



**Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session**

Concept Note

**High-level panel discussion on
“Leaving No One Behind: Poverty and Disability”**

Friday, 3 February 2017 (10:00am- 1:00pm)
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Introduction

Available data indicates that persons with disabilities are at greater risk of poverty than persons without disabilities in both developed and developing countries.¹ In developing countries, many persons with disabilities are at risk of poverty because they are more likely to be part of the informal economy, or even when employed, they are less likely to have long-term career prospects with limited or no pension and health benefits. In developed countries, the income of persons with disabilities has been 12 per cent lower than the national average and as much as 30 per cent lower than those without disabilities.² Many persons with disabilities also experience extra costs associated with disability (e.g. transportation, health care, modified residences, personal assistance and assistive devices). Available evidence suggests these costs can reach approximately a third of an average income, thus increasing the risk of poverty. Apart from income poverty, persons with disabilities are also at higher risk of multidimensional poverty. For example, education, health care and other services are often less accessible to them. Measures to promote decent work and employment as well as to reduce poverty and enhance income security for persons with disabilities are among the core elements of the strategies for the implementation of the SDGs and other development goals. Social protection plays an important role to sustain a sustainable level of income for persons with disabilities, keeping them from falling into poverty. Investment in accessibility in all spheres of life and discrimination can also play a major role, because they would lead to increased participation of persons with disabilities in development.

The work of the United Nations in the field of disability is deeply rooted in its commitment to economic and social progress and human rights for a peaceful and prosperous world. The UN General Assembly has been promoting the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and development as agents and beneficiaries for many decades. From the social development

1. Report of the Secretary-General entitled “Keeping the promise: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond” (A/65/173); see also World Health Organization and World Bank, World Report on Disability (Geneva, 2011).

² Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Sickness, disability and work: keeping on track in the economic downturn”, background paper for the High-level Forum, Stockholm, 14-15 May 2009.

perspective, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) has been promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development through the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982), the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and, more recently, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). The Special Rapporteur on Disability of the CSocD monitored the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 1994-2015. More recently, the Commission at its 54th session organized a multi-stakeholder panel and reviewed the progress in the mainstreaming of disability in the development agenda. The Commission further discussed possible options for strengthening the role of the Commission in promoting the disability-inclusion in view of the new global development agenda.

CSocD Panel Discussion: Mainstreaming disability in poverty reduction efforts

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs included disability as a cross-cutting issue. Together, Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to ending poverty in all its forms for all people, “leaving no one left behind.” SDG 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere; reducing at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty; implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all. In this context, the Commission for Social Development, at its 55th session, will organise a high-level panel on “poverty and disability” to discuss challenges and opportunities for disability-inclusion in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new global development agenda, particularly for SDG 1.

The panel will:

- Review an overview of the international policy framework on disability and development related to poverty reduction;
- Discuss the current situation and identify challenges in poverty reduction for persons with disabilities;
- Share good practices in poverty reduction for persons with disabilities;
- Discuss recommendations for achieving SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms) for persons with disabilities, including for action by Member States, the UN system and other stakeholders

The Chair of the Commission for Social Development will preside over this Panel. The Panel includes six speakers (five panellists and one moderator). Each panellist will make a 10-minute presentation, followed by an interactive discussion.

The panel discussion is expected to contribute to the on-going work for the implementation of the disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by identifying options to realize SDG 1 for persons with disabilities.

Panellists

H.E. Mrs. Ana Helena Chacón, Vice-President of Costa Rica

Ms. Catalina Devandas Aguilar, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Human Rights Council

Mr. Steen Lau Jorgensen, Director in charge of social protection and labor, the World Bank Group

Mr. Mosharraf Hossain, Director of Global Policy, Influencing & Research of ADD International

Moderator

Ms. Nora Groce, Professor and Director of Leonard Cheshire Centre for Disability and Inclusive Development, University of College London, United Kingdom

Discussant (from the floor)

Mrs. Maria Aparecida Borghetti, Vice Governor of the State of Parana, Brazil

Profiles of Speakers

H.E. Mrs. Ana Helena Chacón is the Vice President of Costa Rica. Through the Social Council and the Innovation and Human Talent Council of the Presidency, she coordinates Ministries and public institutions in their effort to reduce poverty and achieve social development. Vice President Chacón has held positions in both private and public institutions, where she consistently defended human rights. For over 20 years, she has worked on disability, poverty, infancy and gender, as director or board member in organizations like FUNDECOR, Paniamor Foundation, Coalition of Women Leaders against the feminization of HIV, Solidarity Triangle Program, Association for People with Down Syndrome and National Council of Rehabilitation and Special Education. In addition, she has been a speaker of seminars on different issues including gender, citizen participation, national security and citizenship, disability, tourism, sexual and reproductive health, childhood, adolescence, older people, education, national and international politics; feminization of HIV / AIDS, poverty, social exclusion, and sexual exploitation.

Ms. Catalina Devandas Aguilar is the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Human Rights Council. She is a lawyer by training and human rights advocate, who has worked extensively on disability issues at the national, regional and international levels. Before taking up her duties as the first Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Human Rights Council on 1 December 2014, she was working as a Program Officer for Strategic Partnerships with the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund, and was formerly with the United Nations Secretariat responsible for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the World Bank as a consultant for the Disability and Inclusive Development Team for Latin America and the Caribbean region. Ms. Aguilar in her capacity has a specific mandate to advance the human rights of persons with disabilities and she has spoken in many United Nations meetings and forums including in the 54th session of the CSocD and 71st session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Steen Lau Jorgensen is the Director in charge of Social Protection and Labor in the World Bank Group. Mr. Jorgensen has worked on strategy and operational activities across a number of themes including economic and social development, human development, governance and community empowerment for thirty years in the World Bank. He has worked across the developing world and in transition countries. He is the co-author of the first World Bank social protection strategy as well as academic publications on social protection, community development and climate change. Mr. Jorgensen was appointed Director of the World Bank's Social Protection and Labor Practice in August 2016. Prior to this assignment, Mr. Jorgensen was Country Director for West Bank and Gaza and Sector Director for Human Development in the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr. Mosharraf Hossain is currently the Director of Global Policy, Influencing & Research of ADD International. He has been actively engaged in the negotiation of the SDGs and has spoken in different forums including the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015 for the participation of persons with disabilities in the implementation of SDGs. He has extensive experience in development, poverty and disability issues. He was Country Director of ADD International in Bangladesh for 20 years and a consultant with UNDP, UNICEF, and DFID. Working in the Senior Management Team of ADD International, a member of International Disability and Development Consortium, Mr. Hossain has a track record of developing strategies to implement multiple disability and development programmes to reduce extreme poverty, inequality and discrimination. He is adept at project planning, negotiating, fundraising, networking, cross-cultural communication and inspiring others to facilitate change. Mr. Hossain graduated with a Masters from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Mr. Hossain was born in Bangladesh and has had a first-hand experience of living with a disability.

Ms. Nora Groce is a Professor and Director of Leonard Cheshire Centre for Disability and Inclusive Development, University of College London in the United Kingdom. She is well known internationally for her expertise in disability, international development cooperation, implementation and monitoring of internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. By training, she has a wide range of expertise and experience working in the area of global disability, health and international development with a particular emphasis on cross-cultural systems of health care and disability as a human rights issue. Her research interests include issues of disability in poverty, health and development, violence as a global public health problem, equity in access to care and services in ethnic, minority and rural communities and the integration of western and traditional health care systems. Ms. Groce has an in-depth knowledge and rich experience in supporting and working with different United Nations entities and mechanisms for more than a decade, as she regularly serves as an advisor to United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNFPA and a number of non-governmental organizations and disabled people's organizations. She has published widely on policy initiatives related to disability issues and serves as an editor and reviewer for a number of leading journals. Prior to coming to the University of College London, Ms. Groce was a Research Scientist at Harvard University (1986-1990) and Associate Professor in Global Health at Yale University and Director of the Yale/World Health Organization Collaborating Centre (1991-2008).

Mrs. Maria Aparecida Borghetti is the Vice Governor of Parana State of Brazil. Mrs. Borghetti is a businesswoman. She holds a major in Public Management, with a Diploma in Public Policy. She is a former Paraná State Representative and former Congresswoman in the Brazilian parliament. Well known for her support to preventive health and rights of women and children,

Mrs. Borghetti presided over the Special Commission that elaborated the Early Childhood Legal Framework Law, a federal legislation concerning the protection and promotion of the integral development of early childhood.