**International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2015**

Conference Room F, UN Headquarters

Thursday, 3 December 2015

Organized by UN-DESA

**Theme: “Inclusion matters: Access and Empowerment for People of all Abilities”**

**Panel Discussion: “Operationalizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with regard to data, statistics and indicators for persons with disabilities” [1.15 to 2.30 p.m.]**

**Background**

It is estimated that more than 1 billion people or 15 per cent of the world’s population are living with disabilities. In all regions, persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the poorest segments of society. Additionally, it is estimated that 80 per cent of persons with disabilities reside in developing countries. The number of persons with disabilities is on the rise, partially due to demographic ageing, an increase in chronic health conditions and improved access to health care. In spite of this, disability has remained largely invisible in mainstream development agendas and processes, and internationally comparable data on persons with disabilities is not yet consistently collected or reported on. Although many countries already collect data on disability, the methodologies used to collect the data vary among countries. Even within the same country, different sources at times use different methodologies to identify persons with disabilities and are thus not comparable which prevents the full usage of all data for policy making.

In 2000, when the MDGs were established, disability data was scarce and often of poor quality in many developing countries; internationally comparable measures to identify persons with disabilities had not yet been developed. Now, internationally comparable measures have been developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. Therefore, the methodology to produce internationally comparable data to monitor the SDGs for persons with disabilities. However, to make that happen, the use of internationally comparable measures by countries and agencies needs to increase.

Many agencies are already using the Washington Group methodologies in their ad-hoc surveys or have developed disability modules for surveys which include the Washington Group methodologies. ILO, UNICEF, UNISDR, WHO have taken a lead on this work. These are positive developments but these surveys remain ad-hoc and the disability modules are often still optional.

About 30% of countries collecting disability data in their most recent census have included the Washington Group short set of questions. Countries have also included the Washington Group questions in many national surveys including living standard measurement surveys which are used to determine poverty rates and labour force surveys which are used to monitor participation in the labour market. A disability module is also about to be finalized for demographic and health surveys, which is expected to provide a wealth of data for persons with disabilities on various on socio-economic aspects.

Disabled persons organizations and academia are also using the Washington Group questions for their disability data collections. These questions have been used to identify persons with disabilities among refugees and to assess access of persons with disabilities to health care.

Positive initiatives are also taking place to evaluate accessibility and produce indicators on accessibility. UN DESA/DPADM conducted a survey in 2013 assessing whether governmental websites were accessible for persons with disabilities. Some countries have also conducted accessibility evaluations of their own public buildings and at times also of private spaces which have public access.

In order to ensure a disability-inclusive monitoring of the SDGs, these initiatives – which remain largely ad-hoc, irregular exercises - would need to be scaled up and turn in to regular data collections based on common internationally comparable measures.

**Objective of the panel discussion**

In observation of this year’s International Day of Persons with Disabilities, on 3 December 2015, the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the cooperation and support from other stakeholders, will organise a panel discussion to explore how to operationalize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with **regard to data, statistics and indicators for persons with disabilities from the policy standpoint**.Panellists will review the current practices of data collection and analysis and discuss how to improve the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda to make it disability-inclusive. The panel also aims at identifying good practices of disability data collection and recent efforts in disability indicators development which can be used to better inform a disability-inclusive monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, the panel will provide an opportunity for calling for enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships among Governments, the UN, statisticians, disability civil society representatives, academic institutions, and development partners to actively involve and work together in promoting better data collection for policy makers in view of the needs of persons with disabilities.

**Questions suggested to panellists to consider and respond in their discussion:**

1. Internationally comparable disability measures have already been developed. What can be done to promote and scale-up their usage worldwide?
2. What are the opportunities and the challenges in disaggregating data by disability for all population-based SDG indicators?
3. In view of SDG targets 4.a, 11.2 and 11.7, which address respectively accessible schools, accessible transport and accessible public and green spaced, how can internationally comparable accessibility indicators be developed?
4. How can persons with disabilities benefit from the Data Revolution?
5. How can technology improve data collection on disability?