Distinguished guests, my name is Tiziana Oliva and I am the International Director for Leonard Cheshire, an inclusive development NGO that works with countries in Africa and Asia and at global level, to support the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals

I am delighted to be here to celebrate this important day and to mark the launch of the new Flagship Report on Disability and Development

This report is incredibly important and provides us with a much needed new global snapshot of disability since the WHO report in 2011. Much has changed since then – we now have a global framework that explicitly includes children and adults with disabilities for the first time

There should be no excuse for persons with disabilities to be left behind, and yet they are

The Evidence
Leonard Cheshire work and research in countries across Africa and Asia shows that the disability and development gap still exists

Our Bridging the Gap research, which examined indicators in four African countries, evidenced this gap even where we find comprehensive policies that support equity and inclusion

A consistent finding across all countries was weak implementation due to lack of monitoring, specific budgetary allocation, and accountability mechanisms. This limited the effectiveness of existing policies

Our Disability Data Portal, with data collated from 40 countries across 16 indicators, shows that persons with disabilities lag behind in education and employment, experience higher levels of poverty, stigma and discrimination, and struggle to access technology

SDGs
For us to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the 2030 agenda and the SDGs, and to ensure that we address the disability development gap, we really need to understand the global framework from a disability perspective

This new report is a huge step forward in allowing us all to do so. We will now have a much more in depth understanding of each SDG from the perspective of disability

DPOs will have tools and evidence to identify and articulate gaps
Policy and decision makers will be able to see in more detail where to concentrate their efforts

The report
We at Leonard Cheshire are proud to have played our role in the report. We had the honour of co-chairing two groups that supported the preparations of the chapters on Gender, and Sexual and Reproductive Health

These chapters are important for advancing people’s rights and particularly women

The chapter on gender reveals that women with disabilities still face multiple discrimination and barriers. They are more likely to be poor, to not have nutritious and sufficient food, to have unmet needs for health care, to be illiterate; they are less likely to be employed, and less likely to have access to technology

Several countries have implemented measures targeting women and girls with disabilities, but these remain scarce and the needs and perspectives of women with disabilities are often not reflected in national gender and disability mechanisms

In the chapter on sexual and reproductive health, a growing body of data confirms the unmet need to access family planning and health services, and the lower access puts women at a higher risk of unwanted unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Persons with disabilities are also more likely to experience gender-based violence, including sexual violence

In conclusion
This report pools sources, expertise, data and insight from partners and organisations around the world to give us this detailed picture of the SDGs

We at Leonard Cheshire were delighted to play our part and want to keep engaging with the global community, as well as reach new partners to drive this global effort for inclusive development

We want to look back at this report in 2030 and see the change that this has helped to catalyse

We look forward to working with all of you

Thank you