



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 July 2019

Excellency,

It is my honour to enclose herewith, an informal summary of the High-Level Luncheon (HLL) on Disability-Inclusive Development, held on the margins of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on 12 June 2019.

I am equally pleased to share with you, as annex to the summary, the Recommendations of the Steering Committee on Accessibility. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Co-Chairs of the Committee H.E. Mr. Walton Alfonso Webson, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda and H.E. Mr. Park Chull-Joo, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea.

Further, I would like to thank the members of the Steering Committee, as well as the Group of Friends on Disability, whose support has been crucial for progress on disability-inclusive development.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for invaluable support to my priority to empower persons with disabilities.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. F. Espinosa Garcés', written in a cursive style.

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



## **The High-Level Luncheon on Disability-Inclusive Development**

**(12 June 2019, UNHQ)**

### **Informal Summary**

#### Background

The High-level Luncheon (HLL) on Disability-Inclusive Development, held during the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), was the signature event under the priority for Persons with Disabilities of H.E. Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, President of the United Nations General Assembly (PGA), for the 73rd Session. The luncheon, which took advantage of the presence of persons with disabilities and relevant stakeholders from all over the world at UN Headquarters, featured briefings on the work of the Steering Committee on Accessibility (SCA) at the United Nations she launched in 2018 and the United Nations Disability-Inclusive Strategy (UNDIS) launched by the Secretary-General. The luncheon provided an opportunity to promote the President's Campaign for Universal Ratification of CRPD, with a new Member State Kyrgyzstan ratifying the Convention, and to review the implementation of CRPD & the 2030 Agenda for Persons with Disabilities with a view to the forthcoming High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

#### Summary

The High-Level Luncheon, which was held on 12 June 2019, consisted of an opening segment, keynote speech and interactive segment. It attracted active participation of more than 150 representatives from heads of delegations for the Conference of State Parties to CRPD, SCA Members including UN Secretariat departments, the United Nations special mechanism and civil society representatives.

In her opening remarks, PGA underscored that more than one billion people – almost one in every seven of the world population – had some form of disability, with 80% living in developing countries. Persons living with disabilities continued to face multiple barriers to enjoying their human rights, which run counter to the promise made in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to leave no one behind. PGA presented her work under the Priority to empower persons with disabilities all during her tenure, including advancing the mainstreaming of disability across the work of the United Nations; launching the Steering Committee on Accessibility at the United Nations; campaigning for universal ratification of CRPD; working closely with the Group of

Friends on disability and other stakeholders to ensure that persons with disabilities were represented at high-level events of the General Assembly; and meeting local advocates in the country visits, among others. She called for furthering disability-inclusive development in the crucial year of 2019.

H.E. Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, President-elect of the General Assembly of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, echoed the theme of Disability-Inclusive Development, saluted PGA for her achievements to empower persons with disabilities and congratulated the UNSG for UNDIS. He commended the work of SCA and vowed to carry on the great initiative on disability inclusive development.

H.E. Park Chull-Joo, Deputy Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, presented the work and recommendations of the SCA on behalf the Committee's other Co-Chair, H.E. Walton Alfonso Webson, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, and the Committee's members – representatives from states, the Secretariat and civil society. The SCA made 14 recommendations ranging from physical accessibility, accessibility to conferences and meetings, accessibility to information and communications, and cross-cutting recommendations (attached as Annex).

Ms. Ana María Menéndez, Under-Secretary-General Menendez, on behalf of the Secretary-General, presented the newly launched United Nations Disability-Inclusive Strategy (UNDIS). The UNDIS represented a comprehensive strategy for ensuring UN system disability-inclusiveness. Ms. Catalina Devandas Aguilar, the Human rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, introduced the development of the UNDIS and called for its full implementation within the UN system.

Member states commended the work of PGA as well as the launch of UNDIS. H.E. Ms. Gabriela Michetti, Vice President of Argentina, addressed the luncheon as the guest of honor. **She commended PGA for her work under the Priority, especially the establishment of the SCA. And she welcomed UNDIS, emphasized that it was vital to carry out above processes in a holistic approach under the 3 pillars of UN: development, human rights, peace and security.**

Mr. Ulugbek Kochkorov, Minister of Labor and Social Development, Kyrgyzstan described the experience of ratifying the CRPD. Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Disability Issues, New Zealand and Mr. Jia Yong, Vice President of China Disabled Persons' Federation, Special Envoy of the President of Rehabilitation International, presented their national experiences respectively.

Ms. Ana Lucia Arellano, Chair of the International Disability Alliance, spoke on behalf of the civil society organizations. Ms. Daniela Bas, Division Director for Inclusive Development, UN DESA moderated the event.

## Annex

### Recommendations of the Steering Committee on Accessibility

#### *Annex*

### **Recommendations of the Steering Committee on Accessibility**

#### Physical Accessibility

- **(Ensure accessible seating)** Accessible seating arrangements upon request should be provided in order to enable delegates and representatives with disabilities to participate in conferences and meetings without hindrance. As such, SCA will be proposing language on accessible seating to be reflected in a resolution on the Revitalization of the Work of GA.
- **(Expand Accessibility Centres)** Feasibility of establishing accessibility centres in other UN offices (UNOG, UNOV, UNON) and regional commissions need to be explored. Experience and lessons learned from running Accessibility Centre at UNHQ and UNESCAP will provide a good foundation. The Secretariat should provide multi-year plan for further consideration of the Member States.
- **(Undertake regular accessibility reviews of UNHQ)** To ensure a more systematic and comprehensive approach to physical accessibility, regular accessibility reviews and reporting can be conducted to identify existing barriers and needs for upgrades.
- **(Explore new technology)** Wayfinding technology with full accessibility features, which is undergoing proof of concept by the Secretariat, can be explored as a tool to enhance user experience and accessibility at UNHQ. Through universal design, Wayfinder can benefit not only persons with disabilities but all.

#### Accessibility to conferences and meetings

- **(Designate disability focal points/coordinators for conferences and meetings)** Disability focal points/coordinators need to be designated for conferences and meetings to communicate with participants with disabilities and ensure their accessibility.
- **(Incorporate disability in the registration process)** Registration forms should include clauses to identify accessibility needs in advance and plan the conference and meetings accordingly. Online registration channels including e-deleGATE should be upgraded to reflect this.

- **(Improve logistics notes)** Logistics notes of all UN conferences and meetings to include information on accessibility of the venue, accessibility services available and contact information of disability focal points/coordinators for the conference or meeting.
- **(Explore new technology)** Cost-effective ways to improve current conference services such as captioning can be explored by using new technology such as artificial intelligence.

#### Accessibility to information and communications

- **(Upgrade Guidelines and toolkits for web accessibility)** Guidelines for web accessibility need to be upgraded to reflect at least Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.0. At the same time, a detailed checklist and tool-kits should be provided to staff to ensure compliance.
- **(Improve accessibility of UN document system)** While continuing to upgrade document system such as UNODS and library to be fully accessible, efforts towards enhancing accessibility of document through easy read and plain language need to be expanded.

#### Cross-cutting recommendations

- **(Ensure participation of persons with disabilities)** Delegates, representatives, visitors with disabilities, organizations of persons with disabilities and CSOs should be fully engaged in designing, implementing and reviewing process. In particular, more proactive efforts to seek feedback from conference (e.g. post conference accessibility survey) are needed.
- **(Accessibility training for staff)** Conduct staff training to sensitize and provide appropriate guidance on accessibility. Security officers should be included, and various formats of training (workshops, webinars, guidelines, etc.) and collaboration with external partners (e.g. NYC MOPD) need to be explored.
- **(JPO)** As shortage of full-time staff dedicated to accessibility and disability is identified as challenge by the Secretariat, Member States can consider sending JPO tasked to support the Secretariat and UN entities for disability inclusion as a short-term measure. Relevant departments of the Secretariat should provide job description of JPO for further consideration of the Member States.