

# The Disability SWAP:

## A System-wide approach for making the United Nations fully inclusive of persons with disabilities

**The United Nations system is undergoing important transformations, bringing a unique opportunity to increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities across all its pillars and areas of work.**

Comprising an estimated 1 billion globally, persons with disabilities are more likely than any other groups to live in poverty, face food insecurity and poorer health outcomes; to be denied education and employment opportunities, and to experience violence. Ensuring their rights and inclusion is fundamental to fulfil the commitment made by the international community to leave no one behind.

Efforts to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities have increased over the last decade. In line with the CRPD, the international community is regarding persons with disabilities as agents and beneficiaries in their work and processes. The *Sustainable Development Goals*, the *World Humanitarian Summit* and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* are among the numerous examples contributing to favorable political and institutional environments for mainstreaming disability inclusion.



**The Disability SWAP:**  
Mainstreaming the rights  
of persons with disabilities  
across the UN system

### **A new System-Wide Approach on Disability Inclusion: mainstreaming the Disability Rights perspective**

The United Nations system is in a key position to champion this work. But efforts in its different areas and programs remain scattered and inconsistent. Without adequate coordination, these efforts are insufficient to effectively mainstream disability inclusion across the organization. My recent baseline study indicates that disparate levels of engagement by Senior Management and insufficient internal capacity are important factors of the shortcomings.

In response to those challenges, the Executive Committee of the Secretary General decided to support a System-wide poli-

### **What will the Disability SWAP do:**

- 1 Enhance senior management accountability and leadership on mainstreaming efforts.**
- 2 Create a sense of shared responsibility for the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities.**
- 3 Improve the allocation of human and financial resources for disability mainstreaming.**
- 4 Make initiatives to promote the rights of persons with disabilities more coherent and better coordinated.**
- 5 Determine standards which can be applied and monitored across all entities, departments and offices of the UN system.**
- 6 Empower disability focal points and advocates in and outside the UN system.**

cy, an action plan and accountability framework to make possible reaching the global commitments of inclusion by 2030, both within the organization as well as in across its field work.

### **What the Disability SWAP can accomplish:**

The System-Wide Action Plan for Disability Inclusion (Disability SWAP) is a means to build internal capacity, providing clear guidelines for the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities across all pillars and at all levels of the UN work. Aiming to achieve lasting and transformative change across the organization's global efforts.

The Policy and Action Plan will lay out the vision and objectives and guide their implementation by UN entities and Country teams, while the Accountability framework will measure their progress against a set of common indicators. Its implementation will see persons with disabilities becoming true agents and benefi-

ciaries of all UN initiatives, allowing the organization's culture to become more inclusive, with a more diverse work force and accessible environment.

### **Sustainability**

In order to succeed, this process must be adequately resourced and have the support of Member States. Strong political support from Member States is fundamental to guarantee the SWAP's sustainability. As a core component of the UN work, its implementation should be resourced within the system's regular budget. However, limited additional resources may be needed for its start-up transitional phase.

**Building a world that is inclusive of persons with disabilities is a task that requires the active involvement and commitment of us all. The momentum is there: the global community has its attention on ensuring that no one is left behind. It is time for the UN to lead by example and become an organization that is fully inclusive of persons with disabilities.**

**The Sustainable Development agenda must prioritize advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. The world will never realize 100% of its goals if more than 15% of its people cannot realize their full potential.**