



CONCEPT NOTE & TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

3 December 2025

THEME

Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress

BACKGROUND

World leaders have convened in Doha at the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) in November 2025 with the aim of recommitting to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, to build a more just, inclusive, equitable and sustainable world. Recognising that profound social challenges confront every country, namely poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, and the urgent need to address both their underlying and structural causes, as well as their adverse consequences, the WSSD2 has served to revitalise action on advancing social progress and give momentum towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹

At the conclusion of the WSSD2, we are reminded that advancing progress on social development depends on, and indeed necessitates, the inclusion of all segments of society.

¹ [A/80/L.5](#).

Yet, across all regions, persons with disabilities face challenges and barriers in the attainment of social development objectives.² Persons with disabilities and households with person(s) with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty;³ they continue to face discrimination in employment, receiving lower wages and overrepresented in the informal sector;⁴ social protection systems are uneven in coverage and inadequate when considering extra disability-related costs, frequently excluding persons with disabilities in the informal sector;⁵ and, many persons with disabilities' experiences within care and support systems continue to be marked by the denial of their dignity, autonomy and agency.⁶

Recognising that the three core themes of social development, i.e. poverty eradication; promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all; and social integration, are interrelated, mutually reinforcing and require an enabling environment so as to be achieved simultaneously, the inclusion of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of social development is indispensable. Disability inclusion in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life is therefore an imperative.

In light of the above, critical areas for enhancing disability inclusion to advance progress in the three core themes of social development, include: community based services and support as a lever of social integration; the role of assistive technologies in expanding access to employment; the benefits of awareness-raising and eliminating discrimination to create inclusive societies; social protection as a poverty-reduction tool and driver of social inclusion; and, accessibility as an enabler of meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.

² United Nations (2025), *On the road to the Second World Summit for Social Development: contributions from the regional commissions* (LC/TS.2024/147), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2025.

³ UN DESA (2024), *Disability and Development Report 2024: Accelerating the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities*. 2024 United Nations.

⁴ CRPD/C/GC/8 (2022), General comment No. 8 on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment.

⁵ UNDESA, 2023. *Leaving no one behind in an ageing world. World Social Report 2023*. United Nations, 2023.

⁶ Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2025. [A/HRC/58/43](#).

COMMEMORATION

Date: Wednesday 3 December 2025, 10:00am – 11:30 am (EST).

Format: Virtual.

The commemorative event to mark this year's IDPD will be held virtually and will consist of an Opening segment, followed by a discussion panel. The Opening segment will explore ways of achieving disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress through the framework of the Doha Political Declaration. Speakers will discuss how the Doha Political Declaration integrates disability inclusion and how it can assist Member States, as a framework replete with practical tools and solutions, to achieve social development for, with and by persons with disabilities.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The online panel discussion will focus on key areas of disability inclusion and discuss enabling factors that are critical to achieving disability inclusion, thereby contributing to advancing progress in social development.

The following key points will structure the discussion and guide panellists when sharing their presentations and insights:

- (i) Highlighting promising practices, practical examples and case studies;
- (ii) How the Doha Political Declaration and the Programme of Action for Social Development can be harnessed and utilised to accelerate momentum and progress towards disability inclusive societies and social progress; and
- (iii) Outlook on future developments and challenges to fostering disability inclusion as a means of advancing social progress and development.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Opening:

Time	<i>Welcome and Introduction</i>
10:00 – 10:05	Introduction to the International Day and setting out the theme by Master of Ceremonies Mr. Charles Katoanga, Director, DISD/DESA.
10:05 – 10:10	<i>Remarks/message by the President of the General Assembly</i> H.E. Ms. Annalena Baerbock, President of the General Assembly (TBC).
10:10 – 10:15	<i>Remarks/message by the State of Qatar, Host of the Second World Summit for Social Development</i> H.E. Ms. Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations (TBC).
10:15 – 10:20	<i>Remarks/message by USG, UN DESA</i> Mr Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).
10:20 – 10:25	<i>Remarks/message by the International Disability Alliance (IDA)</i> Mr. Jose Viera, Executive Director, IDA (TBC).
10:25 – 10:30	<i>Closing</i> Closing remarks by Master of Ceremonies Mr. Charles Katoanga, Director, DISD/DESA.

Master of Ceremonies: Mr. Charles Katoanga, Director, Division of Inclusive Social Development (DISD), DESA.

Online panel discussion:

Time *Welcome and Introduction*

10:30 – 10:35 Short welcome and introductory remarks by the Moderator.

10:35 – 10:45 *Ms. Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities (TBC)*

Presentation of the findings of the Special Rapporteur's latest report entitled "Care and support for children with disabilities within the family environment and its gendered dimensions" (A/80/170).

10:45 – 10:55 *Ms. Anna Paula Feminella, National Secretary for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, Government of Brazil (TBC)*

This intervention will highlight the importance and effectiveness of conducting nationwide awareness-raising campaigns to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities, by fostering an enabling environment in which persons with disabilities may achieve full inclusion and participation in all aspects of society.

10:55 – 11:05 *Ms. Ola Abualghaib, Director, Global Disability Fund (GDF) (TBC)*

This presentation will assess social protection as a means of fighting poverty and as a driver of social inclusion for persons with disabilities, as well as progress made thus far towards filling in the financing gaps.

11:05 – 11:15 *Representative from ILO or ATscale (TBC)*

A discussion of the latest policy brief on Assistive Technology (AT) and Employment issued by ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which sets out how AT can expand persons with disabilities' access to the workforce and employment.

11:15 – 11:25 *[], "Deaf Youth Lead: Sign Language Rights at the UN" initiative (TBC)*

The active, meaningful and effective participation of youth with disabilities in decision-making is essential for achieving, as well as

future-proofing, disability inclusion. This presentation will spotlight an important youth-led pilot initiative “Deaf Youth Lead: Sign Language Rights at the UN”, aimed at strengthening the participation of Deaf youth in global decision-making and affirming sign languages as a cornerstone of human rights, linguistic diversity, and social inclusion.

11:25 – 11:30 *Concluding remarks*

Wrap-up of main points and takeaway messages from the panel.
Moderator concludes the discussion and thanks the panellists.

Moderator: Mr. A.H. Monjurul Kabir, Global Advisor and Team Leader, Gender and Disability Inclusion and Intersectionality, UN Women (TBC).