On the occasion of the 12th Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Discussion Forum: Realizing disability-inclusive and sustainable development through evidence-based policies

Thursday 13 June 2019, 1:15-2:30pm, Conference Room 11

organized by the Programme on Disability of the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UK Department for International Development and the Philippines

Concept note

Overview

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been ratified by 177 States Parties, which has triggered actions at the national level to protect the rights and promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Many countries have now adopted national disability acts or disability policies. But persons with disabilities remain largely invisible in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the internationally agreed development frameworks, as well as in regional and national development policies and monitoring. Lack of reliable and timely data, evidence and research on persons with disabilities continue to pose challenges to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Recognizing this gap, a number of initiatives have been taken in recent years. Building on many decades of their global leadership in promoting inclusive development, the Government of the Philippines spearheaded the efforts that lead to a UN General Assembly resolution requesting a flagship report reflecting on progress towards persons with disabilities vis-à-vis the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and internationally agreed development goals. This report, the ‘UN Flagship Report on

Disability and Development | 2018 - Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities’, was released in December 2018 and it is the first report on disability inclusion in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In response to a UN Secretary-General’s initiative, the UN’s approach to disability mainstreaming was reviewed and the UN disability-inclusion strategy was adopted in May 2019. This Strategy will establish a framework for the UN system on disability inclusion and set clear and achievable objectives against which progress will be measured in line with the vision of the international community: an inclusive, accessible and sustainable world for all. A number of international agencies, including the World Bank, WHO, UNDP are developing their own disability inclusion strategies.

At the regional level, governments of the ESCAP region adopted the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific in 2012 and agreed on the first set of regionally agreed disability-inclusive development goals. In 2018, a Global Disability Summit, hosted by the UK Government, the International Disability Alliance and the Government of Kenya, called for a step-change across the international community to place persons with disabilities at the front and center of development and humanitarian efforts.

Despite the progress made, the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development clearly indicates that persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. They face disproportionate levels of poverty, lack of access to education, health services, employment, under-representation in decision-making and in political participation. This is particularly the case for women and girls with disabilities. Some of the main barriers to inclusion are discrimination and stigma, lack of accessibility to physical and virtual environments, lack of access to assistive technology, essential services, rehabilitation and support for independent living.

This Forum will include presentations by UN agencies, International Financial Institutions, Member States and civil society, including academic institutions, followed by an interactive discussion.

**Objective of the side event**

This event will bring together, UN agencies, International Financial Institutions, Member States and civil society to discuss next steps for taking action on disability-inclusive development through evidence-based policies, in particular with the adoption of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy by the CEB, the highest level policy-making mechanism of the United Nations system. The discussions at this Forum will draw on the findings of the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development and other relevant work of the UN system. The focus will be on exploring the next steps through addressing the current challenges and the opportunities for the UN and other stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 development agenda in line with the CRPD.

The discussion may include the following:

- What are the major obstacles faced by Member States in responding to the demands arising from the implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs for persons with disabilities? In which areas should capacity building efforts focus on?
- How to build on the synergies among the initiatives at the national, regional and international levels to build a coordinated approach and better deliver on the commitments of the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities?

- What next steps should be taken by key stakeholders (UN agencies, International Financial Institutions, Member States, civil society, the private sector) to promote evidence-based policies and realize disability inclusive development?

- What monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place to inform the implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs for persons with disabilities?

**Opening remarks:**

Ms. Akiko Ito, Chief, Program on Disability/Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

**Moderator:**

Ms. Nora Groce, Chair and Director, UCL International Disability Research Centre

**Speakers:**

Ms. Carmen R. Zubiaga, Acting Executive Director, National Council on Disability Affairs, Republic of the Philippines

Mr. Richard Boden, Department for International Development, UK

Ms. Maria Martinho, Program on Disability/Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Representative of ESCAP TBC

Ms. Charlotte V. McClain-Nhlapo, Global Disability Advisor in the Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice of the World Bank Group

Mr. Fred Smith, Head of Policy, Sightsavers

**Discussant:**

Mr. Yaw Ofori Debra, Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations

Real-time captioning will be available at the event.

The event will be webcast at: [http://webtv.un.org/](http://webtv.un.org/)