

Disability Inclusive Development in UNDP



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Summary

03 December 2018



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UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

United Nations Development Programme

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Yerevan, Koryun street - Human Rights Day Celebration in Armenia.

Zaruhi Batoyan, chief editor of "Sunflower" magazine, protests for equal opportunities and accessibility.

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Introduction

Persons with disabilities are one of the largest minority groups in the world, estimated to represent over 15 per cent (approximately 1.5 billion people) of the world's population. 3 out of 5 persons with disabilities are women and disability is more common among children and adults who are poor¹. 80 percent of persons with disabilities live in UNDP programme countries.

Persons with disabilities face challenges to fully participate in society which is further heightened by discriminatory social attitudes – this culminates in marginalization and significant barriers to their inclusion and participation in society and in development. The extent of inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities in all areas of development is often the result of shortcomings in the structural, social, political and cultural environments in which they reside, including lack of accessibility of physical and virtual environments; institutional and attitudinal barriers; exclusion; and unequal opportunities².

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relies on the involvement and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all development efforts². As a universal call to action, the 17 SDGs are interconnected and require governments to take a holistic approach to development. The pledge to leave no one behind in our development efforts and reach the furthest behind first is fundamental to supporting persons with disabilities.

Persons with Disabilities and UNDP

Persons with disabilities are often left out of development processes and development progress. UNDP is committed to an inclusive approach to sustainable human development which benefits all and ensures that no one is left behind. UNDP has a strong and institutional commitment to mainstream human rights including the rights of persons with disabilities in our work, through the human rights-based approach to our development programming. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in our work is also instrumental to the achievement of human development and the SDGs.

UNDP recognizes the centrality of human rights to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and ensuring a fair distribution of development opportunities and benefits. UNDP is committed to supporting universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. UNDP's Strategic Plan, 2018 - 2021, aims to support countries in addressing development challenges and recognizes that a set of core development needs underpin those challenges including the need to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and to ensure the protection of human rights³.

¹ WHO and World Bank, [World Report on Disability](#), 2011.

² Ibid

³ UNDP, [Strategic Plan 2018-2021](#), 17 October 2017, para 22.

“At the UN Development Programme, the organization which I head, we are absolutely committed to play our part. Reflecting this, our new Strategic Plan commits us to ensure that disability is more deeply embedded in all our work, and by the end of the Plan’s duration, I am committed to ensure that UNDP will have made tangible progress in this regard.

At UNDP we firmly believe that to achieve progress, the issue of disabilities cannot be approached as a standalone issue, but needs to be promoted across all policies and programmes.”

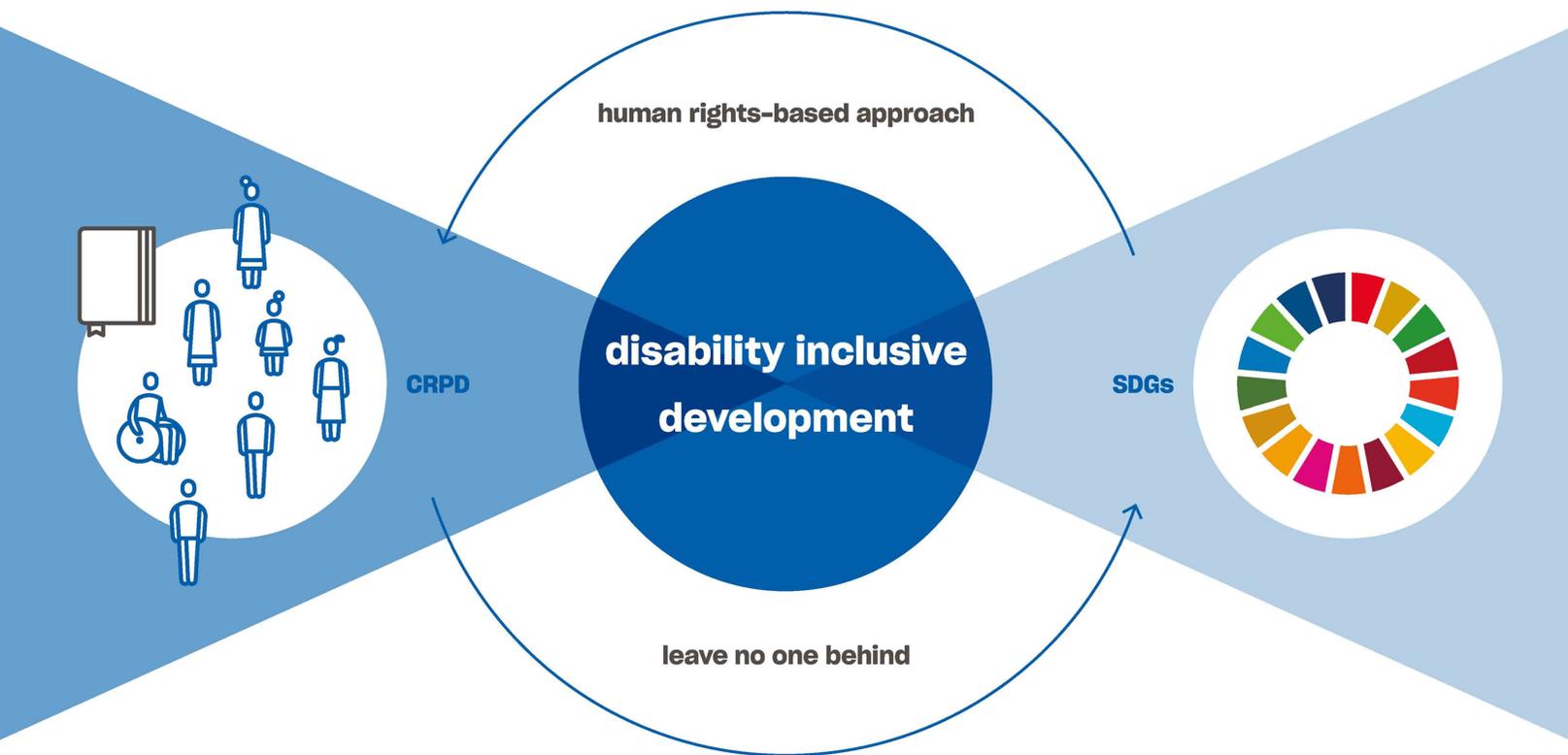
Achim Steiner, Administrator of UNDP
Remarks at the Global Disability Summit, 12 July 2018

In 2015 UNDP adopted Social and Environmental Standards (SES)⁴ which apply to all UNDP programmes and projects and include an overarching principle in UNDP’s work to apply a human rights-based approach to our development programming. That means that development programmes and policies should further the realization of all human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments.

As the development branch of the UN system, UNDP supports member states as they seek to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and fulfil their human rights obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); we do so through a human rights-based approach to our programming. The CRPD and the SDGs are the twin frameworks which are mutually reinforcing and within which UNDP supports disability inclusive development.

SDGs reflect the pledge to leave no one behind in our development efforts and to reach the furthest behind first. People get left behind when they lack the choices and opportunities to participate in and benefit from development progress. Those who experience disadvantage, who cannot realize their rights and have limitations to their choices and opportunities relative to others in society are at risk of being left behind. Unfortunately, as the world’s largest minority group, persons with disabilities have been consistently left behind in development gains and in their participation in development processes. Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations should therefore be actively engaged in our efforts to support the SDGs, not only as a group that has been consistently left behind, but also as invaluable partners in our efforts towards inclusion.

⁴ UNDP, [Social and Environmental Standards 2015](#).

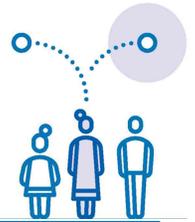


The CRPD was adopted by the General Assembly in 2006 and entered into force in 2008. It is the first core human rights treaty of the 21st century and is legally binding to the Member States who are state parties (currently 177 Member States). Together with the Optional Protocol of the CRPD which has 92 Member States as state parties it forms the normative framework to address the rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure that they are included in all development efforts.

The overarching goal of the CRPD is to ensure equality and non-discrimination in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. The CRPD outlines that persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual and sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Disability is understood as an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers in society. This means the focus should be not only on the existence of an impairment but on how we can remove barriers to participation and ensure people with disabilities can be independent and equal actors in society. Importantly, the CRPD therefore marks a distinct shift away from the medical and charity model approach to the social and human rights-based model of disability inclusive development.

8 general principles across the CRPD

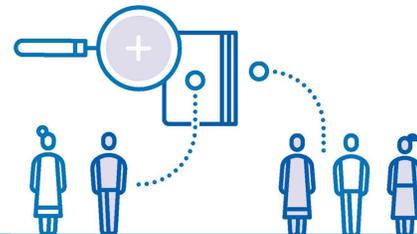
1 Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons



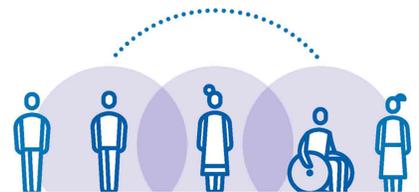
2 Non-discrimination



3 Full and effective participation and inclusion in society



4 Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity



5 Equality of opportunity



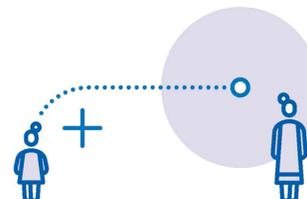
6 Accessibility



7 Equality between men and women



8 Respecting the evolving capacities of children with disabilities



Tactile ballots allowed blind and visually impaired citizens to participate in elections in Sierra Leone © UNDP Sierra Leone



Mainstreamed and targeted support

UNDP adopts a twin-track approach of mainstreaming and providing targeted support in our work to support inclusion of persons with disabilities. Mainstreaming support includes initiatives where UNDP is working broadly to support inclusion of persons with disabilities, in addition to other groups, as one important element or perspective within a broader initiative. Targeted support includes initiatives where UNDP is working primarily to support inclusion of persons with disabilities in a specific initiative, policy or programme.

UNDP programmatic support



National strategies: advancing the CRPD and addressing stigma and discrimination

UNDP is supporting whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches to support disability inclusion by supporting comprehensive national strategies to implement the CRPD and working to combat the attitudinal barriers including stigma and discrimination that persons with disabilities face in societies. UNDP has supported ratification of the CRPD through a variety of measures including development of action plans toward ratification, legislative reviews to align frameworks with CRPD requirements, research on policy options and cost implications, participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in policy dialogues and decision making processes, capacity building for civil servants and civil society on disability rights, and campaigns to address attitudinal barriers to disability. UNDP has been working with governments, the private sector, general populations and civil society to promote inclusive societies and specifically to combat stigma, prevalent stereotypes and bias.

SDGs



CRPD



Human rights and access to justice

UNDP works to strengthen national human rights systems including the capacities of rights-holders to meet their obligations and duty-bearers to claim their rights. Strengthening engagement with the international human rights machinery including the Treaty Bodies and the Universal Periodic Review process (UPR) is a useful entry point for UNDP to support disability inclusion. UNDP supports National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) globally. NHRIs can play an important role in advancing disability rights including: managing complaints; supporting rights-based reviews of legislation and enhancing engagement of persons with disabilities and OPDs to help identify the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing justice. UNDP is working in many countries, supporting the establishment of legislative frameworks on legal aid and building the capacity of legal aid providers.

SDGs



CRPD



Social protection

UNDP has long assisted governments to design, improve and implement social protection strategies, facilitating policy dialogues, generating evidence, convening partners and stakeholders. An important aim of UNDP is to enable the design and implementation of social protection systems that address social exclusion - including through measures and reforms that change disempowering and discriminatory norms and practices and enable the most marginalized to register, access and benefit. UNDP has also played an important part in extending social protection programmes, fostering innovation and south-south and triangular cooperation and working closely with marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities, to ensure that their voices are represented, and their needs addressed.



SDGs



CRPD



Jobs & livelihoods

UNDP is supporting governments in their efforts to create and sustain inclusive jobs and livelihoods for all people, including persons with disabilities and to ensure that there are opportunities for decent remunerated work. This includes national efforts to improve labor inclusion, supporting inclusive vocational training and skills development and economic empowerment programmes and engagement with the private sector to increase access to job opportunities.

SDGs



CRPD



Disaster risk reduction and crisis prevention, response and recovery

UNDP approaches recovery, be it from a conflict or a disaster, as an opportunity to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the CRPD. UNDP recovery programmes and plans include strategies to address the needs of people living with disabilities, disaggregated by specific needs of women and children with disabilities. UNDP's disaster risk reduction and recovery efforts aim to risk-inform development in line with the goals and targets of the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Persons with disabilities and their organizations are critical in the assessment of disaster risk and in designing and implementing risk reduction measures tailored to their specific requirements, taking into consideration, inter alia, the principles of universal design.

SDGs



CRPD



Environment and climate change

UNDP supports countries to address issues of environmental degradation and improve the adaptive capacity of communities and reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and its variability through various global and national programmes. These include the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP), which having a special focus on social inclusion, is in a unique position to promote and build capacity for disability-inclusive development and support effective resilience projects. UNDP's work in this area includes improving the accessibility for people with disabilities to services and resources through environmentally friendly infrastructure/transport and disability inclusive climate-resilient livelihoods and green jobs.

SDGs



CRPD



HIV, health and development

UNDP's work on HIV, health and development focuses on reducing inequalities and social exclusion that drive HIV and poor health, promoting effective and inclusive governance for health, and building resilient and sustainable systems for health. This includes addressing the increased HIV and health risks of people with disabilities, as well as the needs of persons with disabilities to access justice and non-discriminatory healthcare services. UNDP provides policy advice, technical support and capacity development to promote evidence and rights-based approaches to health and development that do not stigmatize persons with disabilities and that leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first.

SDGs



CRPD



Achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls

Disability, gender inequality and discrimination are closely interlinked and often result in the most severe forms of marginalization and exclusion. UNDP programming interventions in different areas must address both the inter-sectional or multiple forms of discrimination and barriers that women and girls with disabilities may face as well as other gender-related issues. Entry points for UNDP which are particularly relevant for women and girls with disabilities include country-led measures to accelerate the advancement of gender equality including specific measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), strengthening capacities to raise awareness on and undertake legal, policy and institutional reforms for women empowerment and leadership and women participation ensured in crisis prevention and recover planning and action.



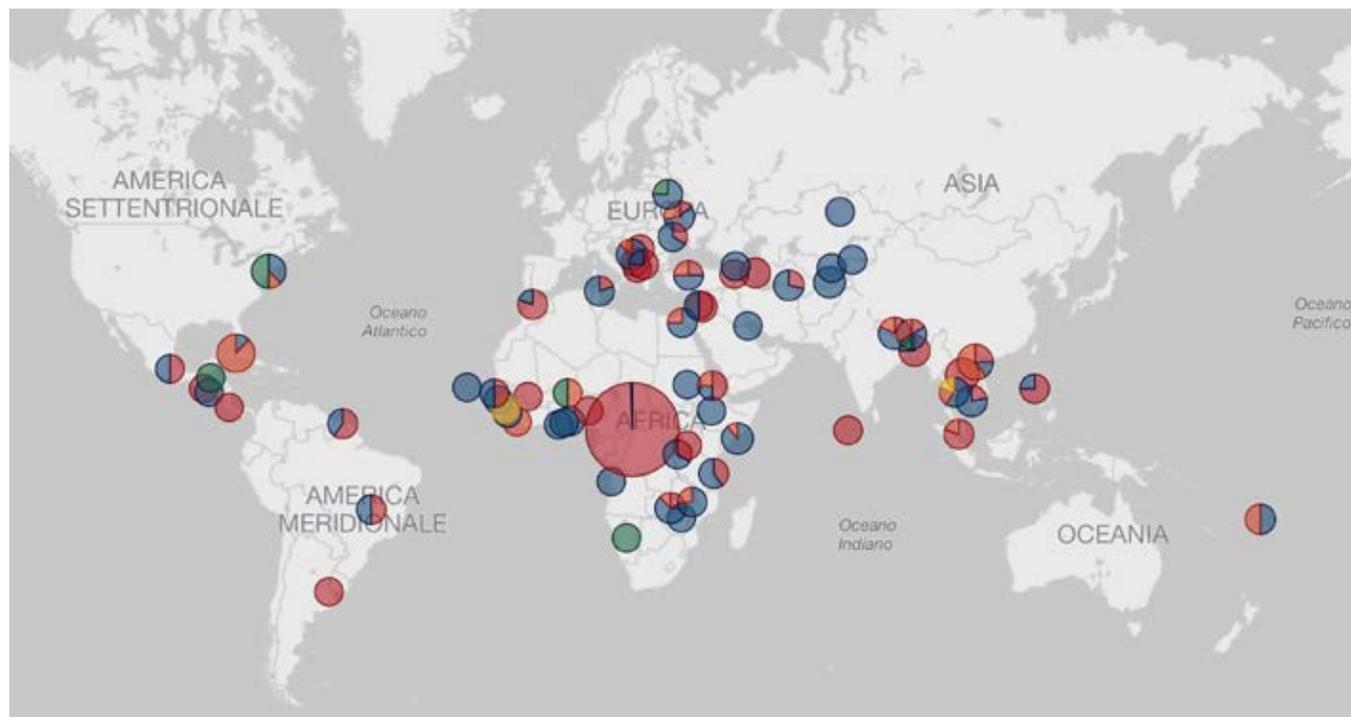


Data for results

UNDP supports the utilization of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics guidance on disability data collection and population-based measuring of disability for country use and for international comparisons. UNDP works to identify national, regional and global trends through our development programming and research and policy work often partnering with academic and research institutions to produce flagship research including our Human Development Reports globally, regionally and at country level. UNDP provides support and technical cooperation to key institutions who receive and process data that can assist with monitoring the environment of persons with disabilities in countries including National Statistical Offices and National Human Rights Institutions. Throughout all the programmatic areas UNDP supports and promotes disaggregation of data by disability status.

UNDP projects contributing to the rights of persons with disabilities

This map visualizes projects contributing to the rights of persons with disabilities across six signature solutions shown in different colors



Accessibility and innovation

Accessibility, Universal Design and Innovation all play important roles in fulfilling UNDP's mission and achieving the SDGs and the CRPD. Accessibility is essential to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in life and is critical for nearly all aspects of the CRPD. It is therefore an end in itself as well, as a means to enjoy other rights.

In the international development innovation context, supporting inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities is framed as approaching people as users of services and actors in adaptive complex systems. A key principle of innovation for development is to design with the user, this includes designing with and for persons with disabilities. Innovation to advance the rights and opportunities for and with persons with disabilities can be framed with these principles:

- Take intelligent risks, experiment, and persevere to achieve transformative change for and with persons with disabilities;
- Address power and political intersections with disabilities and gender;
- Design for Scale.

UNDP's work on innovation has demonstrated the importance of focusing on local priorities, relying on local assets and investing in local solutions. This local focus and engagement of persons with disabilities from the very start provide a sound basis for locally driven development solutions and SDG acceleration efforts.

Civic engagement and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities

While the right of persons with disabilities to participate in public life in an individual capacity should be fully acknowledged and respected, representative organizations of persons with disabilities are a key vehicle to advance the principle of full and effective involvement enshrined in the CRPD.

When determining the scope of participation to be promoted in relation to persons with disabilities within the framework of UNDP programming, UNDP should take steps to involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in its own processes and activities.

This can include among other things:

- consulting organizations of persons with disabilities as sources of advice and inputs into key strategy and planning documents, including - and very importantly - Country Programme Documents;
- engaging organizations of persons with disabilities as partners in the implementation of UNDP initiatives throughout the different phases of the project (from project design to monitoring and evaluation);
- ensuring representation of persons with disabilities in relevant corporate governance mechanisms, including for instance project steering committees and civil society advisory committees.

In addition to promoting an enabling environment for participation, UNDP can play an important role in strengthening the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities. UNDP can leverage its unique position as trusted convener as well as its access and networks to facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships with a focus on the CRPD involving governmental, non-governmental and other partners in a spirit of trust, mutual accountability and complementarity.

Conclusion

Disability is a multi-dimensional and human rights issue. UNDP is working to support disability inclusive development and advance the rights of persons with disabilities across our mandate both in terms of mainstreaming and through targeted interventions. Working in over 170 countries around the world, UNDP has a unique role and opportunity to further disability inclusive development with our partners in the UN system and with persons with disabilities.

Supporting governments to achieve the SDGs and implement the CRPD are the twin frameworks where UNDP can bring to bear our country presences, experiences and integrator function to make a difference. Using new tools including innovation and advancing partnerships to build on what works will benefit persons with disabilities and UNDP to ensure our vision of leaving no one behind in development





10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



Youth Dialogue in Karachi attended by a diverse group including youth with visual, speech and hearing impairments.

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