



International Day of Persons with Disabilities

3 DECEMBER

CONCEPT NOTE

Commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

1 December 2023

UN Headquarters, New York

Since its proclamation in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 47/3, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) has been celebrated annually on 3 December around the world.

The observance of the IDPD aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and to mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

The United Nations' commitment to the fulfilment of all human rights for persons with disabilities has been strengthened by the widely ratified [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

THEME

The theme for the IDPD in 2023 is “United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities”.

BACKGROUND

Given the multiple crises of today's world, achievement of the SDGs is in peril. At the mid-point of the implementation period for the 2030 Agenda, the world is not on track to reach numerous SDGs targets by 2030. For many, progress has either stalled or regressed below the 2015 baseline.

Unfortunately, the world's poorest and most vulnerable are often the hardest hit in times of crisis. Preliminary findings from the forthcoming UN Disability and Development Report 2023 indicate that the world is even more off track in meeting several SDGs for persons with disabilities.

Our efforts to rescue the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities need to be intensified and accelerated, given that persons with disabilities have historically been marginalized and have often been among those left furthest behind.

A fundamental shift in commitment, solidarity, financing and action is critical. Integral to this is the inclusion of the voices, needs and priorities of the global community of persons with disabilities in all their diversity.

Encouragingly, with the adoption of the Political Declaration of the recent SDG Summit, world leaders have recommitted themselves to achieving sustainable development and shared prosperity for all, by focusing on policies and actions that target the poorest and most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities.

This calls for re-energized efforts by Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and the global community of persons with disabilities, through enhanced actions and international cooperation, to make the SDGs a reality for, with and by persons with disabilities.

OBSERVANCE OF THE IDPD IN 2023

The annual commemoration of the IDPD will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on **1 December 2023** and will consist of two components:

- (i) **Opening** (10 - 10.30 a.m. EST): featuring messages from high-level representatives from the United Nations, Member States and civil society, to be held in person;

- (ii) **Online panel discussion** (10.40 a.m. - 1 p.m. EST): a moderated panel discussion to address major gaps in the realization of inclusive and sustainable development for, with and by persons with disabilities and to call for enhanced actions and greater international cooperation.

The discussion will be structured around five pillars of sustainable development – People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships – with a special focus on the priority areas identified in the SDG Progress Report of 2023, in the outcome document of the recent SDG Summit, in policy briefs prepared for the Summit for the Future and in the forthcoming UN Disability and Development Report 2023. For purposes of this discussion, the priority areas can be identified as gender equality (People), climate action (Planet), financing for development (Prosperity), a new agenda for peace (Peace) and strengthening multilateralism (Partnerships).

People: Women and girls with disabilities are acutely vulnerable to being left behind due to the intersection of gender and disability, which compounds the challenges and barriers they encounter. An intersectional lens is crucial for fulfilling the pledge that no one will be left behind.

Planet: Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, owing to their greater likelihood of living in poverty, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic¹. Moreover, stigma and discrimination are additional factors that increase the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to the effects of climate change².

Prosperity: Ensuring that adequate financial resources are allocated towards disability-inclusive development must be a priority going forward, as well as the effective mainstreaming of disability in all aspects of development, including its financing. It is imperative that persons with disabilities, in all their diversity and throughout the world, actively participate in and shape these policies and processes.

Peace: Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by conflict in several ways, yet their needs and priorities are rarely addressed in situations of conflict. Furthermore, their role as peacemakers and peacekeepers is often ignored³. Recent attempts to remedy this situation include the adoption of Security

¹ [Persons with disabilities disproportionately affected by climate change | OHCHR.](#)

² Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2020). *Analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change.* [A/HRC/44/30.](#)

³ [UN disabilities expert urges more inclusive approach across 'peace continuum' | OHCHR.](#)

Council resolution 2475, which stipulates that respect for the human rights of persons with disabilities must be enshrined in international humanitarian law.⁴ Nevertheless, more needs to be done in this regard.

Partnerships: Despite recent setbacks, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs remain the essential roadmap out of the multiple crises that the world is facing. A renewal of the pledge that no one will be left behind is fundamental. Success will require that all Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and the global community of persons with disabilities work together to strengthen international solidarity, and that they join in coordinated, targeted actions designed to reach the furthest behind first.

⁴ Ruminowicz, B. (2023). Advancing towards inclusive peace and security: Persons with disabilities and Security Council Resolution 2475. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 105(922), 449-458.