

 **U N I T E D N A T I O N S N A T I O N S U N I E S**

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**Opening SESSION OF The**

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

**New York, 10:00 a.m., CR.4, 3 December 2014**

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations and declare open the 2014 commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Throughout human history, new and changing technology has always impacted the way people live. Today, technology is built in to nearly every part of our daily lives - from work to recreation, from finance to travel, we cannot do without it.

Furthermore, the emergence of information and communications technologies has dramatically increased connectivity between people and their access to information.

Yet access to such innovative technologies can be a barrier that excludes many people from society.

The theme for this year’s commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is “Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology”.

For the one billion people living with a disability, technology and new innovations in technology can be challenging to access.

Nonetheless, simple adaptions to technological systems and accessible communication tools can provide an abundance of possibilities for persons with disabilities.

A sustainable and inclusive world is one that is accessible to all persons in society. Accessibility should therefore be considered a global public good, which serves the interest of us all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme for this International Day is timely, as we approach the conclusion of the period of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and the launching of a post-2015 development agenda.

With this new development agenda, we must work to ensure that the benefits of technology are available and accessible to all.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a key instrument in the global efforts towards mainstreaming of disability in development.

The Convention works to promote the full participation of persons with disabilities in society, as well as contributes to disability-inclusive development. It also works to realize advancements in accessibility and technology for persons with disabilities.

We all need to work to realize human rights and development for persons with disabilities by removing barriers to their equal access and full participation in society and development.

Today, let us open our minds to consider the promise of technology for persons with disabilities, and help promote a sustainable future for all.

Thank you.

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