

Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities (Goal 8)

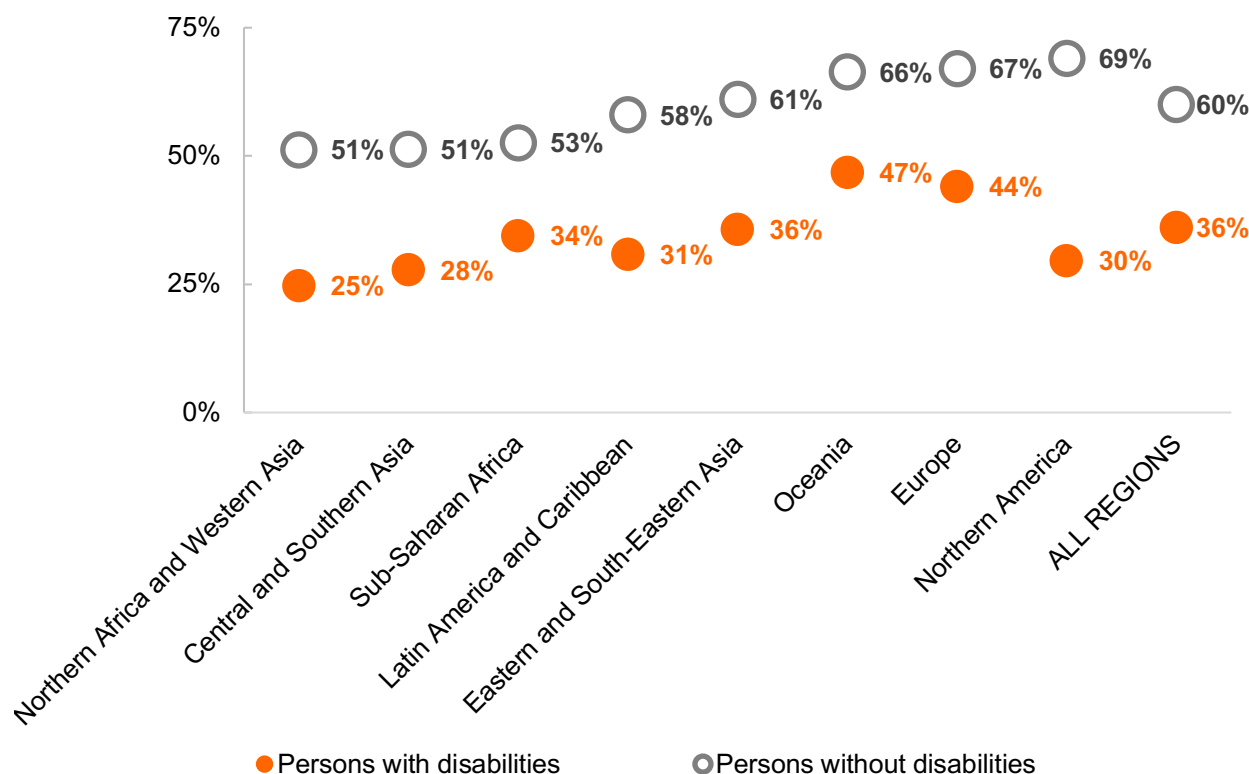


Disability-inclusive development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs provide a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. The 2030 Agenda pledges to leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, and recognizes disability as a cross-cutting issue to be considered in the implementation of all of its goals. The Agenda also includes seven targets and 11 indicators explicitly referencing persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment, availability of schools that are sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

Persons with disabilities continue to have limited access to the labour market. **The employment-to-population ratio of persons with disabilities aged 15 and older is almost half that of persons without disabilities (Figure 1)** and employed persons with disabilities tend to earn lower wages than their counterparts without disabilities. Lack of accessible workplaces and reasonable accommodation pose further obstacles in the employment of persons with disabilities. **In eight developing countries, 32 per cent of persons with disabilities consider their workplace hindering or not accessible.**

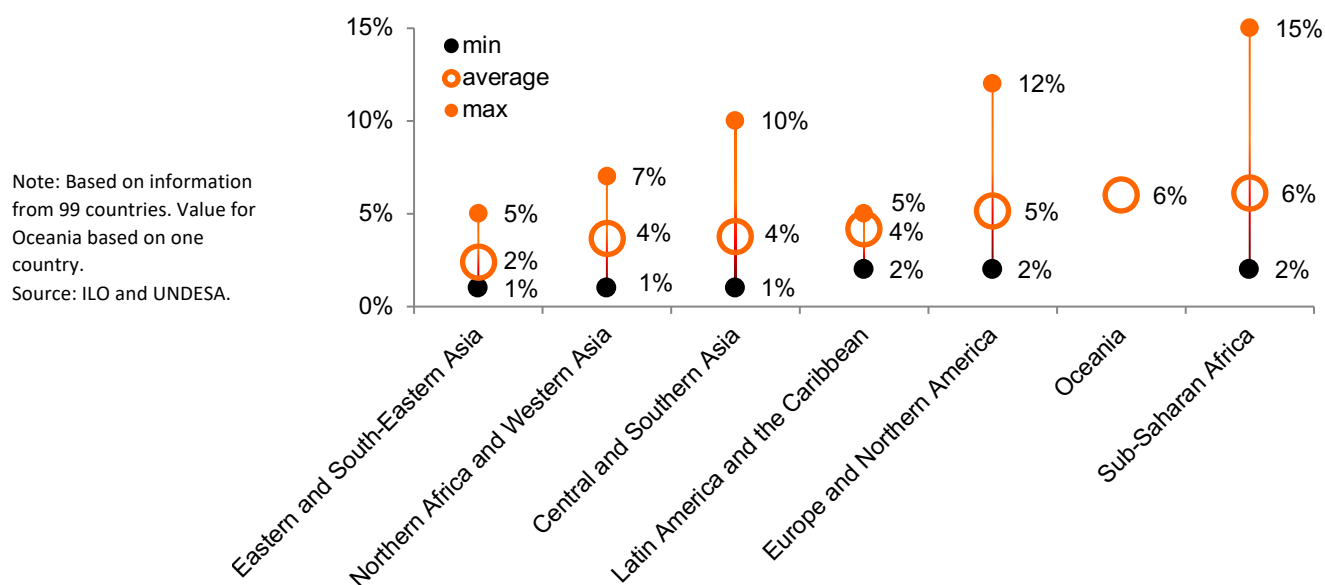
Figure 1: Employment to population ratios for persons aged 15 years and over, by disability status, in 8 regions, in 2006-2016.



Note: Based on data from 91 countries and territories. For some countries, data are for the age group 15 to 64.
 Source: ESCAP,¹ ESCWA,² Eurostat,³ ILO,⁴ UNDESA⁵ (on the basis of data from IPUMS⁶ and SINTEF⁷).

To improve the employment situation of persons with disabilities, **quota systems, which oblige employers to hire a certain number or percentage of persons with disabilities, have been adopted by at least 99 countries. Quotas typically range from 1 per cent to 15 per cent (Figure 2).**

Figure 2: Minimum, average and maximum employment quotas for persons with disabilities, by region.



The most effective quota systems include the payment of a levy by the non-complying company for every position not held by a person with disabilities. These levies typically contribute to a special fund used to finance measures promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. Countries have also adopted employment laws and policies that ensure the right of persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunities and prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability. **In 22 countries, national constitutions explicitly guarantee the right to work for persons with disabilities. More than 60 per cent of countries include provisions in their labour laws prohibiting discrimination in employment and guaranteeing equal pay for persons with disabilities.** Moreover, some national programmes provide financial support for persons with disabilities in accessing mainstream technical and vocational education and training.

To address the current employment gaps and realize Goal 8 for persons with disabilities, States should ensure that:

- National legislation protects persons with disabilities from discrimination in all matters of employment.
- The public sector hires persons with disabilities.
- Public procurement policies and systems encourage the employment of persons with disabilities.
- Public employment services are inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- Mainstream vocational education has provisions to include persons with disabilities.
- Mainstream entrepreneurship development training and microfinance systems include persons with disabilities.
- Policies are in place that facilitate job retention and return-to-work options for persons who acquire a disability, including for persons with mental health conditions.
- Support is provided for persons with disabilities in sheltered employment to enter the mainstream labour market.
- Social protection systems are designed to provide income security and support for disability-related needs.
- Evaluation plans are built to implement programmes to improve the employment of persons with disabilities.
- A database of available information and disaggregated data on disability and employment is developed.

¹ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2018), *Building disability-inclusive societies in Asia and the Pacific: Assessing progress of the Incheon Strategy* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.II.F.4).

² United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia. *Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017*. Available at: www.unescwa.org/sub-site/arab-disability-statistics-2017 (accessed May to October 2018).

³ Eurostat Database. Data available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (accessed in March-May 2018)

⁴ Data provided by ILO.

⁵ Country estimates calculated or commissioned by UNDESA.

⁶ Minnesota Population Center, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International, various data sets from 2001 to 2012. Data available at <https://international.ipums.org/international/> (accessed in 2017 and 2018).

⁷ Stiftelsen for industriell og teknisk forskning, *Living conditions among persons with disabilities*, various datasets from 2006 to 2017.