**2017 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)**

**“Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all”**

**Background Note**

Since 1992, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) has been annually observed on 3 December around the world.[[1]](#footnote-1) The theme for this year’s IDPD is **“Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all”.** This theme focuses on the enabling conditions for the transformative changes envisaged in the 2030 development agenda for Sustainable Development. [[2]](#footnote-2)

The centrality of resilience to sustainable development cuts across all the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda, pledging to “leave no one behind”, is premised on the resilience of those in vulnerable situations and the reduction of their exposure and vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks as well as disasters[[3]](#footnote-3). It also urges all Member States to strengthen the resilience of society, including infrastructure[[4]](#footnote-4), cities and human settlement[[5]](#footnote-5), and climate-related hazards and natural disasters responses[[6]](#footnote-6). The transformation towards sustainable and resilient society provides an opportunity for persons with disabilities to address their challenges through collective efforts with other stakeholders to design, develop and implement affordable and innovative solutions.

In the era of digitalization, technology provides a means to such innovative solutions. It is an essential component to realizing the SDGs for persons with disabilities and their full and effective participation in development. Too often, adaptation and dissemination of technological innovations are too expensive or exclusive, widening the gap between those who can afford them and who cannot. Thus, affordable technologies and equal access to them, including information and communication technologies (ICTs), must be prioritized for persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In particular, access to and affordability of technologies is crucial for the inclusion and the leadership of persons with disabilities to contribute to *the transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society*, including in urban development, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action.

Throughout the recent years, the international community has witnessed the progress made in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. Efforts to mainstream disability have successfully made it a cross-cutting issue in major global development agendas, including the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action which seeks to transform our world and to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner. The New Urban Agenda directly relates to SDG 11 “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, and is also interlinked with other SDGs addressing equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential, and transforming the society into a just, equitable, socially inclusive and resilient one in which the needs of the persons with disabilities are met. Meanwhile, the Sendai Framework recognizes persons with disabilities not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of change for building sustainable and resilient societies for all in the context of disaster risk reduction.

With the adaptation and dissemination of affordable and innovative technologies for persons with disabilities, as well as full and effective participation of persons with disabilities, inclusive and accessible urbanization and development for all can fast track the transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society.

**Key Questions**

1. What are the most challenging issues in the process of the transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society for all? And how can we address them? (e.g. political will, technical support, full and effective participation of persons with disabilities. etc.)
2. What are the actions and measures that the governments, civil society and other stakeholders have been or will be engaged to ensure that all stages of development are inclusive of and accessible for persons with disabilities?
3. What efforts can be made to improve the implementation of disability inclusive development, especially in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other global development agendas?

1. A/RES/47/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A/RES/70/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. SDG 1.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. SDG 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. SDG 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. SDG 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)