

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Regional Forum on Advancing Disability-inclusive Development: **Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.**

3 December 2021

Virtual

Concept Note

I. Background

The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 (Beijing, 27 November - 1 December 2017) led to the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan to accelerate the implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.¹

The Beijing Action Plan provides a strategic guidance to develop concrete policy measures on each relevant target of the Incheon Strategy goals, and to enhance the operational synergy with the Asia-Pacific Regional Road Map for implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.²

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the existing inequalities between persons with disabilities and the general population, and exacerbated these inequalities. Many initial COVID-19 responses overlooked the specific needs of persons with disabilities. Despite these challenges, organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and other civil society organisations (CSOs) worked with policy makers to address these gaps and establish coping mechanisms. These organisations also continued their pre-pandemic work towards creating more inclusive and accessible societies. Similarly, ESCAP responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to support member states and OPDs to make progress in their efforts to implement the Beijing Action Plan throughout the pandemic.

Against this background, ESCAP, is organizing a regional forum on advancing disability-inclusive development through the Incheon Strategy and Beijing Action Plan. The Forum will be held virtually on 3 December 2021, to coincide with the International Day for Persons with Disabilities with the theme “**Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.**”

¹ See E/ESCAP/APDDP(4)/5 at:

<https://www.unescap.org/disabilityhighlevelmeeting2017/documents> .

² <https://www.unescap.org/publications/regional-road-map-implementing-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-asia-and-pacific>

II. Objectives of the Regional Forum

The Objectives of the Forum are:

1. To commemorate the international day for persons with disabilities at the Asia and Pacific regional level, highlighting the leadership of persons with disabilities in organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and in policy and programmes.
2. To deepen understanding of the global campaign on inclusive quality police services for persons with disabilities, and presenting initiatives within Asia and the Pacific to enhance inclusive police services.
3. To share progress made, outcomes achieved, and challenges faced in the implementation of the local initiatives on empowering persons with disabilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

III. Theme for the Regional Forum

The Forum will be organized around three thematic sessions. All of the sessions aim to highlight the leadership and participation of persons with disabilities in creating a more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post-COVID-19 situation within Asia and the Pacific.

To enhance member states progress towards the Incheon Strategy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the sessions are in line with goals from both strategies. The sessions are relevant to many of the goals, in particular Incheon Strategy Goals 2 (promote participation in political processes) and 3 (enhanced physical and information accessibility) and SGD goals 10 (reduced inequalities) and 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).

Session 1: Commemorating the 2021 International Day for Persons with Disabilities: Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.

Session 2: Promoting Inclusive Quality Police Services for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

Session 3: Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities in community projects towards a post COVID-19 world

IV. Participation and organizational arrangement

The Forum is expected to bring together participants from the Asia-Pacific region, including policy makers, government disability focal points, civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities, UN agencies as well as other regional and international organizations.

The Forum will be conducted in English only. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning will be provided.

The Regional Forum will be convened virtually on the MS Teams platform.

IV. Contacts of the ESCAP secretariat

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