



**Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development
Position Paper for the High-level Political Forum
5-15 July 2022**

2022 HLPF Theme:

“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis, it is a crisis of economies and of social justice. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately negatively affected by the pandemic, as well as by discriminatory systems and policies. Before the pandemic, they faced barriers to their equal access to services, information, education, and participation. These barriers have only been magnified.

States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) must “ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability.” This year’s High-level Political Forum theme of building back better from Covid-19 focuses on five of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 4, 5, 14, 15, and 17), and is an important opportunity to create a more equitable world for persons with disabilities.

The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities highlights the urgency of ensuring no one is left behind as the world builds back. Persons with disabilities have rights on an equal basis with others, and those rights touch upon access to social protection, health care, education, and justice, along with many other facets of the Goals currently under review. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, persons with disabilities cannot be left behind and persons with disabilities cannot be ignored in the context of the pandemic and beyond.

Goal 4 on Inclusive Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Education is a human right and an essential condition for individual development as well as for full and effective inclusion in society. Persons with disabilities continue to be denied their right to education as a result of complex and interlinking barriers including social norms, attitudes, infrastructure, environment, legislation, resources, and institutions. As a result, children with disabilities are 45 percent more likely to be out of primary school, according to a new study from UNICEF.¹

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in its General Comment 4, has elaborated on what constitutes inclusive education. It emphasises that inclusion is a process and it requires systemic reforms including in content, teaching methods, approaches. Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion.² The World Federation of the Deaf has issued a position paper on inclusive education, which notes that inclusive education for deaf learners should be of high quality with direct instruction in sign language, access to deaf teachers and deaf peers who use sign language, and a bilingual curriculum that includes the study of sign language.³

At school level, teachers should be trained on inclusive education pedagogy, and understand how to adapt the curriculum for individual needs. The curricula itself should be flexible, allowing for different ways of learning, understanding and expression, following universal design for learning (UDL)⁴ methodology. Teachers and the wider community should also be aware of their own prejudice around children with disabilities and their education and without adequate awareness raising on discrimination and stigma at community level, it can be difficult for children with disabilities to thrive in formal education systems. The concept of inclusive education is further explained by the 2020 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report which states that diversity should be at the heart of education and by design, education should include all learners, including learners with disabilities among other groups that face high risks of marginalization.⁵ Any segregated or special setting, therefore, does not conform to the mandate of Article 24 of the CRPD. Mainstreaming rights of persons with disabilities and using disability-

¹ UNICEF, Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities, 2021, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-with-disabilities-report-2021/>

² General comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/4&Lang=en

³ WFD, Position Paper on Inclusive Education, <https://wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/WFD-Position-Paper-on-Inclusive-Education-5-June-2018-FINAL-without-IS.pdf>

⁴ IDA (2021) Universal Design for Learning and its Role in Ensuring Access to Inclusive Education for All A Technical Paper by the International Disability Alliance

⁵ UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion>

specific targeted actions, also known as a twin-track approach, should be the standard when building policies and programming.⁶ Building a truly inclusive education is the only way to achieve SDG 4 for all.⁷

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged education systems in unprecedented ways. School closures and the disruption to learning have impacted all learners; however, learners with disabilities, have been disproportionately affected.⁸ In a survey conducted by the International Disability Alliance to assess the experiences of persons with disabilities adapting to the pandemic, one in five students with a disability had to drop out of their education programmes due to limited online access, loss of income, and inaccessible learning resources.⁹ The survey's report also shed light on the experiences of parents with disabilities supporting their children in remote education. The report notes that "most parents lost their main source of income during the pandemic, and the cost of remote education was incredibly stressful for many parents."¹⁰

In 2021, girls with disabilities still made up the majority of out-of-school children and were denied their right to education. Before the pandemic, girls with disabilities were already less likely to enrol in education and have lower rates of attendance and completion¹¹ and the pandemic has only exacerbated this trend.

Digital Divide

Online learning interrupted many support strategies from which blind and partially sighted children and children with multiple disabilities benefit, creating unprecedented challenges for children, teachers, and parents to ensure learning continuity.¹² Blind and partially sighted children and children with multiple disabilities experienced barriers in which many resources and learning content were not accessible even if supportive technology existed.

Stemming from structural inequalities, the impacts of the pandemic compounded the digital divide. This has been particularly challenging for students with disabilities. During the early months of the pandemic, some governments introduced distance learning for school children. The arrangement was to continue the education of children remotely using TV, radio, and other digital means. While this arrangement was welcomed, it was not inclusive of children with disabilities. Studies undertaken by the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities found that persons with disabilities in Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Bolivia had difficulties accessing digital technologies and the internet and often lacked the financial means to obtain those resources.¹³ The findings further indicated that during the emergency school closures,

⁶ OHCHR, Policy guidelines for inclusive sustainable development goals: *Quality Education. 2020*
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/SDG-CRPD-Resource/policy-guideline-sdg4-education.pdf>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ UNPRPD, Policy Brief: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the education of persons with disabilities: Challenges and opportunities of distance education, 2021. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378404/PDF/378404eng.pdf.multi>

⁹ International Disability Alliance, 2021. *Survey on the Experience of Persons with Disabilities Adapting to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic*. Available at https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/Covid-19_survey_report_final.pdf

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (2016). *The Learning Generation – Investing in education for a changing world*.

¹² UNESCO. (2020) *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all*. Paris, France.

¹³ Studies by Irokaba, (2021); Mahbub & Mahmud, (2021); and Nóchez-McNutt, (2021), for the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development: Irokaba, G. (2021): *Key findings and recommendations on the impact of Covid-19 on persons with disabilities in Nigeria*. New York: Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development; Mahbub, S. and Mahmud, M, I. (2021): *An in-depth country-focused qualitative research study on the experience of persons with disabilities during and after the pandemic in Bangladesh*. New York: Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development. McNutt, R. N. (2021): *Key findings and*

children with disabilities, particularly deaf learners, were not included in any form of learning arrangements along with other children.

Learners' access to equipment, electricity, the internet, and teacher quality is deepening the learning divide in every country – especially for learners with disabilities, who often face the additional barrier of inaccessible learning content.¹⁴ The Covid-19 pandemic has increased exclusion from education, causing an estimated 40 percent of disadvantaged learners in low- and lower-middle-income countries to be entirely unsupported in their education.¹⁵ The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities researched the impact of Covid-19 on education in Bangladesh and found that the unavailability of smartphones, computers, the financial capacity to buy mobile data to use the internet as well as low network coverage of mobile phone operators and the lack of broadband connection or low bandwidth in rural and remote areas all contributed to the digital divide for persons with disabilities.¹⁶

In addition, while more than 90% of countries offered forms of distance learning,¹⁷ at least 31% of school children worldwide were unable to benefit from it.¹⁸ Only 18% of parents of children with disabilities found radio and television learning resources accessible, and 29% found computer use accessible and useful for their children.¹⁹ Participants in one survey noted that educational platforms often lack features such as transcripts and closed captions, screen readers, and print magnifiers.²⁰

Remote learning options put in place during school closures have highlighted the potential good of information and communications technology (ICT) and digitalization, but exposed challenges. ICT cannot and should not replace other face-to-face methods and tools, or indeed replace the important focus on teacher training in inclusive pedagogy. Preconditions for ICT use in inclusive education include: adequate infrastructure (like electricity and Internet connection), good quality equipment (i.e., corresponding to the learners' needs and available in multiple languages) and learners', teachers', and family members' digital skills.

CRPD and SDGs

Relevant UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) articles:

Article 9: Accessibility²¹

Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse²²

recommendations on the impact of Covid-19 on persons with disabilities in Bolivia. New York: Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development

¹⁴ UNPRPD, Policy Brief: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the education of persons with disabilities: Challenges and opportunities of distance education, 2021. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378404/PDF/378404eng.pdf.multi>

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, *The Experiences of Persons with Disabilities in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Case Studies in Bangladesh, Bolivia and Nigeria, 2021*,

¹⁷ UNICEF, (2020). Covid-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures? A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies using data from 100 countries.

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ World Bank, Inclusive Education Initiative, (2020). *Pivoting to Inclusion: Leveraging Lessons from the Covid-19 Crisis for Learners with Disabilities*.

²⁰ Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, (2021). *No education, no protection. What school closures under Covid-19 mean for children and young people in crisis-affected contexts*.

²¹ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-9-accessibility.html>

²² Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 16,

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-16-freedom-from-exploitation-violence-and-abuse.html>

Article 24: right of persons with disabilities to education²³

Article 32: International cooperation²⁴

Implementation of the 2030 agenda (Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, or SDGs)

SDG Targets:

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes²⁵

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations²⁶

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy²⁷

4(a) Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all²⁸

SDG Indicators

4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated.²⁹

4.a.1 Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) **adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities**; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions).

Recommendations

Policy

- Create standards that ensure online and in-person education spaces are developed through universal design for learning;
- Engage in international cooperation, partnerships, and stakeholder groups to actively work together in recognition that the barriers to inclusive education are multidimensional and require a multisectoral approach to leave no one behind;
- Implement disaster, conflict, and emergency risk management strategies in education policies to reduce disruption to learning for all learners with particular attention to marginalised groups, including women and girls with disabilities. Education in emergency and situations of protracted

²³ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106. Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html>

²⁴ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 32, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-32-international-cooperation.html>

²⁵ UNDESA, Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 4: Inclusive Education. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf

crises should also include learners with disabilities, as outlined in the CRPD and the IASC Guidelines,³⁰

- Develop accurate, robust data on children with disabilities, disaggregated by sex, age and type of disability, including their level of exclusion, segregation in special institutions and school drop-out rates, as well as school-level data on accessibility, reasonable accommodation, teacher training and to ensure adequate resourcing and accountability at all levels of education;
- Use the Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning for population surveys, the UNICEF Inclusive Education Management and Information Systems Guide and forthcoming publications to enhance data collection in schools. Information on the accessibility of schools and materials should be embedded into administrative data collection systems;
- Strengthen national policies and legal systems to ensure that all persons with disabilities have equal rights to access quality education in their community and be educated together in the same classroom with children with and without disabilities, ensuring that the policy environment prevents discrimination, including through no rejection policy and duty to provide reasonable accommodation and enable transformation towards an inclusive education system for all children;
- Prioritize the provision of appropriate and timely, family-oriented early identification and early childhood intervention with related support services from birth onward to children under five having or at risk of developing disabilities. Individualized transition processes should be in place from one education phase to another, from early years to higher education, as appropriate;
- Address the education financing gap. Children with disabilities must be recognised as a priority group for targeted education funding, programming, research, and commitments. National governments and donors must increase spending on education to universally agreed benchmarks and ensure that spending is targeted and equitably distributed; and
- Allocation and use of resources must be in accordance with General Comment No. 4 on Article 24 of the CRPD and follow a twin track methodology.³¹

Accessibility

- Strengthen national policies and legal systems to ensure access to quality and inclusive education for all learners, with particular attention to learners with disabilities;³² Adapt teaching and learning environments to the diversity of learners with disabilities through assistive technologies and devices that are accessible and inclusive to all learners³³, enforcing the principles of Universal Design for Learning including in teacher training both in and pre-service;
- Facilitate the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring; as well as the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community in order to enable persons with disabilities to learn life and

³⁰ UNESCO, Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. 2016. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656/PDF/245656eng.pdf.multi>

³¹ General comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/4&Lang=en

³² OHCHR, Policy guidelines for inclusive sustainable development goals: *Quality Education*. 2020 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/SDG-CRPD-Resource/policy-guideline-sdg4-education.pdf>

³³ Ibid

social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community;³⁴

- Provide guidance and support for parents and caregivers on how to access resources and develop skills to support their children during periods of online and remote learning at home;
- Prioritize children who are hardest to reach with remote learning, including those with disabilities, and where appropriate, ensure that they are among the first to have opportunities to return to school;³⁵ and
- Make available learning materials that are accessible to all, and use various forms of communication including Braille, large print, sign language, and video captioning.

Participation

- Involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs), including organizations of families of persons with disabilities, in the design of education policies³⁶ in line with CRPD General Comment 7 paragraph 85³⁷ in developing policies, plans, budgeting and implementation;³⁸ and
- Consult persons with disabilities who are self-advocates and families on national education plans.³⁹

Intersectionality

- Address intersecting barriers for girls with disabilities. National and international education strategies should promote gender and disability-responsive learning environments and support interventions that recognize the intersectional dimensions of gender, disability and other social characteristics that inhibit access to learning for girls with disabilities.⁴⁰

Technology

- Adopt a disability-inclusive and gender-responsive approach to ICT development to address differences in access to connectivity and digital learning and reduce the digital divide;
- Provide technology at affordable cost, mandate provision of accessible textbooks, and support for the self-learning of children including children with multiple disabilities and children with deafblindness; and

³⁴ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html>

³⁵ World Bank Group, *Pivoting to Inclusion: Leveraging Lessons from the Covid-19 Crisis for Learners with Disabilities*. 2020. Available at <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/147471595907235497-0090022020/original/IEIssuesPaperDisabilityInclusiveEducationFINALACCESSIBLE.pdf>

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>.

³⁸ (2018) *Statement of Action: Accelerate Equitable and Quality Inclusive Education for Children and Youth with Disabilities*. Retrieved from: https://www.ukfiet.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/07/Statement_of_Action.pdf.

³⁹ Inclusion International, *Our Global Agenda for Inclusive Recovery (2021)* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oqPJVAF4w1ZD7V4b-S6npSxe5YP80vE/view>

⁴⁰ United Nation Girls Education Initiative, *Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities. 2017 available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EMBARGOED_%20%2815.6.2017%29%20StillLeftBehindFullReport_FINAL.PDF.*; United Nations General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry. 20 July 2020. <https://undocs.org/A/75/178>; Rajni. "Gender and Disability: Dual Marginalization." *Indian journal of gender studies* 27, no. 3 (2020): 410–419.

- Global technology players should make their products accessible to a maximum number of people, especially those using them for educational purposes, through the application of Universal Design for Learning principles.⁴¹

Advocacy

- Ensure that disability inclusion is a criterion for accessing funds for all education projects and programmes. This requires specific budgets and programme allocations, disability indicators related to beneficiaries and adapted materials, assistive devices, qualified and trained staff members and infrastructure;⁴²
- Adapt teaching and learning environments to the diversity of learners with disabilities through assistive technologies and devices that are accessible and inclusive to all learners⁴³, enforcing the principles of Universal Design for Learning including in teacher training both in and pre-service;
- Empower families with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to support their children's learning process;
- Promote accessibility in line with universal design, including provision of reasonable accommodation and ensuring that virtual classes are accessible for students with disabilities and for parents with disabilities to support their children in remote education;⁴⁴
- Implement awareness-raising strategies to sensitize all services providers, family members, students, developers, and all other stakeholders on the rights of learners with disabilities.⁴⁵

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The SDGs will not be achieved without persons with disabilities. This is particularly true for SDG 5, because an estimated 1 in 5 women lives with a disability, yet the dual discrimination they experience is often rendered invisible in gender equality laws, policies, and practices⁴⁶. Intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, type of disability, age, socioeconomic class, indigenous or ethnic group, sexuality, or religion, among others can shape their identity and the forms of discrimination they experience.

Women and girls account for three-quarters of all persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries.⁴⁷ Compounded by poverty and marginalization, these inequalities expose women and girls

⁴¹ The Marrakesh Treaty facilitates the production and international transfer of books specially adapted for people who are blind or visually impaired by establishing a set of limitations and exceptions to traditional copyright.

⁴² Myers, J., Pinnock, H., and Suresh, S. (2016). *#CostingEquity: The case for disability-responsive education financing*. Retrieved from: https://iddcconsortium.net/sites/default/files/resources-tools/files/iddc-report-short_16-10-17.pdf.

⁴³ OHCHR, Policy guidelines for inclusive sustainable development goals: *Quality Education*. 2020 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/SDG-CRPD-Resource/policy-guideline-sdg4-education.pdf>

⁴⁴ International Disability Alliance, 2021. Survey on the Experience of Persons with Disabilities Adapting to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic, IDA Survey on the Experiences of Persons with Disabilities Adapting to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic | International Disability Alliance <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/ida-survey-experiences-persons-disabilities-adapting-covid-19-global-pandemic>

⁴⁵ United Nations Girls Education Initiative, *Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities* (June, 2017). <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/still-left-behind.pdf>

⁴⁶ International Disability Alliance, 2018. Women and girls with disabilities flagship

⁴⁷ UN Women, Making the SDGs count for women with disability, 2017, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/making-sdgs-count-for-women-with-disabilities.pdf?la=en&vs=731>

with disabilities to a higher risk of violence and abuse.⁴⁸ SDG 5.2 calls for the “elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres.”⁴⁹

Goal 5.5 is to “ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.”⁵⁰ However, many societal decision-making structures exclude women with disabilities.⁵¹ This includes multiple attitudinal and environmental barriers, such as stigma and negative attitudes, discriminatory laws and policies, the unavailability of assistive devices and inaccessible buildings and spaces.

The lack of inclusion and limited access to equal opportunities results in the marginalization of women and girls with disabilities. Similarly, women and girls with disabilities are left behind and excluded by inadequate services and support systems that lack awareness, training, and capacity; lack of access to justice; and inaccessible and hostile environments.⁵² To build back better from the crisis, women and girls with disabilities must be fully involved in decision making in Covid-19 response and recovery, with their full and active participation ensured.

Covid-19

“Gender, disability and structural inequalities, which characterized societies before the crisis, are being exacerbated by the multifaceted impact of the Covid-19 crisis.”⁵³ However, the lack of disaggregated data on the dual intersections of gender and disability has made it challenging to develop an evidence-based analysis of the impact of Covid -19 to facilitate mainstreamed policies for women and girls with disabilities.⁵⁴ What data is available suggests “that the gap is large compared with men without disabilities: women with disabilities are three times more likely to have unmet needs for health care; three times more likely to be illiterate; two times less likely to be employed and two times less likely to use the internet.”⁵⁵ Isolation, lockdowns, and quarantines can leave women and girls with disabilities less able to escape and seek redress for violence, and they are at an increased risk of violence as a result.⁵⁶

The Covid pandemic impacted women, who provide more caregiving than men. In the sectors of economy where women are disproportionately represented, the pandemic has had an even more magnified impact. Inclusion International reports: “Women have a double burden of care, and now, the lockdown has even increased the burden on women due to child caring. And if you’re looking at a woman with children with disabilities, this burden of care has become maybe even tripled.”⁵⁷

⁴⁸ UN Women. (2020). Women with disabilities in a pandemic (Covid-19). Available from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-women-with-disabilities-in-a-pandemic-Covid-19>; Ortoleva, S., Lewis, H. (2012), Forgotten Sisters – A report on violence against women with disabilities, Women Enabled, NUSL

⁴⁹ UN Women, Making the SDGs count for women with disability, 2017. <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/making-sdgs-count-for-women-with-disabilities.pdf?la=en&vs=731>

⁵⁰ UNDESA, Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5: Gender Equality. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

⁵¹ www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/publication-disability-sdgs.html

⁵² IDA, Voices of people with disabilities during the Covid19 Outbreak <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/voices-people-disabilities-during-Covid19-outbreak>

⁵³ UN/DESA Policy Brief #69: *Leaving no one behind: the Covid-19 crisis through the disability and gender lens*, 2020 available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-69-leaving-no-one-behind-the-Covid-19-crisis-through-the-disability-and-gender-lens/> para 2

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Women Enabled International, The Impact of Covid-19 on Women and Girls with Disabilities, 2021, <https://womenenabled.org/reports/the-impact-of-Covid-19-on-women-and-girls-with-disabilities/>.

⁵⁷ Inclusion International, *A Global Agenda for Inclusive Recovery: Ensuring People with Intellectual Disabilities and Families are Included in a Post-Covid World*. 2021. Available at <https://inclusion-international.org/a-global-agenda-post-Covid/>

Violence against women and girls with disabilities

SDG 5.2 calls for the “elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres.”⁵⁸ The Covid-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls with disabilities and has increased their risk of experiencing violence. Isolation, lockdowns, and quarantines can leave women and girls with disabilities less able to escape and seek redress for violence, and they are at an increased risk of violence as a result.⁵⁹ In addition, the economic impact of the pandemic can create additional barriers to leave a violent domestic situation and create higher risks of sexual exploitation or consequential economic deprivation.⁶⁰

Women and girls account for three-quarters of all persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries.⁶¹ Most live in rural and remote areas, where they may experience multiple intersecting forms of discrimination. Compounded by poverty and marginalization, these inequalities expose women and girls with disabilities to a higher risk of violence and abuse.⁶²

However, a recent UN Women brief notes that women with disabilities are up to 10 times more likely to experience sexual violence.⁶³ This is due to perceived power relations and marginalization, as well as discrimination and stigma against women and girls with disabilities. These are compounded by barriers such as poverty, social isolation, political marginalization, inadequate services, and support systems.⁶⁴ Those same factors decrease the likelihood for someone to report abuse. Women and girls with intellectual and sensory disabilities are at a particular risk when denied their legal capacity which means that they do not have any say on their lives. Challenges communicating mean that they can be less likely, or are perceived to be less likely of reporting abuse, and being targeted.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Girls and women with disabilities face specific barriers accessing healthcare, including reproductive health care. Forced sterilization and contraception, female genital mutilation, coerced abortion, lack of access to contraceptive information and services, maternal health care and fertility treatments, are some of the ways in which women and girls with disabilities are denied their rights. Health professionals often lack the knowledge required to treat or communicate effectively with girls and women with disabilities. There is also evidence that women and girls with disabilities receive fewer screenings for breast and cervical cancer than women without disabilities.⁶⁵

Barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights information, goods, and services and exercising bodily autonomy for women and girls with disabilities have also increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, deaf women and girls who use sign language interpreters or women and girls with disabilities who need personal assistants to access sexual and reproductive health services were no

⁵⁸ UN Women, Making the SDGs count for women with disability, 2017. <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/making-sdgs-count-for-women-with-disabilities.pdf?la=en&vs=731>

⁵⁹ Women Enabled International, The Impact of Covid-19 on Women and Girls with Disabilities, 2021, <https://womenenabled.org/reports/the-impact-of-Covid-19-on-women-and-girls-with-disabilities/>.

⁶⁰ UN Women (2022) Women with Disabilities in a Pandemic (Covid-19)

⁶¹ UN Women, Making the SDGs count for women with disability, 2017. <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/making-sdgs-count-for-women-with-disabilities.pdf?la=en&vs=731>

⁶² UN Women. (2020). Women with disabilities in a pandemic (Covid-19). Available from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-women-with-disabilities-in-a-pandemic-Covid-19>; Ortoleva, S., Lewis, H. (2012), Forgotten Sisters – A report on violence against women with disabilities, Women Enabled, NUSL

⁶³ UN Women, Brief, Prevention: Violence against Women and Girls and Covid-19, 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/brief-prevention-violence-against-women-and-girls-and-Covid-19>

⁶⁴ UN Women (2022) Making the SDGs Count For Women and Girls with Disabilities

⁶⁵ ibid

longer allowed to bring those individuals with them, due to social distancing rules. A lack of accessible and affordable transportation also created barriers.⁶⁶

These factors are compounded by the absence of policies and programmes explicitly recognizing the lived experiences of women and girls with disabilities. This has largely been a result of their exclusion from participation and leadership in these processes. It is more effective to plan for inclusion rather than react. Therefore, to build back better from Covid-19 and make progress towards the SDGs, meaningful engagement with women and girls with disabilities is essential, including in preparation, response, and recovery from crisis.

CRPD and SDGs

Relevant CRPD articles:

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination⁶⁷

Article 6: Women and girls with disabilities⁶⁸

Implementation of the 2030 agenda

SDG Targets:

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere⁶⁹

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation⁷⁰

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life⁷¹

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences⁷²

5(a). Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws⁷³

5(c). Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls⁷⁴

Recommendations

Participation

⁶⁶ UNFPA and Women Enabled International (2021) The Impact of Covid-19 on Women and Girls with Disabilities

⁶⁷ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106 Available at UNDESA, CRPD Article 5 Equality and Non Discrimination <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-5-equality-and-non-discrimination.html>

⁶⁸ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106 Available at UNDESA, CRPD Article 6 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-6-women-with-disabilities.html>

⁶⁹ UNDESA, Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5: Gender Equality. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

- To ensure SDG 5 is realised, women and girls with disabilities and their representative organisations should be considered across all targets and included in all efforts development plans, policies and processes; and
- Develop global and local partnerships with OPDs to invest in women and girls with disabilities' capacities.

Advocacy

- Governments should promote gender and disability awareness-raising and adequately train health worker and other service providers to provide non-discriminatory, gender-responsive services, respecting personal autonomy;⁷⁵
- Health workers must be aware of the risk of involuntary sterilization, abortion and contraception faced by women and girls with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, often led by close family members and partners;⁷⁶
- Train service providers and provide them with support on providing non-discriminatory, gender-responsive services, respecting personal autonomy;⁷⁷ and
- Adopt strong laws and policies to prohibit any form of violence towards girls and women with disabilities, including bullying, harassment, institutionalization and forced sterilization.

Resources

- Recognize the role of women that have a caring role as a family member of persons with disabilities and take measures to ensure they have the necessary resources to empower their family member with a disability; and
- Commit to the agenda of women's and girls' rights for women and girls with disabilities, including access to comprehensive sexual education, quality sexual reproductive health services and planning, safe abortion, and maternal and neonatal care.⁷⁸

Goal 15: Life on land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable manage forest, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

Environmental Degradation

"Individuals and communities around the world feel the human rights implications of environmental damage, but the consequences are felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations."⁷⁹ Persons with disabilities are among the most impacted by climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation because of pre-existing marginalization and

⁷⁵ Rashid, Marghalara, Sandra Hodgetts, and David Nicholas. "Building Employer Capacity to Support Meaningful Employment for Persons with Developmental Disabilities: A Grounded Theory Study of Employment Support Perspectives." *Journal of autism and developmental disorders* 47, no. 11 (2017): 3510–3519.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Sterilisation of Women and girls with disabilities*, 2011

⁷⁷ Rashid, Marghalara, Sandra Hodgetts, and David Nicholas. "Building Employer Capacity to Support Meaningful Employment for Persons with Developmental Disabilities: A Grounded Theory Study of Employment Support Perspectives." *Journal of autism and developmental disorders* 47, no. 11 (2017): 3510–3519.

⁷⁸ Morgan, Rosemary, Roopa Dhatt, Chandani Kharel, and Kui Muraya. "A Patchwork Approach to Gender Equality Weakens the SDGs: Time for Cross-Cutting Action." *Global health promotion* 27, no. 3 (2020): 3–5.

⁷⁹ UNGA, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment*, John Knox. 19 July 2018. A/173/188. <https://undocs.org/A/73/188>

discrimination and barriers to emergency information, relief services, transport, shelter, and more.⁸⁰ However, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups are routinely left out of planning processes and actions to protect rights to a healthy environment. “If persons with disabilities are left out of decision-making, that leaves them unable to contribute by identifying risk reduction and adaptation measures that could be effective for, and carried out by, persons with disabilities.”⁸¹

The consequences of these issues for persons with disabilities and their communities include:

- Increasing humanitarian emergencies, both fast and slow onset;
- Declining food, energy and water security;
- Declining access to shelter, infrastructure and basic services;
- Increasing displacement or being left behind in degraded environments; and
- Reductions in human security, with increased vulnerability, due to competition and conflict over increasingly limited resources, as climate change accelerates and populations increase.⁸²

The right to participate in decisions about life on land

Persons with disabilities have the right to participate in public policy decisions that affect them. They “have important roles to play in proposing creative and relevant solutions to improve their communities and protect our shared planet.”⁸³ The participation of persons with disabilities in decision making must be accessible for persons with disabilities, including deaf people, through diverse formats such as information in sign languages. Furthermore, persons with disabilities should participate in the development of, and benefit from socio-economic resilience strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability to climate risks. Such strategies include for example, increasing access to broad-based education and training opportunities, and a much wider range of livelihood options.⁸⁴

CRPD and SDGs

Relevant CRPD Articles

Article 28 Adequate standard of living and social protection⁸⁵

Article 29 (b) the right to participate in public affairs⁸⁶

Article 32 International cooperation⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Disability Inclusion Helpdesk, October 2021 Evidence digest focus issue: Climate Change and Disability Inclusion

<https://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/2297/disability-inclusion-evidence-digest-climate-change.pdf>

⁸¹ OHCHR, Report *Analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change*, 2020. <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/30>

⁸² World Economic Forum. (2017, October 9). *Climate, migration and conflict in a changing world*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/climate-migration-and-conflict-in-a-changing-world/>.

⁸³ Global green grants, 2019. <https://www.greengrants.org/2019/03/18/disability-and-environment/>

⁸⁴ Ayers, J. and Forsyth, T. (2009) *Community-based adaptation to climate change: strengthening resilience through development*. Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development, 51, 4, p.22-31. Retrieved from:

http://www.researchgate.net/publication/270588919_Community_based_adaptation_to_climate_change_Strengthening_Resilience_through_Development.

⁸⁵ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106

Available at UNDESA, CRPD Article 28 – Adequate standard of living and social protection, United Nations Enable

<http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-28-adequate-standard-of-living-and-social-protection.html>

⁸⁶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106 Available at UNDESA, CRPD Article 29 – Participation in political and public life, United Nations Enable

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-29-participation-in-political-and-public-life.html>

⁸⁷ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106

Available at UNDESA, CRPD Article 32- International Cooperation | United Nations Enable

<http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-32-international-cooperation.html>

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

SDG Targets:

15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed⁸⁸

15(c) Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities⁸⁹

Recommendations

- The CRPD is applicable to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in a cross-cutting manner to achieve Goal 15. The following CRPD Articles must be upheld: 28, 29 and 32;⁹⁰
- Ensure persons with disabilities have access to resources, to livelihoods, food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, education and training, adequate housing and decent work;
- Recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to a healthy and sustainable environment by providing accessible inclusion in planning and implementing policies to restore and protect our land;⁹¹
- Include persons with disabilities and their representative organizations meaningfully into raising awareness and providing technical capacity within communities about climate change, and the absolute necessity to protect local environments, within the framework of the Paris Agreement. This awareness raising must be provided in an accessible way, including the provision of professional sign language interpreters or in the frame of bilingual education for deaf children;
- Ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities into the development and outcomes of evolving people-centred approaches, which integrate Disaster Risk Reduction⁹² and Climate Change Adaptation as part of longer-term sustainable, resilient community development;
- Ensure expenditure of Green Climate Funds is fully inclusive of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups; and
- Collect and use disaggregated data by disability to inform climate-related policymaking.

Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development

International Cooperation

The global nature of the pandemic requires the participation of all; governments, private sector, civil society organizations and people throughout the world. Governments' support of multi-stakeholder partnerships working with persons with disabilities follows the human rights model and increases

⁸⁸ UNDESA, Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 15: Life on Land, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15>

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ International Disability Alliance, Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, and The Danish Institute for Human Rights. (2018). *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals: A Matrix mapping the links between the SDGs and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from: <https://www.humanrights.dk/publications/rights-persons-disabilities-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>.

⁹¹ International Disability Alliance, Disability-Inclusive Climate Action COP26 Advocacy Paper https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/cop26_advocacy_paper_0.pdf

⁹² United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>.

participation and the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.⁹³ To ensure persons with disabilities enjoy their rights and the benefits of development, international cooperation must align its objectives with the CRPD to fully include persons with disabilities and their representative OPDs in partnerships for sustainable development.

Data collection

Collecting data on Covid-19 and disability is essential because persons with disabilities have been one of the groups most adversely impacted by the pandemic and consequently even more left behind. And collecting disability data measures the SDGs which countries are supposed to report, thus including a group most often left behind. Surveys and studies targeting persons with disabilities are essential to understand additional barriers faced in enjoying their human rights on an equal basis with others, and should be conducted using inclusive and accessible methods (including through accessible online survey tools).

CRPD Article 31 requires States Parties to collect data on persons with disabilities and 193 countries committed to collect data on persons with disabilities and to disaggregate data by disability by adopting the 2030 Agenda and the global indicator framework. Despite this, limited disability data are available at the global level.

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics tools are important to use, especially the Washington Group short set of questions and the UNICEF/Washington Group Child Functioning Module (that supports identification of children with disabilities). This is especially important for measuring SDGs and to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on persons with disabilities.

Covid-19 Response

International cooperation and collaboration are critical to recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and upholding the principle of "leave no one behind."⁹⁴ A key way to increase the inclusion and accessibility of the Covid-19 response and recovery efforts is to intentionally engage people with disabilities and their representative organisations in needs assessment, planning, implementation, and ongoing monitoring.⁹⁵ The strengthening of partnerships should include persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in new investments that provide training and capacity to contribute to empowerment and development.⁹⁶

CRPD and SDGs

Relevant CRPD Articles:

Article 31: Statistics and data collection⁹⁷

Article 32: International Cooperation⁹⁸

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

⁹³ Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities Submission for HLPF 2021, available at

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/29185Stakeholder_Group_of_Persons_with_Disabilities.pdf

⁹⁴ United Nation General Assembly 76th Session Statement by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 2021. Available at

https://estatements.unmeetings.org/estatements/10.0010/20210914/JhWVRhicU38c/8q4nSd573T86_en.pdf

⁹⁵ Tessa Hillgrove, Jen Blyth, Felix Kiefel-Johnson, and Wesley Pryor. "A Synthesis of Findings from 'Rapid Assessments' of Disability and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Implications for Response and Disability-Inclusive Data Collection." *International journal of environmental research and public health* 18, no. 18 (2021): 9701–.

⁹⁶ UNGA. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar. 20 July 2020.

<https://undocs.org/en/A/75/186>

⁹⁷ CRPD Article 31

⁹⁸ CRPD Article 32

SDG Targets:

17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries⁹⁹

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships Data, monitoring and accountability¹⁰⁰

17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts¹⁰¹

Recommendations

- Undertake appropriate and effective measures to support national efforts for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, between and among States and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international and regional organizations and civil society, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities;¹⁰²
- Integrate disability inclusion and a human rights-based approach into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all mainstream policies and programmes on international cooperation and complement them with disability-specific policies and programmes;¹⁰³
- Closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all efforts, including by establishing formal consultative mechanisms in decision-making processes related to international cooperation;¹⁰⁴
- Promote, develop and strengthen the capacity and competence of international cooperation agencies and multilateral financial organisations on rights-based disability inclusion;¹⁰⁵
- Invest in data collection for inclusive development in all sectors to assess the impacts of progress and address barriers, disaggregating data by disability, sex, age and other relevant characteristics to adequately assess the impact of programmes and projects on persons with disabilities;¹⁰⁶
- Build capacity in stakeholders, including training for enumerators, and especially OPDs, to be better prepared to survey their communities;
- Adopt and systematically use the OECD DAC disability marker in all official development assistance to measure and monitor financing for disability inclusion;¹⁰⁷
- Official statistical bodies collect and disaggregate data by disability using the Washington Group short set of questions and the Washington Group and UNICEF Child Functioning Module to learn about barriers and to measure disability-inclusive programmes, response and recovery actions;

⁹⁹ UNDESA, Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 32: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-32-international-cooperation.html>

¹⁰³ UNGA. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar*, 20 July 2020.

<https://undocs.org/en/A/75/186>

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

- Support research and access to scientific and technical knowledge on disability inclusion and facilitate access to and sharing of accessible assistive technologies;¹⁰⁸
- Support communities to gather community-driven data to complement traditional data sources and highlight information that cannot be captured in other ways; and
- Bring together statisticians, policymakers, OPDs, and NGOs, to exchange information, learn from one another, and create evidence-based policies to create sustainable change.

Conclusion

In closing, governments must redouble their efforts to reach the most marginalized and furthest behind to implement policies and programs to address the discrimination and disadvantage faced by persons with disabilities.

Governments should uphold the CRPD's standards on the right to access to education, gender equity programs, including assistance to offset the cost of disability-related expenses for persons with disabilities living in poverty.¹⁰⁹ Disability data should be collected to inform policymakers, who, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities and in line with the CRPD, must enact new evidence-based regulations and laws to ensure the inclusion and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society. As vaccinations are being disseminated, persons with disabilities should be prioritized because they face increased risks in the pandemic and have been left behind both before and during the Covid-19 response. This is essential to ensure they will not be left further behind, "experiencing disproportionate loss of lives and livelihoods, inaccessible healthcare services, and undignified lives and aggravated disconnection from...society."¹¹⁰

The Sustainable Development Goals are interrelated, and governments should address all facets of inequality with a sense of urgency. Dismantling barriers to effective participation, health care, education, and other aspects of systemic infrastructure for persons with disabilities must be central to government responses to guarantee that that they will be sustainable and resilient. Governments and the United Nations system should act to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. In efforts to "build back better" and build a resilient and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, it is vital to ensure no one is left behind.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106*
<https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

¹¹⁰ *Recommendations on Accessing Covid-19 Vaccinations*
https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida_recommendations_on_accessing_Covid-19_vaccinations_final_01.12.20.pdf