

HLPF. Where are we headed? Vision and scenarios for the future of the SDGs after the COVID-19 crisis. Author: Prof. María Soledad Cisternas Reyes, Special Envoy of the SG-UN on Disability and Accessibility

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- 1.- Human rights are the heart of inclusive sustainable development.

- 2.- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps in public policies, legislation and services with regard to the need of being truly inclusive, negatively affecting the human rights and sustainable development of millions of persons in the world.

- 3.- Accessibility is the most recognized cross-disciplinary human rights figure of the 21st century. Accessibility involves the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including technologies and other services and facilities open to the public or for public use, in both urban and rural areas.

Accessibility is universal, because it provides unique conditions for the fulfillment of human rights and most of the SDGs for millions of persons: persons with disabilities, older persons, girls and boys, pregnant women, among others.

- 4.- Universal accessibility is a pillar and bridge for the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms and also for the fulfillment of the SDGs on education, work, health, inclusive production, peaceful societies, access to justice, effective institutions, among others.

5.- During the pandemic, insufficient accessibility in most hospitals has affected the right to health care for many persons (including mental health). Insufficient accessibility has also affected the provision of goods, services, and technologies for many persons during quarantine and the exercise of rights such as education and work. Accessibility includes training personnel from different areas (health, transportation, police, judges, legislators, etc.) to take care of human diversity.

6.- To implement universal accessibility means to move broadly towards the eradication of multidimensional poverty.

7.- Currently we are talking about smart cities with technological innovations. These cities will be really smart when they are fully accessible, allowing the exercise of all human rights by all persons.

8.- The HLPF, in 2021, will await for information from the States Parties on legislation, public policies and specific measures as a result of inclusive and participatory responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as political decisions according to the lessons learned. This includes data and statistics with a focus on accessibility, especially on health care and the exercise of other related rights during and after the pandemic.

9.- It will be very important to establish inclusive governance through multilateral political decision-making to catalyze universal accessibility. The creation of “global big data” to address the critical issue of accessibility during and after the pandemic will be a legacy for humanity. This “big data” will provide very decisive keys to better face other

humanitarian emergencies in the future, helping Member States to identify crucial aspects of accessibility for the exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

10.- The alliance among central governments, local governments and civil society organizations with a public-private approach, will be crucial to make progress on the different paths towards universal accessibility, as an effective way for the fulfillment of human rights and for overcoming poverty; always taking into account the reality of each local context and the needs and proposals of its inhabitants.