



Second World Summit for Social Development

Breaking Barriers, Building Inclusion through Yes to Access

Nov 5, 2025, 10:00am - 11:00 am Doha (Virtual, Based in India)

Organized by: The Association of People with Disability (APD), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Government of India and State Commissioner for Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, Karnataka

Background on the Event

The Virtual Solutions Session at the United Nations Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha brought together senior government officials, disability rights leaders, and civil society representatives to discuss India's progress in accessibility and inclusion, with a focus on the Yes to Access (YTA) platform. Participants included leadership from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in Karnataka, India and the Association of People with Disability (APD), India. The session highlighted India's decade-long journey under the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, the shift from infrastructure-focused accessibility to a cross-sectoral national priority, and APD's role in driving citizen-led, technology-enabled accessibility assessments. Karnataka's large-scale Sugamya Yatra and over 197,000 accessibility checks demonstrated how federal, state, and community collaboration, supported by real-time data advances inclusive development aligned with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

Key Issues Discussed:

- The evolution of the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign) from infrastructure accessibility to a cross-cutting governance, technology, and community-driven mission.
- The need for structured, comprehensive, and real-time accessibility data to inform planning and accountability.
- Gaps in accessibility knowledge, capacity, and trained professionals across sectors.
- The critical role of citizen participation and decentralised district-level engagement in strengthening accessibility.
- Challenges related to India's vast scale, diversity, and varying levels of sensitisation across states and institutions.
- The importance of long-term partnerships between central government, state departments, civil society, and the private sector.
- The growing need to integrate accessibility into mainstream development programmes, public works, and urban planning.

Key Recommendations:

- Strengthen federal, state, and local coordination models demonstrated in Karnataka's Sugamya Yatra to create scalable, participatory frameworks for accessibility assessment.
- Promote AI-enabled, citizen-driven platforms like Yes to Access as tools for measurable, transparent, and actionable accessibility improvements.
- Embed accessibility into the design stage of all public infrastructure, ensuring all physical structures are "born accessible."
- Invest in capacity building by training more accessibility professionals, officers, and community volunteers to standardise implementation across states.
- Encourage data-driven accountability, ensuring visibility of accessibility scores and progress indicators for government bodies and public institutions.
- Foster public-private-community partnerships, recognising that accessibility is not a sectoral responsibility but a shared societal mission requiring collective ownership.