**UNDESA/DSPD FORUM**

**Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development**

Opening Session |Wednesday 28 October 2015 | UN Habitat, Nairobi

**Message for Mr. Lenin Moreno
Secretary General’s Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility**

Colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like, at the outset extend my appreciation and congratulation to our hosts UN-DESA and UN Habitat for organising this important event. Welcome to experts and participants from all continents of the world to the Forum!

Ladies and gentlemen,

We know that urbanization is a growing global phenomenon in countries all over the world. We know that by 2050, 57 per cent of the world’s population will be living in urban hubs. All this makes the discussions on inclusive urbanisation fundamental.

Last month, heads of states assembled in New York to adopt the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This ambitious framework for development will serve as the launch pad for action by the international community and by national governments. It is an agenda that promises to leave no one behind and to fight against inequality and injustice.

Social inclusion is understood to be a central aspect of development.

The Goal No.11 of the Agenda for Sustainable Development states that cities should be ‘inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’. This goal explicitly reflects principles of universal design and encourages States to develop and enforce regulations and building codes that provide accessible for all.

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, conceptualisation of accessibility has evolved. We now have a stronger understanding of disability as a lack of accessibility resulting from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation on an equal basis with others in society.

This means actions and measures must ensure universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, adequate and affordable housing, urban and peri-urban transport and basic services for all urban dwellers, including access to information.

I am delighted to welcome representatives from disabled person’s organisations including young leaders with disabilities, who will share their experiences during the Forum.

Next year, in October, the Third Global Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development - HABITAT III - will take place in Quito, Ecuador, my country.

This Conference will review the progress, experience and lessons learnt in the past to design a “New Urban Agenda”.

Discussions for this New Urban Agenda are ongoing. I urge you, colleagues, to use this forum to develop a clear position on inclusive and accessible urban development to contribute to this process.

I encourage everybody to grasp the unique opportunities to further raise awareness about disability inclusion and accessibility in urban development.

I also urge our Governments including local authorities, the United Nations entities, development partners and other major stakeholders including academic and professional institutions, private sectors and civil society to engage and work with persons with disabilities and their organizations in a more proactive way building accesibles societies and cities.

The most difficult barrier to overcome is the human attitude. Attitudes of human being make the world inaccessible. Societies are the ones that disempower. Change the discriminatory mentality toward a culture of inclusion and accessibility is imperative for an agenda of true urban development.

Together we can make our cities better place for all.

I wish you a successful Forum.