**International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2014**

“**Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology**”

**Panel Discussion: “Disability-Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals”**

**3 December, 2014. Conference Room 4,**

**11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

In 1992, the UN General Assembly proclaimed, by resolution 47/3, that 3 December be observed annually as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

The theme for this year’s International Day is **“Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology”**. The theme marks the conclusion of the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 and the launching of the new development framework of sustainable development goals (SDGs). This year’s objectives are to harness the power of technology to promote inclusion and accessibility to help realize the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and shape the future of sustainable development for all.

This year’s events will be organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). Representatives from Member States, UN system, civil society, the private sector and individuals will discuss how advances in technology can be utilized for persons with disabilities to improve their lives.

As part of the IDPD programme at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, a panel discussion will be held under the theme “**Disability-Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals** **(SDGs)**”.

**Background**

As the world is gearing up for launching of the post-2015 development agenda, the international community has before it a critical opportunity to ensure the inclusion of disability, which was not sufficiently visible in MDGs, in the emerging global development agenda. Against this backdrop, the General Assembly convened a High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development (HLMDD) on 23 September 2013, which provided a historical opportunity to examine the situation of persons with disabilities in society and development and showcase their roles as both agents and beneficiaries of development. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has been also supporting the efforts towards mainstreaming of disability in internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

During the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), Member States agreed to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose achievement period concludes in 2015. The SDGs are to address all three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social) and be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations global development agenda beyond 2015.

**Progress in disability inclusion and the post-2015 development agenda**

In September 2013, at the United Nations, a 30-member Open Working Group of the General Assembly was tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs. In July 2014, the Open Working Group drafted and presented to the General Assembly a proposal for sustainable development goals. The envisaged SDGs have a time horizon of 2015 to 2030.

Disability is referenced in various parts of the draft proposal on the SDGs and specifically in parts related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs.

Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all focuses on eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. In addition, the proposal calls for building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and also provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. Technology that supports children and adults with disabilities in education and learning plays a crucial role in making education fully accessible.

In Goal 8 “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”, the international community aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. A workplace that is adequate to the needs persons with disabilities includes all technical tools that give persons with disabilities the full opportunity to find employment and work. Closely linked is Goal 10, which strives to reduce inequality within and among countries by empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities.

Goal 11 would work to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable. To realize this goal, Member States are called upon to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities. In addition, the proposal calls for providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for persons with disabilities. Various technologies exist to make the infrastructure fully accessible and should be comprehensively employed for persons with disabilities.

Goal 17 stresses that in order to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, the collection of data and monitoring and accountability of the SDGs are crucial. Member States are called upon to enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), which would significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data that is also disaggregated by disability. Big data may play an important role in evaluating the SDGs in the future.

The proposed goals are still under negotiation and will be adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

**Panel discussion on** “**Disability-Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals** **(SDGs)**”

Technology can greatly impact the achievement and outcome of the SDGs for persons with disabilities, and for people everywhere. The SDGs can be used to promote the impact and benefits of assistive technology, accessible information and communications technology, technological adaptations and other policy and programmatic measures to improve the well-being and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development.

The panel discussion aims to bring attention to this very important aspect of the SDGs. The panel will identify key issues and trends with regard to technology and the SDGs and how they can promote an inclusive path to development. The panellists will focus on practical strategies and actions points to make disability a development priority. For inquiries related to this panel discussion, please contact Mr. Robert Venne, UNDESA (enable@un.org, Telephone: 1-212-963-4540).

Panelists and speakers will present their expertise to answer the following questions:

1. In which SDGs can technology be used in the most effective way to enable persons with disabilities to participate in all aspects of society?
2. How can challenges to using technology be addressed?
3. Elaborate on good practices and policies that assisted persons with disabilities by using technology!
4. Which role can stakeholders play in achieving the SDGs and disability-inclusive development?
5. How can we collect better and more comprehensive data on the quality of life of persons with disabilities in monitoring the SDGs?