



Second World Summit for Social Development

Advancing Disability-Inclusive Economic Growth through Innovation and Integration

3rd November 2025, 16:30 – 18:00, Virtual Session

Organized by: EnAble India, G3ict and International Disability Alliance

Background

Over one billion people globally (16% of the population) live with disabilities, yet they remain among the most socially and economically marginalized, with exclusion resulting in global GDP losses of 3–7% despite the combined spending power of persons with disabilities and their ecosystems being estimated at USD 18 trillion. This Solutions Session highlights how inclusive policies, technology-driven solutions, and integrated platforms can bridge the gap between innovation and adoption by bringing together civil society, private sector actors, and innovators to explore assistive technologies, inclusive digital platforms, AI-enabled accessibility tools, and the **Purple Economy** model, demonstrating how these solutions increase independence, employability, and economic participation. By creating a central space for global dialogue, the session will amplify the voices of persons with disabilities, promote evidence-based decision-making, and support value-based economic models that leave no one behind.

Key Issues Discussed

- Disability inclusion must be rooted in cultural context and lived experience, with replicable and shareable models that enable solutions to scale across countries and regions rather than remain isolated local efforts.
- A strong call to move beyond the charity and social welfare model toward a **value-based economic model of disability, recognising persons with disabilities as taxpayers, employees, leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators, consumers, and customers — reinforcing that inclusion is smart economics and good business.**
- The **integration of innovation and AI** in the disability ecosystem emerged as a major priority, with emphasis on building a pipeline from grassroots innovations to systemic adoption at the top of the pyramid. EnAble India's DISH – Disability Innovation Solutions Hub was highlighted as a promising model for accelerating this integration.

- Ms. Shanti Raghavan, Founder of EnAble India stressed on **The Purple Economy**, which is as a forward-looking framework redefining disability inclusion, positioning dignity, participation, and economic value at the centre of development and market systems.
- Ambassador Luis Gallegos strongly emphasized the critical **importance of joint leadership between civil society and the private sector**, noting that disability is not only a social issue but also a **legal, economic, and financial priority** affecting persons with disabilities, older people, and the rapidly growing population of low-mobility users globally.
- UN Resident Coordinator in India, Mr. Shombi Sharp, highlighted that **true progress must be human and inclusive**, innovation that leaves people behind is not progress. He stressed that inclusion must be foundational to the digital future, not an afterthought, and called for structural commitments to universal access.
- The discussion reaffirmed the need to **use AI responsibly and ethically**, ensuring that businesses, institutions, and the disability sector collaborate to shape opportunities, supported by strong regulatory frameworks and inclusive policy ecosystems.
- Participants emphasized that **disability inclusion must become part of institutional identity and culture**, not a compliance mandate or temporary strategy, requiring leadership buy-in, accountability, and representation of OPDs (Organizations of Persons with Disabilities).
- Reflections on **funding accessibility**, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and co-creation from lived experiences underscored the importance of investing in research, assistive solutions, and innovation ecosystems to strengthen economic participation and employability outcomes globally.

Key recommendations for action

- Adopt a **value-based economic model of disability** across labour markets, entrepreneurship, and consumer ecosystems — recognising persons with disabilities as drivers of economic growth and reinforcing that inclusion is good business, not charity.
- **Invest in inclusive innovation and responsible AI**, ensuring that emerging technologies expand access and opportunity through ethical regulation and collaboration between governments, business, and OPDs.
- **Strengthen OPD-led, lived-experience-driven innovation ecosystems**, with dedicated funding and support for platforms that bridge grassroots solutions with policy and market systems including models such as **The Purple Economy** model.
- **Advance the Purple Economy** globally by generating evidence, incentives, and partnerships that accelerate the development of disability-inclusive products, services, and systems across industries.
- Embed **disability inclusion into institutional culture and leadership**, ensuring representation, accountability, and cross-sector collaboration — moving beyond compliance mandates to long-term, systemic commitment.
- Ensure the **digital and technological future is universally accessible**, echoing the call that progress must be human and inclusive, and that innovation which leaves people behind cannot be considered progress.