intensify in a crisis.² The challenges people with disabilities face have been extensively documented, however, the increased exposure to COVID-19 and its consequences for 15% of the world's population have been overlooked during the past months. The coming weeks and months provide a new opportunity to break this vicious cycle as global vaccination roll-outs and national vaccination plans begin.

We ask UN agencies, governments and the private sector to ensure an equitable global distribution of vaccinations to leave no person and no country behind!

1 UN Secretary-General Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/05/sg_policy_brief_on_persons_with_disabilities_final.pdf

2 COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor 2020. <https://covid-drm.org/assets/documents/Disability-Rights-During-the-Pandemic-report-web.pdf>

