

## **Side Event: Financial Empowerment and Building Cities For All**

### **Organizer:**

World Enabled, New York City Mayor's Office of Persons with Disabilities, the Workers Lab.

June 15th, 11:30 am - 12:45 pm

### **Presentation**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps in public policies, legislation and services with regard to the need of being truly inclusive, negatively affecting the human rights and sustainable development of millions of persons in the world.

The enjoyment of human rights and the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development are not suspended by the pandemic. Thus, the international human rights monitoring mechanisms and the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development will need to examine the response of the States Parties on legislation, public policies and specific measures that they have adopted with full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and older persons, reflecting the political decisions according to the lessons learned. This includes data and statistics with a focus on accessibility, especially on health care and the exercise of other related rights during and after the pandemic, like education and work.

The alliance among central governments, local governments and civil society organizations with a public-private approach, will be crucial to make progress on the different paths towards universal accessibility, especially in cities as an effective way for the fulfillment of human rights and for overcoming poverty; always taking into account the reality of each local context and the needs and proposals of its inhabitants.

On the other hand, it's important to underline that the CRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. This is in line with the SDG 8 which looks to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, with special emphasis on its goals for persons with disabilities who should receive equal pay for equal work.

In turn, it is linked to SDG 10 that proposes Reduce inequality within and among countries, highlighting the goal of empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons.

All of this is aligned with the financial empowerment. In the case of workers with disabilities, experience shows that they can perform different jobs remotely through the use of accessible and available technologies.

However, building cities for all is directly related to SDG 11 in that it is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It's clear that a city without accessibility produces two transgressions of law: STRUCTURAL MISTREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION THAT LEADS TO INCREASED IMPOVERISHMENT. A city that is not accessible imposes barriers to full and effective participation in society and lack of protection in the exercise of human rights and abysses to reach sustainable development in the year 2030.

The economic empowerment of persons with disabilities will require as a sine qua non objective the universal accessibility of cities. For this reason, we hope that the pandemic has been and continues to be an opportunity for States, local governments, the private sector and civil society to continue to push forward this challenge in human rights and sustainable development. We cannot continue to talk about "impossible" to persons with disabilities.