**International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December**

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

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

**Panel Discussion: “Creating Enabling Work Environments”**

2 December 2014, Conference Room 8, UN Headquarters, New York

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). The objectives of the theme 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.

At UN Headquarters, this year’s commemorative 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 others will discuss how advances in technology can be utilized for persons with disabilities to improve their lives.

As part of the IDPD events at UN Headquarters from 2-3 December, a panel discussion will be held on 2 December, under the theme “Creating enabling work environments”.

**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 also advanced efforts towards mainstreaming of disability in internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In its resolution 66/288, the General Assembly highlighted the need to achieve sustainable development by creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities and fostering equitable social development and inclusion. The world’s more than one billion persons with disabilities are resourceful contributors to help realize such a goal, as no development path that is not inclusive of persons with disabilities can be equitable and thus sustainable.

Most recently, the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly submitted the proposal on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which contains 21 references on disability with increased visibility, reflecting the growing global interest in and political momentum towards disability-inclusive development.

**Panel Discussion on “Creating Enabling Work Environments”**

Disability has been referenced in the ongoing work on the SDGs including in the context of full and productive employment and decent work. Various policy measures have been undertaken to incorporate accessibility concerns and ensure an enabling work environment for persons with disabilities.

The UN system has made significant advances in promoting accessible work environments around the world, as well as through its facilities, services and human resources policies. In 2000, the Chief Executives Board of the UN system that is made up of the leaders of UN system organizations, adopted a "Policy on persons with disabilities in the United Nations workplace". The policy aimed at guiding UN system organizations in creating work environments that would enable persons with disabilities to work effectively, based on fair practices that promote respect for human dignity. The policy also included elements of reasonable accommodation measures that would eliminate physical, communications, technical and other barriers to promote the full participation of persons with disabilities in the UN workplace.

In June this year, the UN Secretary-General promulgated its very first internal policy to create enabling work environments for staff with disabilities for the UN Secretariat based on the inter-departmental efforts by DESA, DGACM and other UN departments of the UN Secretariat working through an internal task force on accessibility.

This panel discussion will examine different policy measures and strategies which successfully utilize technology to promote enabling work environments for all, including persons with disabilities. Key questions below will guide the overall discussion:

1. What are the obstacles and challenges to creating enabling environments?
2. What works? Best practices, lessons learned?
3. What measures can stakeholders, such as Governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations, academia, private sector, as well as persons with disabilities, take to create accessible work environments?

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