**High-Level Panel Meeting organized by the President of the General Assembly in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Statement by Assistant Secretary-General**

**Mr. Lenni Montiel**

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**2 December, 2016 | 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.**

**Conference Room 4, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, just 10 years ago, was a hard-earned culmination. Decades of advocacy - at national, regional and global levels - resulted in the development of a hallmark international treaty hinged on the right to development of persons with disabilities.

The impact of the Convention at the global level is undeniable. The past 10 years has seen a major shift in the approach to disability and development away from one of charity, and away from a primarily medical focus.

At the international level, disability is now clearly understood to go beyond the individual condition to encompass the impact of the physical and psychological environment. Disability is now seen to be as much a social phenomenon as it is about health or impairment. Even in the field of health, disability is defined with a clearer understanding of the social underpinnings. The World Health Organization describes disability as, “the interaction between individuals with a health condition and personal and environmental factors.”

With this shift in focus, we have seen an acceleration of the global commitment to realising the rights and role of persons with disabilities in development. This commitment has translated into a well-articulated and inextricably interlinked normative framework for disability inclusion, spanning the fields of social and economic development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and urban planning, among others.

This tenth anniversary is being celebrated just one year after the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. An overarching development framework intended to enable a sustainable development path that leaves no one behind. In stark contrast to previous umbrella frameworks at the international level, these agenda are explicit in their accounting for persons with disabilities, promoting disability inclusion in line with the principles of the Convention.

Central to our current development framework are a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The SDGs call for data to be disaggregated by disability where relevant and include 11 indicators which refer explicitly to disability. What this means is that, over the course of implementation, countries will hold each other accountable for the reach of social protection to persons with disabilities and for addressing disparities in education. Countries will be expected to ensure that schools are equipped with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities. With full implementation, national statistics will monitor earnings by employed persons with disabilities and account for those living below 50 per cent of median income. Countries will monitor and improve access to convenient public transport, and public open spaces. They will have a clearer picture of any physical and sexual harassment that persons with disabilities may face, and how this compares to the population without disabilities. They will monitor representation by persons with disabilities in public institutions and inclusive decision making, and work to improve it where it is lacking.

In support of country-level efforts, DESA has strengthened its disability statistics programme in support of the SDGs and is working with countries to build capacity to effectively measure the population of persons with disabilities and to improve the availability and quality of data for monitoring the SDGs. We have also created a Tool Kit on Disability, designed to increase country capacity to formulate, monitor and evaluate national policies and action plans in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

The commitments have been made, and the goal posts have been set. Expectations are high. Now it is time to deliver. With 168 parties to the Convention, we must expect success. We must expect delivery and effective implementation. This is best accomplished through effective partnerships.

Governments, the United Nations, civil society and development cooperation institutions must continue to work together on disability as a cross-cutting issue, and ensure that the principles established by the Convention are mainstreamed into policy-making at all levels.

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