**UN to promote more accessible and inclusive cities for persons with disabilities**

*Nairobi 28 October 2015*-- A global United Nations meeting bringing together more than 60 urban planning and disability experts opens today at the UN Office in Nairobi. Over the next three days, the experts will discuss solutions to make urban development inclusive of and accessible to the world’s one billion persons with disabilities, many of whom live in cities.

The three-day ‘DESA Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development’ aims to support States and related stakeholders in jointly advancing accessible and inclusive urban development. It will result in a set of key recommendations to build an inclusive and accessible New Urban Agenda for all, including persons with disabilities.

The recommendations will expect to highlight in particular the need for proper urban policy, regulatory norms and standards, "design for all" approach to planning and necessary mobilisation/ allocation of resources through broad-based partnership.

Outcome of the Forum would contribute to the 3rd UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), which will take place in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016 and result in a New Urban Agenda that will guide global urban development for the next two decades.

“The achievement of truly inclusive development where no one is left behind requires a holistic and people-centered approach”, said Mr. Hongbo Wu, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “Development policies and programming must fully take account of the aspirations, needs and concerns of all people, and involve and engage all members of society, regardless of their status, disability or non-disability.”

For one billion persons living currently with disabilities, most cities and towns present significant barriers to inclusion and participation, ranging from inaccessible built and virtual infrastructures to lack of user-sensitive designed facilities or limited access to basic public services.

“We need to find local solutions for global problems”, said Dr. Aisa Kayira Kirabo Deputy Executive Director for UN-Habitat and former Mayor of Kigali. “Innovative housing, transportation and buildings programmes that make our cities accessible to all are urgently needed.”

Mr. Lennin Moreno UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility, in his message to the Forum, urges all Governments including local authorities, United Nations entities, development partners and other major stakeholders to engage and work with persons with disabilities and their organizations and work together in a more proactive way to make cities better place for all.

The Forum is organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and UN-Habitat, and is supported by the African Union as well as the African Disability Forum and other civil society organizations and development partner organizations from five continents.

The Forum is convened just prior to World Cities Day (31st October), which will be marked this year under the theme “Designed to Live Together”.

For more information about the Forum please visit: <http://www.un.org/disabilities>

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