

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

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

3 December 2013, Conference Room 6, NLB

Ambassador, DPR Janne Taalas

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Our starting point must be the dignity of every human being. In Finland’s development policy this is manifested in human rights based approach: both the aims and individual policy actions are anchored in human rights.

Inclusion and **accessibility** are key elements in upholding the dignity of every human person. Special measures and specific targets for the reduction of inequalities are required. We need to strive to change **people’s attitudes** and increase the understanding of the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

I would like to use my three minutes to draw your attention to three issues of paramount importance

First, children with disabilities are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in society. Girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination.

It is essential to recognize children with disabilities as full members of society and remove barriers to promote their inclusion. Education is the key

to inclusion. Education must be made available, accessible and free to all children with disabilities.

Second, **we must ensure meaningful and effective participation of all people with disabilities.** The United Nations Partnership to promote the rights of Persons with Disabilities shows how representative organizations play a part when promoting inclusion and participation of people with disabilities.

In Finland we actively engage persons with disabilities in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects. Participation is a key right of all persons, with or without disabilities.

Third, **reduction of inequalities should be one of the central tenets of the post-2015 agenda.** Development cannot be sustainable unless we address the root causes of exclusion, and the inequalities in access to opportunities, services and resources.

By adopting the outcome document of the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development, States committed themselves to realizing development goals for persons with disabilities. We need to live up these commitments when shaping the global development agenda post 2015. We need to work together to promote model of development that is inclusive of and accessible to all.

Thank you!