

Draft Statement

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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, colleagues,
I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for inviting UNDP to this seventeenth session of the Conference.

A session that comes at a critical juncture.

As also highlighted in the Disability and Development Report released a few days ago, compound planetary crises and the stagnation and reversal of progress on the majority of the SDGs disproportionately impact persons with disabilities.

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At the same time, we prepare for a Summit of the Future that seeks a new international consensus on how to create a better present and future, that leaves no one behind.

UNDP believes that this promise can only be kept with and by persons with disabilities, with the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda as our mutually reinforcing guides in this journey.

This means ensuring the meaningful engagement and representation of persons with disabilities in the discussions and negotiations around the Pact for the Future.

It also means accelerating efforts specifically on the themes of this year's Conference, which lie at the core of the Summit of the Future.

I would like to highlight a few recommendations in this regard, that strongly align with the papers developed for the three conference roundtables.

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First, technological development and its governance should be inclusive by design, from assistive technology to national digital public infrastructure, or DPI.

In Bermuda, UNDP supported national authorities in launching the National Disability Register - an accessible smartphone app that collects data on and from persons with disabilities to inform a more inclusive delivery of public goods and services, while preserving their rights to privacy and protection.

We also launched the DPI Safeguards Initiative with the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, to strengthen multistakeholder, international cooperation for safer and more inclusive DPI, including for persons with disabilities.

UNDP's own internal digital systems are also fully accessible, with 100% of our corporate platforms supporting accessible technologies.

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Second, national and local strategies and plans for disaster risk reduction and recovery should be designed and implemented with, by, and for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, recognizing the diversity WITHIN their communities.

In Vietnam, for example, we work with local organizations of persons with disabilities to promote gender-responsive and disability-inclusive budgeting within disaster risk reduction efforts, to address the inequalities faced by women and girls with disabilities before, during, and after disasters.

Experiences such as the one in Vietnam and other countries are detailed in our recently published Policy Brief, "A Resilient Future for All: Advancing Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery." The brief provides guidance and best practices from UNDP's offices worldwide.

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As my last recommendation, I would like to stress the need to create inclusive and equitable job markets, with laws and policies reviewed and updated to ensure access to education, training, and social protection for persons with disabilities - working with governments, private sector, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

For example, we are providing grants for public-private partnership initiatives to improve the socio-economic reintegration and employability of persons with disabilities in Ukraine. We are also working with the Ministry of Labour and the National Council on Disability of the Dominican Republic to enhance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the country through trainings, awareness campaigns, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

And, of course, internally, we strive to become an inclusive employer for our colleagues with disabilities, with a new "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" Strategy that aims to ensure that all UNDP personnel enjoy an enabling, inclusive work environment.

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Excellencies, colleagues, let me end by thanking once again the Presidency of this conference for convening this much-needed discussion and my fellow panelists for their remarks.

I will, of course, be happy to respond to any questions from the floor.

Thank you.

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