



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES
Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
Division for Inclusive Social Development

Background Note

United Nations Expert Group Meeting,
New York
15 – 17 October 2019
Meeting rooms S-2726 and S-2727

“Strengthening evidence-based research for disability-inclusive implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals”

Introduction

The programme on disability of the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) will organize an expert group meeting in New York under the theme “Strengthening evidence-based research for disability-inclusive implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals” from 15-17 October 2019.

The meeting will invite, in their individual capacity, experts from around the world with experience in evidence-based research for disability-inclusive development to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other international development goals.

The meeting is part of ongoing and upcoming work by DESA to fully support stakeholders in the field of evidence-based research for disability-inclusive implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

The meeting is expected to result in a set of recommendations to support the mandate of the General Assembly to advance its priorities for disability inclusion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant global commitments and to translate such commitments into action in the United Nations operational framework and into tangible results on the ground. The meeting will also lay the foundation for future work related to monitoring and evaluation of the disability-inclusive implementation of development goals, in particular the SDGs.

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 2015, with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, pledges to “leave no one behind”, including persons with disabilities, reaffirming disability as a crosscutting global issue to be considered in the implementation of all its goals.

The Agenda provides a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. It also includes seven targets and 11 indicators explicitly referring to persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment,

availability of schools sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

Goal 17.18 of the Agenda aims 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 contexts”. While Goal 17.19 aims to “build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries”.¹

Over the past decade, the General Assembly has reiterated that the continuing lack of reliable timely and high-quality statistics, data and information about persons with disabilities presents an obstacle to achieving development planning and implementation inclusive of persons with disabilities and their rights, well-being and perspectives, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The fifty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development, at its panel discussion “Towards inclusive, resilient and sustainable development: an evidence-based approach to the mainstreaming of disability in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda” recognized the importance of undertaking an evidence-based approach to the mainstreaming of disability in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda.

In 2018, in response to decades-long calls by the General Assembly, including through its resolution 69/142, the Secretary-General launched the United Nations flagship report on disability and development, titled “Disability and Development Report - Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities”. The report is a first ever endeavor by the United Nations system to examine disability and SDGs of the 2030 Agenda at the global level. The report reviewed data, policies and programmes and identified best practices; and used this evidence to outline recommended actions to promote the realization of the SDGs for persons with disabilities.

The report shows that despite the progress made in recent years, persons with disabilities continue to face numerous barriers to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. It sheds light on their disproportionate levels of poverty; their lack of access to education, health services and employment; and their underrepresentation in decision-making and political participation. This is particularly the case for women and girls with disabilities. Data and statistics compiled and analysed in report indicate that persons with disabilities are not yet sufficiently included in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

The report concluded that further research and robust data and analysis are required to ensure that persons with disabilities occupy their rightful place in the SDG framework and its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The lack of data and research about persons with disabilities severely constrains the international community from monitoring the situation of children, youths and adults with disabilities. Many relevant global and country indicators are still not disaggregated by disability status. Many countries collect data on disability, but the data remain unpublished.²

Studies on the impact of policies and programmes promoting disability inclusion are scarce. These studies will be needed to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities, in particular to help policymakers in designing new policies and in deciding to scale up, refine or discontinue existing

¹ [A/RES/70/1](#)

² [Disability and Development Report](#)

policies. There are well-established methodologies to evaluate the impacts of policy. The capacity of countries to use these impact-evaluation methodologies and interpret their findings should be built.

Given the increasing availability of data, including internationally comparable data, cross-country studies are becoming increasingly possible. Establishing an international repository of disability data, updated on a regular basis, combined with a regular assessment and report of progress for persons with disabilities towards the SDGs is necessary to better guide the efforts of the international community in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, a global analysis of the impact of policies could further assist countries in identifying best practices and policies for promoting disability inclusion.

Purpose

The primary objective of the Meeting is to bring together international experts to discuss and explore the issues noted above. The conclusions and recommendations of this meeting will provide stakeholders with expert analysis regarding several issues impacting disability-inclusive evidence-based research in the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Methodology

Experts will be asked to provide a paper, make a short presentation, participate in group discussions and give their expert opinion and policy recommendations on disability-inclusive evidence-based research, monitoring and evaluation in the areas mentioned above. The experts are also expected to provide specific examples of good practices in disability-inclusive policy making and offer detailed recommendations on further development of policies, programmes and strategies supporting persons with disabilities in the areas noted above.

Organizational matters

The expert group meeting will be convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 15 to 17 October 2019 in conference rooms S-2726 and S-2727.

A minimum of twelve experts on mainstreaming disability in development from UN and other international and regional agencies, from Member States and from civil society, including academia and organizations of persons with disabilities, will participate in the Meeting. Experts will be invited from different regions to participate in the meeting in their personal capacities. Participants are expected to arrive on 14 October and stay through the duration of the meeting, through the end of the day on 17 October. The participants should submit their papers to the UN Secretariat by 07 October 2019.

The participants will meet in several working sessions:

- Each session will have brief introductory remarks or presentation/s (power point is acceptable but not required) by expert/s which will introduce the topic and provide context for ensuing discussion;
- A moderator for each session will lead the group discussion and will be responsible for compiling the recommendations from each session;
- Experts will provide a short presentation based on his/her written paper (not exceeding 15 minutes).

Language of the meeting

The working language of the meeting will be English. There will be no interpretation provided. All submissions should be made available to the Secretariat in English.

SDG-specific action points on evidence-based research for disability-inclusion

Ending poverty and hunger for all persons with disabilities (Goals 1 and 2)

- Disaggregate data on poverty and hunger by disability status to better inform national policies concerning poverty and hunger, including social protection schemes.
- Establish national monitoring and evaluation systems that periodically assess all social protection programmes regarding inclusion and positive impact about persons with disabilities.

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all persons with disabilities (Goal 3)

- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen health systems to include and deliver for persons with disabilities.

Accessing sexual and reproductive health-care services and reproductive rights for persons with disabilities (targets 3.7 and 5.6)

- Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the implementation of policies and programmes on access to sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities.
- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen sexual and reproductive health and services for persons with disabilities.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4)

- Establish monitoring mechanisms to regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of policies and laws on inclusive education.
- Improve national collection and disaggregation of education data by disability.
- Explore online and smartphone crowdsourcing applications to obtain bottom-up information on the accessibility of schools for persons with disabilities.

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls with disabilities (Goal 5)

- Enhance the collection, dissemination and analysis of data on women and girls with disabilities and disaggregate and disseminate data by sex, age and disability.

Ensuring availability of water and sanitation (Goal 6)

- Share information and build capacity about low-cost inclusive interventions to scale up best practices.
- Monitor progress through the collection of individual data.
- Collect, analyse and disseminate census and survey data on water, sanitation and hygiene access for persons with disabilities and disaggregate these data by type of disability, age and sex.
- Explore crowdsourcing applications to obtain bottom-up information on the accessibility of water and sanitation facilities for persons with disabilities to inform accessibility policies.

Ensuring access to energy (Goal 7)

- Raise awareness within ministries and promote interministerial coordination to address fuel and energy poverty among persons with disabilities.

Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities (Goal 8)

- Build robust evaluation plans for the implementation of programmes to improve the employment of persons with disabilities.
- States should ensure that a database of available information and disaggregated data on disability and employment is developed and available in an accessible format.

Increasing access to information and communications technology (target 9.c)

- Develop and publish comparable data on access to and use of ICTs disaggregated by disability as well as on accessibility of ICTs.

Reducing inequality for persons with disabilities (Goal 10)

- Develop mechanisms for reporting on discrimination such as the creation of a public service, where persons with disabilities can file or report incidences of discrimination, or the carrying out of periodic surveys and collection of feedback from persons with disabilities regarding how anti-discriminatory laws are being implemented in practical terms.

Reducing inequalities through enhanced access to assistive technology for persons with disabilities

- Incentivize research and development of assistive technology. Provide financial incentives for research and development of assistive technology. Design assistive products and programmes in close collaboration with persons with disabilities and their organizations. Estimate needs for assistive technology and map available human and financial resources, as this evidence is a prerequisite for planning equitable services. Consider the needs of persons with all types of disabilities, including those with physical, cognitive and sensory disabilities.

Making cities and communities inclusive and sustainable for persons with disabilities (Goal 11)

- Share knowledge and best practices and build capacity to implement measures promoting accessibility and inclusion.
- Improve research and data to monitor, evaluate and strengthen urban development to be more accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities.

Building resilience of persons with disabilities and reducing their exposure to and impact from climate-related hazards and other shocks and disasters (targets 1.5 and 11.5 and Goal 13)

- Enhance the capacities and knowledge of aid workers on the needs and strengths of persons with disabilities in humanitarian actions.
- Undertake evidence-based research and develop a data collection system on persons with disabilities relevant to conflicts and disasters.

Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16)

- Establish mechanisms to report violence which are accessible for persons with disabilities and provide appropriate and sufficient support to report violence. Accessible formats, sign language interpreters, services for victims with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities should be established.

Increasing the availability of disaggregated data by disability (target 17.18)

- Continue building capacity in countries to collect, process, analyse and disseminate data disaggregated by disability.
- Regularly update international guidelines on the production of data disaggregated by disability.
- Invest in an international repository of disability data, compiling data at the country level to monitor progress towards the SDGs for persons with disabilities.