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The Stakeholder Group of Person with Disabilities is extremely concerned that amidst a global pandemic that there is no recognition of persons with disabilities in the Ministerial Declaration, a critically important document, that will be adopted at the HLPF. The moment the pandemic hit, the principles of “leave no one behind” and “reach the furthest behind” evaporated into thin air. Overwhelmingly, persons with disabilities and older persons have been left to die. Often not because they contracted the COVID-19 virus, but due to the effects and consequent barriers caused by the global pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis is thwarting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the overarching principles of the 2030 Agenda, as such, in the rebuilding phase and at the time of calling for the Decade of Action, we must urgently recognize, name and ensure the rights of the most marginalized groups. We recommend the following language suggestions to be added to the Ministerial Declaration.

5. We recognize that the poorest and the people in vulnerable situations, particularly persons with disabilities and older persons, are being left behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and are the most affected by the COVID-19 crisis. We commit to placing those people at the center of our policies and actions. We will undertake every effort to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. We also intend to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society.

12. We strongly believe that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. We welcome, in this regard, the Secretary-General’s appeal for an immediate global ceasefire. We will redouble our collective efforts to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies through reducing inequalities within and among countries, enhancing our ability to prevent and resolve conflicts. We call for further effective measures and actions to be taken, in conformity with international law, to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment. We reaffirm, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States. We also commit to respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights for all, ending all forms of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, ensuring equal access to justice and achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. We will also upscale our efforts to build and strengthen more effective, accountable and transparent institutions, and ensure equal access to basic services and opportunities, with a special emphasis on people in vulnerable situations, particularly persons with disabilities and older persons.

27. Finally, we will promote public engagement and innovative partnerships through a whole of government and whole of society approach, regional and local mobilization and actions, involvement of communities**,** people, civil society, academia and the private sector*.* We will continue to ensure meaningful participation of non-State actors in the HLPF.We also acknowledge the role of the volunteers in the implementation of the Goals*.* We will invest more in human capital, to empower children, youth and women, persons with disabilities and older persons as critical agents of change, and support their meaningful participation, in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda.