**2017 International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

**Panel Discussion on**

**“Persons with disabilities as agents of change: lessons from disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action for resilient and sustainable societies”**

**Concept Note**

1 December 2017

11:40 am – 1 pm | Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters, New York

The panel discussion will bring together policy makers, experts, academic institutions, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and the private sector. It will discuss how the experience and the perspective of persons with disabilities could directly contribute to the transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all from an integrated approach, especially in the context of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian actions. The panel will explore the nexus the Disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action, and the implications in accessible future development in both rural and urban societies. Including the voices from the ground, it aims to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The panel will discuss recent experience as well as good practices related to building resilience and how persons with disabilities, as agents of change, contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the context of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and accessible urban development, followed by a Q&A session to engage a broader audience.

**Background**

Persons with disabilities, approximately 15 per cent of the world population, are faced with higher risks of and disproportionately affected by disaster and emergency situations. Yet, their unique knowledge and experience in these contexts can help build societies for all. The transformation towards sustainable and resilient society will need to address their concerns and challenges through collective efforts with other stakeholders to design, develop and implement affordable and innovative solutions.

The promise of the 2030 Agenda, “leaving no one behind”, is predicated on the resilience of those in vulnerable situations and reduction of their exposure and vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks as well as disasters[[1]](#footnote-1). Persons with disabilities are both beneficiaries and agents of change, which has been strengthened with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development frameworks, such as Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the outcome documents of the Humanitarian Summit and the New Urban Agenda call for investment in accessibility, actions to meaningfully engage persons with disabilities in all stages of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian responses and future development, and disability-disaggregated data in place for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Those international agreements have strengthened the visibility of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and galvanised commitment from Governments, UN entities and the civil society to close existing gaps and ensure development efforts are truly inclusive.

**Guiding Questions**

* What are the goal and objectives of disability-inclusive disaster risk, humanitarian action, and accessible urban development?
* What are the good practices in policies, programmes and relevant activities to achieve the sustainable and resilient society for all?
* What are the specific roles played by different stakeholders, including Governments, UN entities, academic institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector?
* What are the specific actions that Governments, UN entities, academic institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector can to further advance the resilience and sustainability of society and development?

1. SDG 1.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)