

## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in response to call for inputs to the thematic review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2023

#### Introduction

The theme of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels.” As highlighted in the Committee’s contribution to the 2022 HLPF, persons with disabilities have been and continue to be disproportionately impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and largely excluded from government response and recovery policies. The 2030 Agenda calls on the international community to commit to “leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first”. It is unequivocally anchored in human rights and is meant to guide States in implementing national, regional and international development policies and strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>1</sup>

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) sets out the actions required to implement and uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. The CRPD calls for a paradigm shift from previous understandings of disability to a human rights model of disability, under which it is recognized that disability is a social construct, that impairment is a valued aspect of human diversity and dignity and that impairment must not be taken as a legitimate ground for the denial or restriction of human rights. Persons with disabilities are individuals with multidimensional layers of identities, statuses and life circumstances. The human rights model acknowledges disability as one of these many layers of identity, meaning that laws and policies must take the diversity of persons with disabilities into account. The CRPD also highlights the concern for those whose age, ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic position, or other aspects of their identity make them vulnerable to intersectional discrimination. This form of discrimination reflects the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together to the extent that they become inseparable.<sup>2</sup>

The CRPD not only enumerates the human rights of persons with disabilities, it also serves as a development tool for their implementation into policies and practices. The CRPD serves as a guide for the implementation of the SDGs by providing a human-rights perspective to the inclusion of persons with disabilities, in the pursuit to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first.<sup>3</sup>

#### Disability Inclusive Development

In line with Art. 4(3) of the CRPD, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are to be closely consulted with and actively involved in the development,

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR, *SDG-CRPD Resource Package Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals* (2020 United Nations), p. 5. (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/disabilities/sdg-crpd-resource-package>); OHCHR, *About the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/sdgs/about-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>)

<sup>2</sup> See generally, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, general comment No. 3 (2016), para. 4 (c).

<sup>3</sup> OHCHR, *Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals* (2020 United Nations), p. 5. (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/disabilities/sdg-crpd-resource-package>)

implementation and monitoring of all aspects of COVID-19 recovery policies and the SDGs. Article 33 establishes the requirement for designated focal points within government for national implementation and monitoring of the CRPD. However, despite a plethora of guidance documents on disability inclusive development, the exclusion of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations from participation in all stages of the development process is pervasive.

With a view to advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 recovery process, and the mutual reinforcement of the SDGs and the CRPD, the Committee draws the attention of the HLPF 2023 to the *SDG-CRPD Resource Package*, and the UN Secretary-General's *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*.<sup>4</sup>

The SDG-CRPD Resource Package provides policymaking and monitoring support to assist governments to identify action points across the SDGs, including in areas specific to the SDGs under review in 2023, with action points linked to the relevant CRPD Indicators. The Secretary-General's Policy Brief outlines key actions and recommendations to make the COVID-19 response and recovery inclusive of persons with disabilities, and identifies the foundations for a disability-inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery—non-discrimination, intersectionality, accessibility, participation, accountability, data disaggregation. It will be through the application of these resources to policy development, implementation and monitoring that States Parties will promote the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

### **SDGs under in-depth review**

The Committee recognises the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the SDGs and that inclusive development is critical to achieving them all. We draw upon the SDG-CRPD Resource Package and the Secretary-General's Policy Brief to highlight three of the SDGs under in-depth review.

Goal 6 clean water and sanitation—access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and services can be improved for persons with disabilities through a range of measures that have inclusion built into them from the beginning. Removing barriers experienced by persons with disabilities—stigma and discrimination, physical design barriers, lack of budget allocation, lack of disability related data to inform programs and other barriers—will promote inclusive WASH facilities that benefit persons with disabilities and the whole of the community.<sup>5</sup>

Goal 11, concerned with sustainable cities and communities, highlights how cities and human settlements are designed and built can impede or enable the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Many persons with disabilities experience a substantial lack of accessibility to the built environment, such as housing, public buildings, transportation, and information and communications. This lack of accessibility contributes greatly to the exclusion, marginalisation and poverty of persons with disabilities. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from town planning processes has long lasting negative effects. The cost of retrofitting for accessibility is inefficient and possibly unfeasible, resulting in multiple

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<sup>4</sup> OHCHR, SDG-CRPD Resource Package *Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals*; UN Secretary-General, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19* (May 2020).

<sup>5</sup> OHCHR, SDG-CRPD Resource Package *Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals* (2020 United Nations), p. 6-7. (<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/thematic-brief-clean-water.pdf>); Secretary-General, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19* (May 2020), p. 5.

negative impacts on the life of persons with disabilities, including social and economic inclusion.<sup>6</sup>

Crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda is Goal 17—Partnerships. International cooperation—South-South, North-South, Triangular co-operation or other forms—is an important source of financial and technical support for both the implementation of the SDGs and the CRPD. Article 32 of the CRPD calls for all relevant international cooperation programmes to be inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities and not be allocated to programs and measures that do not adhere to the CRPD. Goal 17.18 is also concerned with data and the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by disability, gender, age, race, geographic location and other relevant characteristics. Article 31 of the CRPD—statistics and data collection—calls upon States Parties to collect statistical and research data to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the CRPD. Article 31.2 acknowledges that the disaggregation of data is essential for the development of disability inclusive development and the identification of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities in exercising their rights.

## **Conclusion**

The CRPD Committee would like reinforce the messages provided in its contribution to the 2022 HLPF and stress the following key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2023 HLPF:

1. Ensure that all actions undertaken for the SDGs are inclusive of persons with disabilities and guided by the CRPD, including through recourse to the SDG-CRPD Resource Package and the Secretary-General’s Policy Brief by States Parties.
2. Encourage effective international cooperation in support of national efforts to advance the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the purposes and objectives of the CRPD, including by strengthening partnerships with relevant international and regional organizations, organisations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organisations, the private sector, private philanthropy, and others to co-design inclusive, flexible, cost-effective and innovative solutions for realising the SDGs for persons with disabilities.
3. Encourage national efforts to collect high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by disability, and other relevant characteristics to mitigate the disproportionate impact that persons with disabilities have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure disability inclusive recovery programs, and to achieve 2030 Agenda.

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<sup>6</sup> OHCHR, SDG-CRPD Resource Package, *Policy Guidelines for Sustainable Cities and Communities*, p. 7. (<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Disability/SDG-CRPD-Resource/policy-guideline-sustainable-cities.pdf>); Secretary-General, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19* (May 2020), p. 2–3.