

World Autism Awareness Day 2015

Panel Discussion at the United Nations

Concept Note

In the 8 years since the State of Qatar launched the Global Autism Movement by leading the passage of the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/139 on "World Autism Awareness Day", we have witnessed a dramatic increase in autism awareness worldwide. The passage of new autism and developmental disabilities resolution A/RES/67/82 on "Addressing the socioeconomic needs of individuals, families and societies affected by autism spectrum disorders (ASD) developmental disorders (DD) and associated disabilities", led by Bangladesh and other Member States at the United Nations General Assembly, and World Health Assembly, enjoyed an overwhelming support by the United Nations Member States, and was adopted by consensus. A WHO consultation report clearly articulates the opportunities and the technical feasibility of meeting the needs of our children and families, and the robust demonstration of political will to address the autism public health crisis among even the poorest countries in the world.

As the global community looks toward the future, the inclusion of individuals and families affected by autism and other developmental disabilities and mental health conditions in the emerging post-2015 development priorities seems both a logical next step and a strategic opportunity to ensure that all children, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable, not only survive but also thrive.

By working together to foster innovation, stakeholders from different countries and diverse sectors, including policymakers, professionals and individuals and families affected by autism, have started to speed progress around the world. By empowering stakeholders with feasible and sustainable tools and resources customized to meet their needs, the global autism community can narrow the treatment gap and change the future of all who struggle with autism.

Representatives of UN agencies and NGOs will share via interactive sessions examples of cutting edge research and scientific collaboration, from public health to genomics, that can make a difference to individuals and families today, as well as inform and shape future solutions to address the needs of the developmental disabilities and mental health communities, specifically autism, in honor of World Autism Awareness Day.