



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

12 May 2016

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/68/3 and A/RES/69/142, which request the President of the General Assembly to organise a panel discussion to follow up on the status of and progress made towards the realization of the development goals for persons with disabilities in relation to the follow-up to the outcome of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, and to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In order to act upon this mandate, I am planning to hold a panel discussion on the abovementioned theme from 3-6 pm on 13 June 2016, in Conference Room 4 at the UN Headquarters in New York. I herewith attach a preliminary Concept Note and draft Programme for the panel discussion.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York

## **Draft Concept Note and Programme**

### **Panel Discussion organized by the President of the UN General Assembly**

**13 June 2016, 3.00 – 6.00pm, CR4, UN Headquarters**

#### ***Mandate***

The President of the United Nations General Assembly will organise, in accordance with A/RES/68/3 and A/RES/69/142, “a panel discussion to follow up on the status of and progress made towards the realization of the development goals for persons with disabilities in relation to the follow-up to the outcome of the high-level meeting on disability and development and to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”.

#### ***Background***

The commitment of the international community to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and in the development process is deeply rooted in the United Nations Charter<sup>1</sup> and other international norms and standards relating to human rights and development. The global framework to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in development has been strengthened significantly over the past three decades with the adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>2</sup> (CRPD) in 2006, as well as earlier frameworks. In this context, the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development (HLMDD), at the level of Heads of State and Government, was convened in September 2013, under the theme “The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond”<sup>3</sup> to provide further guidance and to strengthen efforts of the international community to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development.<sup>4</sup> Based on this commitment, a number of efforts have since been made to include persons with disabilities in global development frameworks.

This year, 2016, marks the first year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>5</sup> The 2030 Agenda includes a number of targets for persons with disabilities, including in the areas of education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs. It also incorporates disability as a crosscutting issue to be addressed across all development goals. The 2030 Agenda reflects the commitment of the international community to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. The new global agenda indicates that in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals,

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/61/106

<sup>3</sup> A/RES/66/124

<sup>4</sup> A/RES/66/124, paras. 2 and 4

<sup>5</sup> A/RES/70/1

persons with disabilities must be included in the operationalization of these commitments. Nonetheless, gaps and challenges persist in terms of translating international commitments and development policies to practice on the ground.

***Panel Discussion***

The panel discussion will be interactive and involve different stakeholders, including UN representatives, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. A summary of the discussions will be documented by the United Nations Secretariat and will be reflected in the Report of the Secretary-General to the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly.

## *Programme*

**15.00 – 15.10**

**Opening by President of the General Assembly**

**15.10 – 16.10**

**Part 1: Review of existing institutional frameworks to mainstream the rights-based approach to disability and advance the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities in development efforts at international, national and local levels**

This segment will involve presentations from panel speakers who will draw on experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of global development frameworks that are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Moderator: Ms. Rangita De Silva, Associate Dean and Professor, University of Pennsylvania Law School (tbc)

Panellists:

- Mr. Lenin Moreno, UN Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility (tbc)
- H.E. Ambassador Oh Joon, in capacity as President of Conference of States parties to the CRPD (tbc)
- Civil Society Representative
- Private sector Representative

Q&A from the floor

The aims of this segment are to:

1. Review the progress made towards including persons with disabilities in development in relation to the Outcome Document of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development (HLMDD), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

*Rationale:*

*The HLMDD outlined a number of thematic priority areas for urgent action by Member States, including areas, such as of poverty reduction, health, education, employment, social protection, accessibility, humanitarian assistance, data & statistics, international development and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Panel discussion provides an opportunity to review progress and share good practices and experiences in achieving global development goals for persons with disabilities at national regional and international levels.*

2. Review existing institutional frameworks to mainstream a rights-based approach to disability and advance the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities in development efforts at national and local levels.

*Rationale:*

*Much progress has been made for including persons with disabilities in*

*development policies, processes and mechanisms. Nonetheless, concerns around the lack of integration and 'siloed' approaches to persons with disabilities persist. Effective mainstreaming of the rights-based approach to disability relies on strong institutional frameworks, mechanisms and capacity both within the United Nations system and in government agencies at the national and local levels. Similarly, although the role of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes has gained its ground in many parts of the world, there is an urgent need for engaging persons with disabilities as not only beneficiaries but agents of transformative change in society. The Panel discussion will provide an opportunity to review existing institutional mechanisms to further mainstream disability issues and fully engage persons with disabilities as agents of change in development efforts.*

**16.10 – 16.15**

**Intermission transition video: tbc**

**16.15 – 17.50**

**Part 2: Discussion on the way forward for operationalization and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under the guidance of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

This segment will involve an interactive panel discussion, wherein panel members will respond to a series of questions posed by the moderator and will draw on their experiences to convey recommendations for future action. This segment will be followed by an interactive discussion.

Moderator: Mr. Michael Stein, Professor, Harvard University (tbc)

Panellists:

- Ms. Catalina Devandas, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (tbc)
- Civil Society Representative
- Private sector

Q&A from the floor

The aims of this segment are to:

1. Discuss the way forward in terms of operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development using the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a guide, both as a human rights instrument and as a development tool, according to the specific international obligations of Member States.

*Rationale:*

*The unanimous adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ten years ago set a new era on the realization of the human rights of persons with disabilities. As a way forward to operationalize the 2030 Agenda, inclusive of persons with disabilities, there is an urgent need to develop/strengthen institutions, mechanisms and processes to advance evidence-*

*based policy making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. A number of barriers against the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and development, such as those existing in public policy and in private practice, also need to be removed to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The lack of data and statistics on persons with disabilities that is reliable and internationally comparable is one such challenge that needs to be addressed to inform the global and national policies. The discussion will draw on examples of good practices and identify resources, mechanisms and forward-looking strategies to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda.*

Q&A from the floor

**17.50 – 18.00**

**Closing**