

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2015**

**Inclusive 2030 Development Agenda**

**“Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities”**

**Panel Discussion: “Taking action for persons with invisible disabilities: Mental health and well-being: A new global priority in SDGs”**

**3 December 2015. Conference Room 4**

**12.00 to 1.00 p.m. United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Background:**

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated annually on 3 December around the world to promote awareness and mobilize support on critical issues pertaining to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development.

The theme for this year’s International Day is: “**Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities**”.

This year’s events will be co-organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), by Permanent Missions to the United Nations, and co-sponsored by civil society organizations.

As part of the IDPD programme at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, a panel discussion will be held under the theme “**Taking action for persons with invisible disabilities: Mental health and well-being: A new global priority in SDGs**”. The panel is co-organized by the United Nations DESA, the University of Tokyo Komaba Organization for Educational Excellence, United Nations University International Institute for Global Health, Nippon Foundation, and co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations.

**Panel Discussion: “Taking action for persons with invisible disabilities: Mental health and well-being: A new global priority in SDGs”**

The year 2015 marks a historic transition in the focus on global mental health and well-being, and mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. Mental health and well-being, as well as rights of persons with disabilities, have been included in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a new global priority. In addition, the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) integrated aspects of psychosocial support and mental health services in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

Worldwide, an estimated one in four people experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. Suicide is a leading cause of death among young girls and depression is the leading cause of disability. However, 80% of persons with serious mental health conditions in developing countries do not receive any appropriate interventions. Many persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities face grave human rights violations based on severe stigma and discrimination, which can result in torture and murder. Economic losses related to mental health issues exceed 4% of GDP according to OECD.

The economic, social and health impact of poor mental well-being and disability is pervasive and far reaching, leading to poverty, high unemployment rates, poor educational and health outcomes, and human rights violations. Mental well-being represents a critical indicator and a key determinant of well-being, quality of life, sustainable development, and peace. The inclusion of mental well-being and disability in the SDGs provides unprecedented opportunity to realize respect, protection and promotion of rights of persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities.

The panel discussion aims to bring attention to action points for implementing SDGs for persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. Panellists will share good practices and lessons learned regarding integrating mental well-being and disability in development efforts with a particular focus on experiences and expertise on improving accessibility for persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. Updates on global mental health and well-being will be shared too.

**Panelists:**

Moderator:

H.E. Ambassador Mr. Luis Gallegos, Special Advisor, Nippon Foundation

Opening Remarks:

Akiko Ito, Chief, SCRPD/DESA, United Nations

H.E. Ambassador Mr. Mateo Estreme, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of Argentina

Presenters:

Takashi Izutsu, Associate Professor, The University of Tokyo

Atsuro Tsutsumi, Coordinator, UNU

Mark van Ommeren, Public Mental Health Adviser, WHO

Patricio V. Marquez, Lead Health Specialist, WBG

Kathyrn Goetzke, Founder, iFred

Vivian Pender, Special Advisor, American Psychiatric Association/Chair, NGO Committee on Mental Health

**Questions to guide the presentations and discussions:**

1. What are the main challenges and gaps in the inclusion of invisible disability as part of inclusive development?
2. What are some of the good practice examples at the local, national, regional levels that have been successful in including invisible disabilities in sustainable development?
3. What kind of measures have been successful or useful in improving accessibility for persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities?
4. What concrete measures and actions should be taken by Member States, the United Nations, development agencies and civil society to implement the relevant SDGs (SDG3 Target 3 & 4 on mental health and well-being, and other SDGs Target on disability) and follow up in furthering the inclusion of mental well-being and disability in development in all processes, at all levels?