



CENTER for
FINANCIAL
INCLUSION | ACCION



International Day of Persons with Disabilities

“Break Barriers, Open Doors: for an inclusive society and development for all”.

Panel Discussion: “Key to the Future, Financial Inclusion and Opportunity for all”

3 December, 2013. 3-4:30pm.

S-2723BR-Board Room/27th floor of the Secretariat Building
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Co-organized by DESA and the Center for Financial Inclusion at ACCION

Background

For the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals now and beyond 2015, persons with disabilities must have access to financial services.

The financial services sector makes an important contribution to development challenges. Increased financial inclusion -- through the extension of saving schemes, credit, insurance and payment systems are central to poverty eradication and sustainable economic growth.

Persons with disabilities, who constitute 15% of the world's population, represent a huge untapped market opportunity for providers of financial services, representing the largest unbanked minority in the world.

Extending the range of financial products and services to a wider segment of the population at a reasonable cost and on a sustainable basis can offer tremendous potential to unleash the productivity of millions of people. This is especially so at the local level where persons with disabilities are often denied opportunities to own land, obtain loans and even access to education generating a vicious cycle of poverty with inter-generational effects.

There is need for financial inclusion strategies to adopt integrated approaches that incorporate drivers of financial inclusion--including product innovation, financial capability, distribution channels, retail institutions, policy and legal frameworks--to achieve financial access for all. Support for disability responsive planning, programming, and budgeting for all relevant stakeholders including government, the private sector and local civil society is critical to the design and rollout of financial services and products in a more equitable manner.

The landmark outcome document of the September 2013 High-level meeting on disability and development encourages regional and international development banks and financial institutions, to include disability in all their development efforts and lending mechanisms. It also calls for the social inclusion for persons with disability in all development policies, including those regarding poverty eradication and economic empowerment.

Panel Discussion

This multi-stakeholder panel comprises of practitioners and policy makers, who in different ways are dedicated to empowering persons with disabilities through economic empowerment.

Opening: **Ms. Akiko Ito**, Chief, Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, DSPD/ UN DESA.

Moderator: **Mr. Joshua Goldstein**, Principal Director for Economic Citizenship & Disability Inclusion, Center for Financial Inclusion at ACCION.

Panellists:

Mr. Sergio Guzman (Center for Financial Inclusion at ACCION): Will discuss tools and trainings, to be published in January 2014, that are designed to make microfinance institutions disability-inclusive.

Ms. Pina D'Intino (Bank of Canada): Will highlight takeaways from the recently concluded "Financial Inclusion 2020 Global Forum" held last month in London. The Forum developed with key recommendations to achieve the full financial inclusion for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations by the year 2020. Ms. D'Intino will also discuss the key objective of overcoming "the digital divide" by making websites and other portals completely accessible.

Mr. Michael Felix (Trickle Up): Will discuss efforts by his NGO to empower the ultra poor, including persons with disabilities, through the implementation of community-based livelihood development projects.

Mr. Frank Spada (AIG): Will discuss an innovative initiative at AIG to make Human Resources policy disability-inclusive across the company.

Mr. Mattias Lundberg (The World Bank): Will address the World Bank's perspective on financial inclusion, based on the declaration by the Bank President, Mr. Jim Kim, to the Microcredit Summit in Manila last month, and the work of the World Bank on financial capability and decision-making.

An interactive discussion, featuring a Q&A session, will focus on how to measure the impact and success of different but complementary initiatives for the financial inclusion of persons with disabilities in diverse contexts.

For additional information on the panel, contact Ms. Eunice Ajambo, UNDESA (ajambo@un.org, Telephone: 1-212-963-6052).