**COSP14 Concept Note**

**Disability Inclusion in the Health Sector**

**[Date/Time TBC]**

**Background**

Over one billion people – about 15% of the global population – live with some form of disability and this number is growing because of population increases, ageing, and medical advances.[[1]](#footnote-1) Persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination. “Building back better” in COVID-19 response and recovery requires that disability inclusion be strengthened across the wider health sector and in national health agendas.

The recently endorsed World Health Assembly Resolution on the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities requests collaboration between states, international organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, including intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, private sector companies, academia, and organizations of persons with disabilities to work together toward that objective.[[2]](#footnote-2)

First, health systems – that is, policies, workforce, information systems, financing mechanisms as well as strategies for medicines, vaccines, and assistive products – need to integrate the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities, so that health services become barrier free. This includes addressing physical barriers that prevent access to health facilities and specific interventions; informational barriers that prevent access to health literacy and information; and attitudinal barriers which give rise to discrimination.

Secondly, cross-sectorial public health interventions that address the social, economic, environmental, or commercial determinants of health need to be designed accommodating the requirements of persons with disabilities. In this way persons with disabilities also experience the health gains targeted by the interventions.

Thirdly, as COVID-19 has demonstrated, national and international health emergency preparedness and response plans need to include persons with disabilities in every step of their preparation and implementation.

**Side Event Objectives**

This side event, co-hosted by the World Health Organization and International Disability Alliance (other partners to be confirmed), seeks to:

* Highlight approaches, as well as ongoing gaps, to disability inclusion in the wider health sector, including in health systems strengthening, health emergencies, and cross-sectoral public health actions.
* Engage states, UN agencies and civil society in dialogue on the entry points to strengthening disability inclusion in national health agendas.
* Share information about forthcoming initiatives for multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance the rights of persons with disabilities to the highest attainable standard of health.

**Provisional Agenda and Possible Speakers (TBC)**

Introduction (10 min)

Disability inclusion in health emergencies – Why it matters (10 min)

* Experience of people with intellectual disabilities – LASA video (3 min)
* Examples of disability inclusion in COVID-19 responses - United Nations Workstream on COVID-19 Disability Inclusive Health Response and Recovery (5 min)

Disability inclusion in health systems strengthening – What we need to do (10 min)

* Equity in health systems policy – WHO speaker (5 min)
* Workforce development – WHO speaker (5 min)

Disability inclusion in cross-sectoral public health interventions – What it looks like (10 min)

* Disability inclusion in physical activity guidelines – WHO speaker (5 min)
* Disability inclusion in housing guidelines – WHO speaker (5 min)

Advancing the health agenda of persons with disabilities (20 min)

* International Disability Alliance (5 min)
* Another state speaker (5min)
* Launch of the WHO webinar series (5min)
* Global Disability Summit – Norway (5 min)

Questions & Close (15 min)

**Logistics**

The event will be both recorded and webcast with CART and international sign language interpretation provided by WHO.

1. <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB148/B148_R6-en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)