

Conclusion: SDG progress by, for and with persons with disabilities at a glance

The *Disability and Development Report 2024* provides an updated comprehensive analysis to address the needs of the international community to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. As a follow up to the *Disability and Development Report 2018*, the *Report* presents the most recent global analysis based on data, legislation and policies from all countries to understand the socio-economic circumstances of persons with disabilities worldwide and the challenges and barriers they face in their daily lives, including the exacerbated impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. *Annex 1* presents a summary of the findings, providing a snapshot of progress by Goal.

The analysis shows that, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, nine years ago, there has been much progress, despite the setbacks posed by COVID-19. But many persons with disabilities still fall behind and continue to face barriers and discrimination. Gaps between persons with and without disabilities persist in the implementation of all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Among the 119 indicators used in this *Report* to assess progress towards the 63 targets of the 2030 Agenda identified as relevant for persons with disabilities, five indicators suggest progress consistent with achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities. These include remarkable progress made in increasing the number of countries with laws on equal access to education for students with disabilities (target 4.1), with disaster early warnings in accessible formats (target 13.b), with online services for persons with disabilities (target 16.6), with government ministries accessible to wheelchair users (target 16.7) as well as notable progress made in increasing the number of donor countries reporting on the disability marker in their bilateral aid (target 17.2). If the trends observed so far continue, these achievements will reach all countries by 2030.

Some 31 indicators, corresponding to 21 targets, show progress but with moderate or severe deviations from the desired trajectory. These include progress on the provision of universal disability benefits and of cash benefits (target 1.3); on the health of persons with disabilities (targets 3.3 to 3.6); on legal protections for women with disabilities and against discrimination in the labour market for all persons with disabilities (targets 5.c and 8.8); on accessible and inclusive banks, food banks, restaurants, supermarkets, healthcare facilities, schools, public toilets and showers, employment agencies, public Internet cafes, bus and train stations, playgrounds, recycling premises and shops for sustainable products (targets 1.4, 2.1, 3.8, 4.a, 6.1, 6.2, 8.5, 8.10, 9.c, 11.2, 11.7, 12.2 and 12.5); on providing assistance during blackouts to persons with disabilities using electricity-run assistive technology (target 7.1); and on the safe evacuation of persons with disabilities during disasters (target 13.1).

For 10 indicators, there has been stagnation, regression or the target has been missed – these include insufficient progress in making ATMs (targets 1.a and 8.10), hospitals (target 3.8) and public drinking water sources (target 6.1) accessible for persons with disabilities; in providing access to persons with

disabilities living in least developed countries to the Internet (target 9.c was missed in 2020 for persons with disabilities), in preparing persons with disabilities for disasters (target 13.1), in providing policies on climate change in easy-to-understand formats (target 13.3), in including the perspective of persons with disabilities in environmental discussions (targets 14.2 and 15.5), and in involving persons with disabilities in decision-making on disaster risk reduction and response (target 16.7).

For 67 indicators, the data available can provide a snapshot of the current situation, but there is not enough data to assess trends over time and evaluate progress since 2015. For six indicators, corresponding to six targets, there is not even enough data to analyse the current situation for persons with disabilities – these include targets on extreme poverty, child mortality, health impact of pollution, early childhood development, child labour and impact of corruption and bribery.

Gaps persist between persons with and without disabilities, even for targets and indicators with progress. For many indicators, progress for persons with and without disabilities run parallel to each other and have not reduced the gap. The gaps are particularly large on food insecurity, health, access to energy and ICT, with gaps above 10 percentage points, and on multidimensional poverty and employment, with gaps above 20 percentage points. For women with disabilities, Indigenous persons with disabilities, persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and persons with disabilities living in rural areas, the gaps are even wider.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities. The response to the pandemic was largely not inclusive of persons with disabilities, especially in the early stages of the pandemic, with discriminatory practices in COVID-19 treatment, lack of information in accessible formats and reduced access to COVID-19 testing. Evidence suggests that half of COVID-19 deaths occurred among persons with disabilities. Moreover, persons with disabilities lost jobs and income at higher rates than others and struggled with the rising costs of goods and services, including the increased costs of assistive technology. In the early stages of the pandemic, about a third of persons with disabilities lost access to personal assistance, assistive technology or accessibility services – a trend that continued throughout the pandemic driven by inflation and disruptions in the supply chains. Persons with disabilities faced more difficulties than others accessing and affording food, water, energy, housing, healthcare and personal protective equipment, like masks and sanitizers. One in five students with disabilities dropped out of school during the pandemic and nine in ten did not have the ICT needed to participate in remote learning. Half of workers with disabilities faced barriers working remotely, such as inaccessible online platforms. The isolation created by lockdowns put persons with disabilities, and particularly women with disabilities, at an increased risk of violence, with a quarter of persons with disabilities experiencing violence at home and almost half of women with disabilities not feeling safe at home. Lockdowns also disrupted the regular data collections creating a lack of evidence to guide pandemic responses for persons with disabilities.

Although various countries put in place measures to provide support for persons with disabilities to face

these challenges, others were not able to do so: more than 90 per cent of countries prioritized persons with disabilities in COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, but only half of households with students with disabilities received financial support during school closures to cover the cost of personal and technological support for remote learning, less than half of countries targeted persons with disabilities in their COVID-19 social protection measures and only 10 per cent of countries conducted rapid emergency data collections on persons with disabilities during the pandemic.

Although countries worldwide have been taking measures to build back better and the negative impacts have been steadily reversing since the end of the pandemic, in the current trajectory, the world will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities by 2030. Progress needs to be accelerated. Depending on the target, its achievement will require accelerating the rate of progress from 2 to 65 times faster than the rates of progress observed so far. Accelerations are particularly needed in making physical and virtual environments accessible for persons with disabilities, in adopting anti-discrimination legislation, in expanding social protection and in implementing measures to guarantee the safety and protection of all persons with disabilities when a disaster or other emergency hits.

Compared to the 2018 *Disability and Development Report*, this time around there are much more data on persons with disabilities. The gains in data availability are attributed to the strong commitment of countries and national, regional and international organizations to collecting, compiling and disseminating disability data as well as to the advocacy and efforts of civil society, especially representative organizations of persons with disabilities. The availability of disability data for monitoring progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is at its highest levels since the CRPD was adopted in 2006. The international community can be more confident where they are, where they need to go and what needs to be done. The disability markers recently developed for tracking bilateral and multilateral aid are a major breakthrough that can inform development efforts. As the international community prepares for the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025, all need to step up to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and disability inclusion is part of the solution. This *Report* includes concrete steps that global leaders and relevant stakeholders can take right now to speed up the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities.