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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

Monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, contained in the annex to its resolution [48/96](#).
2. Section IV, paragraph 2, of the Standard Rules stipulates that the rules should be monitored within the framework of the sessions of the Commission for Social Development. The appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor their implementation is in accordance with section IV of the Standard Rules.
3. In 2009, the Secretary-General appointed Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa) Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development for the period from 2009 to 2011.
4. In 2011, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2011/27, decided to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for the period from 2012 to 2014.
5. The Special Rapporteur delivered an oral report and presented his annual reports to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-eighth, forty-ninth, fiftieth sessions and at its fifty-first session, held in February 2013 ([E/CN.5/2013/10](#)).
6. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2013/28, requested the Special Rapporteur to submit to the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-second session an annual report on his activities on mainstreaming disability in development agenda.
7. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission the report of the Special Rapporteur on disability pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/28.



Report of the Special Rapporteur on disability to the Commission for Social Development

I. Introduction

1. This is my fourth report to the Commission for Social Development, covering my activities pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/11 and in accordance with the provisions set forth in section IV of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.
2. The present report covers my activities for the period from November 2012 to October 2013.
3. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Governments and United Nations agencies and to the staff of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs who assisted me during the reporting period.

II. Background

4. The most important event on the global disability agenda during the reporting period was the high-level meeting on disability and development that took place on 23 September 2013. The much-anticipated meeting of heads of State and Governments adopted an outcome document (General Assembly resolution 68/3), which was also made available online and in an accessible multimedia format, and called for urgent action by all relevant stakeholders to further disability-inclusive development.
5. The theme of the meeting was “The way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond”. The outcome document calls for more ambitious disability-inclusive national development plans with targeted actions, backed by increasing international cooperation and support. The meeting resolved to undertake a number of commitments leading to 2015 and beyond, including, among others:
 - (a) Achieve the full implementation of the international normative framework on disability and development by encouraging the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, as both human rights and development instruments;
 - (b) Ensure that all development policies are inclusive of people with disabilities, including women, children, youth and older persons;
 - (c) Develop plans and where necessary enact, amend and enforce national legislation that advances the inclusion of people with disabilities;
 - (d) Recognize the right to education, especially for children with disabilities from low-income families;
 - (e) Ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities to health-care services;
 - (f) Strengthen social protection to meet disability-related needs, ensure equal access to full employment and decent work;

(g) Ensure accessibility, according to the universal design approach, by removing barriers to the physical environment, transportation, employment, education, health, services, information and communications technologies, including in rural areas;

(h) Improve data collection;

(i) Strengthen and support research to promote knowledge of disability and development.

6. The outcome document of the meeting urged Member States to strengthen the inclusion of and focus on the needs of people with disabilities in humanitarian response and encouraged increased understanding, knowledge and greater social awareness about people with disabilities in order to eliminate discriminatory social and attitudinal barriers to facilitate their full participation in society.

7. The outcome document also called upon regional and international development banks and financial institutions to include disability across their development efforts and lending mechanisms, taking into account that persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected during economic crises. The document also encouraged the mobilization of public and private resources to mainstream disability in development at all levels and to strengthen international cooperation, and encouraged private sector entities to integrate disability into their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

8. The adoption of the outcome document provides the international community with an additional framework for all stakeholders to take action to enhance the efforts for including disability in the development agenda and to realize the rights of persons with disabilities in development.

9. The sixth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities took place in New York from 17 to 19 July 2013, on the theme of ensuring an adequate standard of living and the empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities within the framework of the Convention.

10. In 2013, at the fifty-fourth session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, held in Banjul, Lawrence Mute of Kenya, the first Commissioner with a disability, took his oath of office.

11. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has mandated a working group on the rights of older persons and people with disabilities, headed by Commissioner Yeung Sik Yuen, to draft an African disability protocol. The first draft of the protocol was considered and discussed at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission.

12. Among the global civil society organizations, the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry held their global strategy-building meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, from 13 to 18 May 2013. The meeting's report states that it was a milestone in the development of the network's capacity-building project, which started in early 2013. The capacity-building project aims to strengthen the network so that it can more effectively carry out its purpose of being a global forum and voice for the rights of users and survivors of psychiatry and people with psychosocial disabilities.

13. The present report will focus on the recent developments, including some of the above-mentioned activities and their contribution to the mainstreaming of disability in development and the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

III. Activities of the Special Rapporteur on disability

A. Monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules and synergy between the Standard Rules and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

14. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolutions 2011/27 and 2012/11, in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on disability I have a mandate to act as an interface between Governments, the United Nations system and disabled persons' organizations in pursuing global and regional efforts to advance the disability agenda in the following areas, with a special focus on Africa. I therefore continue:

(a) To raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities;

(b) To promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability issues in development programmes and strategies at the national, regional and international levels;

(c) To promote both international cooperation, including technical cooperation, that is inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities, and the exchange and sharing of expertise and best practices on disability issues;

(d) To collaborate, in fulfilment of the above tasks, with all relevant stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities.

15. A number of opportunities arose during the reporting period that afforded me the opportunity to monitor and advise governments and regional intergovernmental entities on the implementation measures that would enhance the implementation of the Standard Rules and the Convention.

16. In April 2013, I visited the Republic of Moldova at the invitation of a consortium of organizations of persons with disabilities that aims to ensure that the Convention is implemented in the country. The overall purpose of my mission was to advise government and civil society organizations on the measures they need to take to implement the Convention and to observe some of the measures that they are currently involved in with regard to the implementation of article 12 of the Convention, concerning legal capacity. During the mission, I met with a number of government departments that deliver services to people with disabilities, including the ministries for health, education, justice, foreign affairs, labour, social affairs and the family, Members of Parliament, the national human rights institute, the ombudsman for psychiatry, the United Nations country team, as well as members of disabled persons' organizations in the Republic of Moldova. I also visited one of the psychiatric institutions in the capital, Chisinau.

17. During my mission to the Republic of Moldova, I received support from the country team and the human rights adviser, who plays an active role in the development of measures to implement the Convention, especially in addressing the challenges that the country confronts in implementing articles 12 and 19 of the Convention.

18. Immediately after my mission to the Republic of Moldova, I visited Croatia at the request of the office of the ombudsman on disability. I had the opportunity to meet the President of Croatia, the Speaker and Members of Parliament, government departments responsible for disability issues, and civil society organizations, and to visit a former institute for people with mental disabilities, as an example of deinstitutionalization. I shared with other States parties to the Convention my positive observations of the Ombudsman's office in Croatia and the process of deinstitutionalization of residential facilities in Zagreb.

19. At the end of May 2013, I attended the General Assembly of the European Disability Forum and, in addressing the meeting, highlighted some of the challenges in implementing the Convention and my observations of the successes. I also met with some of the delegates to brief them on developments in Africa, especially on the progress with the establishment of an African disability forum. The members of the European Disability Forum were supportive of the establishment of an African disability forum.

20. In June 2013, the Indonesian Disabled Peoples Association and the Australian Indonesian Partnership for Justice invited me to visit Indonesia. The purpose of my visit was to encourage the Government of Indonesia to implement the Convention and to review the situation of people with disabilities in Indonesia. During my visit I met with the local government officials of the city of Jogjakarta, officials of the ministries of education, social affairs and health and the country team. I also attended a national disabled peoples' organization consultation on a national action plan that would be aligned with the government action plan. In Jogjakarta I visited a community where households with disabled children were trained on how to evacuate in case of an emergency, in an area where earthquakes are common. On the last day of my mission I visited the national planning agency of Indonesia (Bappenas). The planning agency is an important sector of the Government of Indonesia and has the potential to mainstream disability in all government programmes. Indonesia is also another country where the country team is very active in the area of disability and development.

21. After my mission in Indonesia, I visited the office of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, for a meeting with the disability focal point and to discuss progress with regard to the implementation of the new regional policy framework, entitled "Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific". Follow-up meetings were held in November 2013 and looked at the monitoring mechanisms for the "Incheon Strategy".

22. The sixth Conference of States Parties to the Convention was held in July 2013. I was invited to join in the interactive dialogue with the United Nations system on 19 July 2013. I also participated in the side events organized by Disabled People's International and the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments.

23. In August 2013 I was invited by the office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Viet Nam to attend the meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on "Enhancing the role and participation of persons with disabilities in the ASEAN community". The Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability and the Ministry for Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam jointly organized the meeting. During my visit to Viet Nam I had extensive discussions with the Deputy Minister responsible for disability and he assured me that Viet Nam would ratify the Convention.

24. I also had a round-table discussion with the country team, with the facilitation of UNICEF Viet Nam. I discussed the role of agencies of the United Nations in mainstreaming disability in their country programmes with the participants.

25. In September 2013, I attended the African Regional Symposium on Leprosy and Human Rights in Addis Ababa. The Nippon Foundation of Japan sponsored and organized the meeting. My visit to Ethiopia gave me the opportunity to meet with the Head of the Commission for Labour and Social Affairs of the African Union and I briefed him on progress regarding the establishment of an African disability forum.

B. Mainstreaming disability in development

1. Member States

26. In my previous report ([E/CN.5/2013/10](#)) I mentioned the high-level meeting on disabilities and development and my support for the views expressed in the report of the Secretary-General ([A/67/211](#)) and the recommendations contained therein for the outcome document of the high-level meeting.

27. The high-level meeting was a success in that the outcome document presents the global disability community and Member States with an additional instrument that will guide the implementation of development policies and programmes that will lead to the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

28. The outcome document presents the United Nations and Member States with clear recommendations on the way forward, including the following:

(a) The United Nations system and Member States should stay engaged in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond. In the document, the international community was encouraged to seize every opportunity to include disability as a cross-cutting issue in the global development agenda, give due consideration to disability in the emerging post-2015 United Nations development agenda with a view to enhancing cooperation, and provide relevant technical assistance to Member States upon their request;

(b) The outcome document calls upon the Economic and Social Council to give due consideration to the issue of disability and development within the framework of United Nations operational activities, in accordance with relevant mandates, in order to enhance awareness and cooperation at all levels, including the participation, where appropriate, of United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks and institutions, and other relevant stakeholders, while ensuring coordination and avoiding possible overlapping;

(c) The high-level meeting requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, to include information on progress made in the implementation of the present outcome document in his existing and already mandated periodic reports on the issues of disability and development and to make recommendations, as appropriate, for concrete steps to implement the outcome document within the context of the development agenda beyond 2015;

(d) The outcome document also underlines the importance of closely consulting with and actively involving, as appropriate, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations as key actors and stakeholders in the elaborations, implementation, and monitoring of the emerging post-2015 development agenda;

(e) The General Assembly was requested to include, in its final review of the progress made towards the achievement of the Goals, information on steps taken to implement the outcome document, and the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session was requested to follow up on the status and progress made towards the development goals for persons with disabilities.

29. The outcome document and the Convention are powerful tools for advancing disability inclusion and mainstreaming it into development. They also offer guidance for the implementation of regional initiatives, including the decades for persons with disabilities in Africa and Asia and the Pacific that provide Member States in the regions with additional platforms to implement the development goals and to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and respect for those rights.

2. United Nations system

30. The outcome document of the high-level meeting made strong reference to the role and support, where appropriate, of the United Nations system, which has made tremendous strides in mainstreaming disability into development activities of its entities.

31. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, continued to take the lead within the United Nations system in promoting the mainstreaming of disability in development, including through co-chairing the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention. On 19 and 20 July 2013, the Department convened the first forum, entitled “Dialogue on post-2015 development frameworks and disability”. With support from the President of the General Assembly, the Forum was organized in collaboration with the Governments of Brazil, Kenya, Philippines and Thailand, the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development, Disabled People’s International, Leonard Cheshire Disability and Rehabilitation International.

32. Many other entities of the United Nations system were also taking initiatives to include the issue of disability in their work. Notably, in June 2013, the World Intellectual Property Organization facilitated the negotiation and adoption of the landmark Marrakesh treaty which will greatly facilitate the access to books for people all over the world who are blind, or visually impaired, or otherwise print-disabled. In August 2013, the World Tourism Organization adopted a recommendation on “Accessible Tourism for All”.

33. In October 2013, the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Member States, organized a panel discussion on disability and disaster

risk reduction in observance of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, which had a focus on persons with disabilities for the first time.

34. UNICEF has achieved remarkable progress in mainstreaming disability. It established a Disability Unit and appointed a Senior Disability Adviser, tasked with mainstreaming disability across UNICEF programmes and policies and building the capacity of UNICEF and that of its partners with a view to ensuring that UNICEF is an inclusive organization for all.

35. Owing to a restructuring process, the Disability Unit has greater opportunities to influence policies and programmes and greater access to the most senior management of UNICEF. The Unit provides technical support on disability inclusiveness to the regional and country offices of UNICEF and advice to national children's committees. One of its achievements was that the *The State of the World's Children* report for 2013 had a focus on children with disabilities.

36. In addition, a review of 112 annual reports from UNICEF country offices shows that 85 country offices already reported activities relating to disability issues.

37. There is a greater awareness of disability among country offices and as Special Rapporteur I often receive requests for information and advice. The number of such requests has steadily increased during the reporting period. For example, the country teams in the Republic of Moldova and Indonesia co-hosted my missions to their countries, and the country teams in Afghanistan and Somalia requested advice and closer working relations.

38. I have worked closely with regional initiatives to mainstream disability. For instance, during my visit to Bangkok, I met with the ESCAP director responsible for promoting and implementing the Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and the Incheon Strategy. I extended my support for incorporating some indicators that form part of the Incheon Strategy. ESCAP held an expert group meeting on 6 and 7 November in Bangkok, to discuss ways of generating effective data on the basis of the Incheon Strategy indicators.

39. I visited Viet Nam at the invitation of the country office for UNICEF and attended an ASEAN regional meeting on enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in the process of implementing the Convention. The Government of Viet Nam and the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability organized the meeting.

40. I worked with the African Union on the new Continental Plan of Action for the Second African Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

41. At a side event at the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, in February 2013, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) reported on the Arab Decade of Disabled Persons. The statement reported progress, with greater awareness in Arab society. It also called for information-sharing on developing monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress with regard to the implementation of the Arab Decade and the Convention.

3. Developments in Africa

42. Within the African Union the restructuring process for the new disability architecture is continuing. A disability adviser was appointed and will work within the Commission for Labour and Social Affairs of the African Union.

43. The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights met in October 2013 for its fifty-fourth session, in Banjul, during which the first commissioner with a disability, Lawrence Mute of Kenya, who is also a member of the working group on the rights of older persons and people with disabilities in Africa, took his oath of office. The working group, with the support of the secretariat for the African Decade on Persons with Disabilities, presented a zero draft of protocol on the rights of people with disabilities in Africa. The protocol forms an important part of the overall disability architecture, as it will provide the legal framework for the implementation of the Continental Plan of Action on Disability.

44. A group of 14 African disability activists attended the fifty-fourth session of the Commission and advocated the following proposals to the Commission: that the Commission include disability and all other human rights issues relating to diversity as cross-cutting issues in all reporting mechanisms as an affirmation of its commitment to the promotion and protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities in Africa; that the Commission and the working group on the rights of older persons and people with disabilities widely consult persons with disabilities in the drafting of an African disability protocol; that the Commission speedily draft and issue a resolution on the prevention of attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism so as to prohibit atrocities, including the ritual killings of albinos and the trafficking of their body parts; and that the Commission promote an end to all harmful practices aimed at people with disabilities, which are experienced as torture, cruel or inhuman and degrading treatments and punishments.

45. In September 2013, I attended the African Symposium on Leprosy and Human Rights in Addis Ababa, which was organized by the Nippon Foundation of Japan and was opened by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. The meeting focused on discrimination against people with leprosy and their families and my presentation focused on the way forward and the inclusion of anti-discriminatory measures in alignment with the Convention. Leprosy still affects many Africans and the stigma and discrimination is pervasive.

46. The African Disability Forum is making steady progress. It will have a meeting in December 2013 in Addis Ababa to finalize outstanding matters such as the location of the secretariat for the Forum and to decide on the staffing structure.

47. In May 2013 the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry held a strategy and capacity-building meeting in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting brought together members from North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. I attended an open dialogue session of the meeting. During the meeting, I also met with representatives of the Government of South Africa.

C. Fostering disability-inclusive international development

48. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2008/20, requested the Special Rapporteur on Disability to act as a catalyst to promote international and technical cooperation on disability issues, including by identifying strategic areas for the exchange and sharing of expertise, best practices, and knowledge and information.

49. During the reporting period I met and worked with ESCAP, in Bangkok and with members of the African Union Commission for Labour and Social Affairs. I

also listened to the statements of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. In my deliberations I have sought to learn as much as possible about the activities of each of those entities, in order to be able to share relevant information from their experience in my meetings with those organizations on an individual basis.

50. I noted that there is a pressing need for a platform or mechanism to facilitate the better exchange of information, experiences and knowledge on the successes and challenges encountered among the regional initiatives such as the decades in Africa, the Arab region and Asia and the Pacific. An opportunity may be created to share information and technical knowledge during the annual sessions of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention and of the Commission for Social Development. Closer cooperation among partners is possible, will enhance international cooperation among the different agencies involved and could benefit all by preventing duplication of efforts, finding new and innovative solutions to such common problems as data collection and the monitoring and evaluation of existing programmes, as well as in advising Member States on the best practices for implementing the Convention and regional instruments.

51. After the meeting of the Commission for Social Development in February 2013, I went to Washington, D.C., to meet with staff of the United States State Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The meetings focused on the need to provide support for inclusive development and support for regions in which Member States are experiencing humanitarian disasters and for those in conflict areas. I expressed my concern at the situation of people with disabilities in the conflict areas of the Arab region and the preparedness of host countries to meet the needs of refugees with disabilities.

52. During the high-level meeting on disability and development, I met the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lynne Featherstone. We discussed the continued support and commitment of the Government of the United Kingdom for disability issues and the need for inclusive development across the programmes of the Department for International Development.

D. Promoting awareness-raising and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Standard Rules and other instruments

53. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 2008/20 and 2011/27, requested the Special Rapporteur on Disability to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules, the World Programme of Action and other disability-related instruments.

54. I have had a number of opportunities to raise awareness and to encourage the implementation of the Convention. In April 2013, during my missions to the Republic of Moldova and Croatia, I engaged with the government and civil society and advised the country teams on effective ways to promote the implementation of the Convention.

55. In June 2013 I visited Indonesia at the request of a consortium of disabled peoples' organizations, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice. I participated with such organizations in a meeting that developed a national plan of action for the implementation of the Convention in Indonesia that will be aligned to the national plan of action of the Government of Indonesia.

56. I visited Washington, D.C., in February 2013 and took the opportunity to raise the matter of the ratification of the Convention with the officials of the State Department. Although the United States Congress turned down the first request for ratification, another attempt will be made to ratify the Convention.

57. In August 2013, I visited Viet Nam at the invitation of UNICEF and the Government of Viet Nam. I met with the Deputy Minister responsible for disability affairs to request the ratification of the Convention by the Government and I was assured that Viet Nam would ratify it, very likely in 2014.

E. Collaborating with civil society

58. As the Special Rapporteur, I always work closely with civil society organizations, especially during my missions to Member States. For instance, when I attended the meeting in Viet Nam in August 2013, I encouraged the participation of civil society in the discourses and development regarding the community of ASEAN. I took the opportunity to brief officials from different countries of ASEAN on the implementation of article 33 of the Convention (on national implementation and monitoring) and its relevance for the participation of persons with disabilities in the monitoring process.

F. Vulnerable groups within the disability community

59. I am pleased to note a new Pan-African organization developing in Africa that represents the voice and interest of persons with albinism. Persons with albinism experience extreme discrimination and grave violations of their human rights, including mutilation, violence and killings. The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 13 June 2013 (Human Rights Council resolution [23/13](#)), which for the first time at an international level, recognized and addressed the attacks and discrimination people with albinism face in many countries. The Council urged Member States to take all measures necessary to ensure the effective protection of persons with albinism.

60. In September 2013, I attended the Symposium on Leprosy and Human Rights in Addis Ababa. I learned with concern of the situation regarding discrimination, on the basis of archaic beliefs, that people with leprosy experience in some African countries. In many societies, persons with leprosy still face severe isolation that results in their complete separation from mainstream society. More awareness needs to be raised about the discrimination experienced by people with leprosy, so that this treatable condition can be eradicated.

61. I have not had an opportunity to visit any of the conflict areas in the Middle East but I am concerned that relief agencies may not be adequately prepared to assist the large number of refugees with disabilities.

62. I am also concerned by the reports of the re-emergence of the polio virus in parts of Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

IV. Observations and conclusions

63. The number of ratifications of the Convention is the most encouraging indicator of the commitment of Member States to the development and rights of people with disabilities. Full and effective implementation of the Convention is even more important and calls for strong political will, specific commitments and concrete actions in terms of allocating resources, building capacities to remove barriers and create enabling conditions to ensure that all persons with disabilities have opportunities to participate in society and development and enjoy the fruits of development on an equal basis with others.

64. The high-level meeting on development and disability and the adoption of its outcome document was a success that embodies the renewed commitment by world leaders to the advancement of persons with disabilities. The meeting and its outcome, however, is not the end in itself but the start of a journey of world leaders delivering on their commitments. Concrete actions and measures must be in place to implement the outcome document and other commitments and instruments in order to advance the disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond, internationally and nationally.

65. A number of United Nations agencies are making great strides in including and mainstreaming disability in their work. UNICEF is an example of how mainstreaming disability can achieve results at the headquarters and country levels. The same can and shall be done in other United Nations entities by designating disability focal points for the necessary arrangements.

66. At the global level, there is consistent progress in advancing the cause of persons with disabilities. The challenge is to replicate such progress at the national level, and this will require the support of a cross section of governmental agencies and all major stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to work closely with government to implement and deliver the promises made in the high-level meeting and the Convention.

V. Recommendations

67. I wish to make the following recommendations:

(a) **The United Nations focal point for disability should take the initiative, with the support of other United Nations entities, including regional commissions, to establish and improve a mechanism that would better facilitate the sharing of information and experiences among the regional decades for persons with disabilities. Members of civil society organizations could be invited to contribute where appropriate. For this, I would like to offer my full support;**

(b) **The outcome document of the high-level meeting on development and disability should be distributed widely among Member States and civil society;**

(c) **Member States should contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability and multi-donor trust fund of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;**

(d) **Greater awareness should be raised about the conditions of refugees with disabilities in conflict areas and their needs should be taken into account when interventions are planned and made.**

VI. Activities planned from November 2013 to October 2014

68. Within my mandate to monitor the situation regarding the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, raise the awareness about the Convention and promote international cooperation, one of my focuses will continue to be on Africa. For this reason, I plan to visit Ethiopia, Zambia and Angola in conjunction with the next meeting of the working group on the rights of older persons and people with disabilities in Africa, in connection with the protocol on the rights of people with disabilities in Africa.

69. I will continue to promote the development of the African Disability Forum. As a catalyst for the development of the Forum, I will encourage the development of a sound relationship between the Forum and other major international and regional civil society structures.

70. I visited El Salvador in November 2013 and will pay more attention to the situation of persons with disabilities in Latin America.

71. I will attend the inclusive education meeting organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to be held in Madrid in December 2013 and the seminar of the Human Rights Council on the right to education in March 2014.

72. I will go on missions to Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka in 2014.
