

2030

**sustainable
development
agenda**

Spotlight on Disability

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

Briefing Paper

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been adopted in September 2015 by the member states of the United Nations. The new Agenda came into effect on 1 January 2016 and will define and guide global development for the next 15 years. Its principle of universality means that all states commit themselves to implement the Agenda, including in their national contexts and international cooperation.

At the heart of the Agenda are 17 thematic goals – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and their 169 corresponding targets. The SDGs have been developed in a multi-lateral process which spanned more than two years and saw the involvement of governments, international organisations, civil society and other stakeholders.

The principle ‘leave no one behind’, which was coined during the negotiations, is crucial throughout the whole implementation period of the Agenda. It means that the SDGs have to include all groups of society and have to ensure the participation of all people.

‘Leaving no one behind’ is of particular importance to people belonging to vulnerable groups. 15% of the world’s population are persons with disabilities and their majority (80%) lives in low-income countries. Regardless of the obvious link between poverty and disability, persons with disabilities were completely left out from the SDGs’ predecessor framework, the Millennium Development Goals, which reinforced their marginalisation and discrimination.

The new Agenda includes several important references to disability¹, including in the goals and targets on education, employment, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities and data collection. In the course of implementation and reporting of the Agenda, governments and all other stakeholders have to respect and truly live disability inclusion in the design, implementation and review of all SDG programmes. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an important compass to ensure accessibility and inclusion in all programmes.

17 reasons why disability matters in the new development agenda

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD is a leading European NGO dedicated to eye health, community based rehabilitation, access to inclusive education, and promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities. LIGHT FOR THE WORLD works in 15 countries around the globe, striving for an inclusive society in which everyone is valued, has a voice and can meaningfully participate in community and public life. The SDGs with their principle of universality and strong human rights basis inform and guide the strategic work of LIGHT FOR THE WORLD and its partners

While not all goals contain explicit references to disability, all of them are relevant because persons with disabilities are part of all communities. LIGHT FOR THE WORLD and its partners will continue calling for comprehensive inclusion of persons with disabilities, in line with the international disability movement's slogan 'nothing about us without us'.

The following pages provide information on disability in relation to the 17 goals.



#1 No Poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

- 15% of the world's population are persons with disabilities. In low-income countries this figure increases to 18%.
- Disability and poverty are strongly linked.
- 80% of persons with disabilities live in low-income countries.



RECOMMENDATION:

All programmes to fight poverty have to include the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in order to be successful and leave no one behind.

#2 No Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

- Healthy and sufficient nutrition is crucial for a child's development.
- Malnutrition and undernourishment can cause developmental delays and life-long impairments.
- 47 million children in low-income countries are stunted due to malnutrition in their early childhood.
- Vitamin A-deficiency can lead to child blindness.



RECOMMENDATION:

Make sure that food security and agriculture programmes are accessible to persons with disabilities.

#3 Good Health

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

- 60% of persons with disabilities in low-income countries cannot afford treatment in their local health centres.
- 80% of all visual impairments could be treated, prevented or cured.
- Trachoma, an infectious eye disease, is responsible for the visual impairment of about 2.2 million people of whom 1.2 mill. are irreversibly blind.
- Estimates suggest a total loss of productivity due to trachoma of between \$3 billion and \$6 billion every year.



RECOMMENDATION:

Information about health care and disease prevention has to be provided in accessible formats to be available to all members of society.

Investment in and integration of health care for persons with disabilities in the general health system is a core ingredient of development and the fight against poverty.

Action against avoidable and treatable blindness (caused by Trachoma, Onchocerciasis and other diseases) has to be embedded in the national and international health care.

#4. Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- Education is a key ingredient of the fight against poverty and inequality, for empowerment and an active and meaningful participation for all.
- 1/3 of the world's out-of-school children are children with disabilities.
- In many low-income countries only 1 in 10 children with disabilities can attend school.
- Every additional year that a person spends in school results in an increase of the GDP by 0.37% p.a.



RECOMMENDATION:

Education systems and education finance have to be made inclusive and accessible to enable children with disabilities to learn with their peers.

#5. Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- Women and girls with disabilities experience even higher discrimination in their access to school, health care, employment, social life etc. than men and boys with disabilities.
- Women and girls with disabilities are up to 3 times more at risk of violence and abuse than their non-disabled peers.
- The global literacy rate for women and girls with disabilities is 1% (79.7% for non-disabled women).

RECOMMENDATION:

Women's empowerment programmes have to include women and girls with disabilities and be accessible to women with different communication and access requirements.



#6 Clean Water and Sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

- 2.5 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation.
- 748 million people are without access to safe water.
- Persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented in these figures, their access to water and sanitation is often blocked due to stigma, physical inaccessibility or lack of assistance.
- Inaccessibility of toilets can influence a child's prospect of going to school.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is vital to include disabled community members in infrastructure development to ensure accessible water and sanitation systems.



#7 Clean Energy

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

- Clean, affordable and accessible energy is essential for a community's development and prosperity.
- For persons with low vision or other visual impairments stable lighting can make a big difference in their ability to study, do homework or read.
- Stable, reliable and sustainable electricity is necessary to power elevators, electric wheelchairs, high-tech prostheses and other assistive devices.



RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to clean and reliable energy that meets their needs.

#8 Good Jobs and Economic Growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

- 470 million of the world's working age people have some form of disability.
- 80-90% of persons with disabilities in low-income countries are unemployed.
- Up to 7% of a country's GDP are lost due to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market.



RECOMMENDATION:

Investment in an inclusive and accessible labour market and vocational training is not only a human rights issue but also the economically sensible thing to do.



#9 Infrastructure

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

- Accessible infrastructure and ICT can improve access to and participation of persons with disabilities in social and economic life, thereby enriching the community.
- Innovation can revolutionize the way in which persons with disabilities can access the health and education sector, the labour market and social life,
- Improved infrastructure and transport enables children with disabilities to attend schools in their communities, by making the way to school safe, affordable and accessible.



RECOMMENDATION:

Infrastructure, buildings, new technology and transport systems should be built in universal design to be accessible to persons with disabilities from the start.

#10 Inequalities

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

- Persons with disabilities are particularly affected by discrimination, unequal treatment and violations of their rights.
- Social, institutional, physical, communicational and financial barriers which persons with disabilities face in their everyday lives contribute to their continued exclusion and unequal chances in society.
- 1 in 5 of the world's poorest people has some form of disability.
- Inequality and discrimination is multi-faceted and touches all areas of life and society: education, access to health care, work and employment, family life, public office, political participation etc.



RECOMMENDATION:

Disadvantaged groups of society have to be explicitly targeted in the SDGs' implementation in order to fight inequality.

#11 Sustainable cities and communities

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

- Only cities and communities that are accessible to and meet the needs of all their inhabitants can be truly sustainable and resilient.
- Safety and emergency plans usually do not include provisions for persons with disabilities, nor are they consulted during the development of such plans, putting them at higher risk when disasters occur.

RECOMMENDATION:

No one must be left behind during the planning of housing and infrastructure projects, preparing for emergencies and shaping public space.



#12 Responsible Consumption

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

- Responsible and sustainable consumption is an issue relevant to all individuals and communities around the globe – and all communities and social groups include persons with disabilities.
- Information campaigns and education about responsible consumption are usually designed in a generic way, without considering different audiences and communication needs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information and education about consumption, recycling and sustainable production requires diverse and alternative ways of communication: in easy-to-understand language, Braille and Large Print, Sign Language and radio broadcasts, subtitled TV programmes, community outreaches etc.



#13 Protect the Planet

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



#14 Life below water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



#15 Life on land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

- We all share the same planet and its ecosystem.
- Climate change and natural disasters that occur in its wake affect everyone, but are particularly devastating to vulnerable members of society such as persons with disabilities.



RECOMMENDATION:

Communication and education about environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity and life on land and below water should address all members of society equally and in an accessible manner.

#16 Peace and justice

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

- Persons with disabilities frequently experience discrimination and hate speech in society.
- Their access to the justice system and to social and political participation is often denied.



RECOMMENDATION:

Governments and institutions have to actively address discrimination and hate speech against persons with disabilities and invest in awareness raising campaigns on disability rights as laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Electoral systems and institutions in general have to become inclusive and accessible to all, it is important to sensitize officials, media and the public and invest in accessible infrastructure.

#17 Partnerships for the goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

For the SDGs to be successful, a wide range of partners has to be involved. Making sure that persons with disabilities are actively included in all sectors of development and all programmes designed to implement the SDGs is a vital factor for success and for the SDGs' unofficial motto 'leave no one behind' to become true.



RECOMMENDATION:

We call on governments and international organisations to step up efforts of disability mainstreaming in all programmes, to join the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to align all their programmes with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Measuring progress and performance is key in making sure that the goals and targets are on track and to make necessary adjustments. Any review or monitoring mechanisms require strong baselines and data – these have to be disaggregated by disability, age, gender, income, and any other relevant factors.

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD – A short history of disability and sustainable development

Why was 2015 such an important year?

2015 marks the end of the world's biggest development programme so far, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These 8 thematic goals were decided by the international community in the year 2000 and included goals and targets such as halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, ensuring universal access to primary education for all children and improving health care for mothers and children.

Although not all goals and targets were successfully met, these goals were still a remarkable success which improved the living conditions of people in poor regions around the globe. The MDGs' success was partly due to their simplicity: Governments and organisations alike took up these 8 concise, simple, easy-to-understand goals as the frame of reference for their programmes and strategies.

Why are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) important for our world?

The past few years have seen unprecedented challenges for our world, ranging from climate change and natural disasters to conflicts, food crises and an increase of inequality. At the same time, it has never been as clear that immediate, ambitious and concerted efforts are needed to address global challenges and that any response to these challenges has to connect ecological, social and economic aspects in order to be successful.

The MDGs and Disability

The MDGs certainly brought about important progress in the fight against hunger and poverty. However, the Goals also showed severe gaps in their scope and design. Persons with disabilities were neither mentioned in the Goals themselves, nor in their accompanying targets and indicators. This invisibility led to the fact that persons with disabilities were left out from actions tailored to fight poverty. Strategies and programmes to implement the MDGs did not consider disability in their design and planning, resulting in continuous inaccessibility and discrimination.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol were adopted in 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, opened for signature on 30 March 2007 and entered into force on 3 May 2008. The CRPD is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and also the first human rights convention which was ratified by a regional integration organisation, namely the European Union.

The Convention marks a shift of paradigm away from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights and capable of claiming those rights. The Convention is a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It applies a broad understanding of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It explicitly names the role of international cooperation and development cooperation in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, thereby strongly linking human rights with development.

The pieces of the Post-2015 puzzle and their relevance for persons with disabilities

The SDGs connect the dots between development, climate protection and sustainability while still including the “unfinished business of the MDGs”.

A number of global processes contributed to the shape and meaning of the new 2030 Agenda.

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (March 2015, Sendai)
- World Education Forum 2015: Education 2030 – Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (May 2015, Incheon)
- Financing for Development Conference (July 2015, Addis Ababa)
- The Post-2015 United Nations Summit (September 2015, New York)
- 21st Session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (December 2015, Paris)
- High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and Global Indicator Framework

Together these processes build the new Sustainable Development Agenda 2015-2030.

I. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

The Framework was adopted by the UN member states at the Third United Nations Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. The Sendai Framework is the first major agreement of the Post-2015 development agenda, with 7 targets and 4 priorities for action.

The conference was remarkably accessible, and the disability movement was intensively involved in the preparation of the conference. The framework itself includes many important references to disability and disability-inclusive DRR (disaster risk reduction), recognising that persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable in situations of risk and disasters. Specifically, the framework shows 5 references to disability and two references to the principles of universal design. The terms “inclusive” and “accessible” are used throughout the text.

Official text of the Sendai Framework:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/283&Lang=E

II. Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 – Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

At the World Education Forum 2015 in May 2015 UN agencies, state delegations, civil society, teachers’ associations and other stakeholders came together to set the agenda for education for the coming 15 years. Disability was included in the Forum’s outcome document, the Incheon Declaration, which states, inter alia:

“Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.”

<http://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration>

III. Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development 2015-2030

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) took place from 13-16 July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It followed the FfD conferences in Monterrey in 2002 and Doha in 2008 and brought together world leaders, international organisations, civil society and the private sector to shape the financial framework for the United Nations' new sustainable development agenda and to launch a new global partnership for FfD. The outcome document of the Third Conference on Financing for Development was adopted by UN member states on 15 July 2015. Discussions focused on the sources of FfD: tax governance and mobilising domestic resources, increased involvement of the private sector, debt reduction and debt management, international trade as motor for development, and Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Civil society and the G77 voiced their concerns and disappointment about the weak results in terms of systemic change. The text did not turn out as ambitious as expected. No agreement could be reached on a new global tax body – as demanded by civil society and developing countries to address tax invasion which causes tremendous losses for governments.

In terms of ODA expectations were not met either. Ahead of the conference the EU member states decided to postpone the end date of their 0.7%-commitment (donor states had promised to spend, by 2015, 0.7% of their GDP on aid) to 2030. This means that ODA funds will not increase as much as necessary.

In terms of disability inclusion the outcome of the conference is very positive. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda contains 6 explicit references to persons with disabilities and disability, 1 to “inclusive education”, 1 to “inclusive learning environment” and 2 to “accessible” technologies and infrastructures. In addition to these disability-specific references, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda also includes a number of references to “inclusive” (e.g. “inclusive growth”, “inclusive societies”), a number of references to “access” (e.g. access to beneficial ownership information) and an additional one to “accessibility” of data (Para 128).

The Addis Agenda will form a part of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, specifically the part on Means of Implementation and Global Partnership (Goal 17).

Text of the Addis Agenda: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.227/L.1

IV. The United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda

The United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda took place from 25 to 27 September 2015, in New York as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. At the Summit the United Nations and Member States officially adopted the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals and committed to its implementation.

The new agenda provides a historic opportunity to have persons with disabilities fully included in the fight against poverty, inequality and climate change. A truly inclusive society and a world which leaves no-one behind is only possible if persons with disabilities are included, empowered and involved from the start and in all phases of planning, implementation and review. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities must serve as a foundation of all strategies and plans for the implementation of the new agenda.

The intense efforts of the international disability movement, in particular the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), during the consultation and negotiation phases were successful – the outcome document includes 11 explicit references to disability and a number of other references to inclusion and vulnerable groups.

“Transforming our world – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” Information on the Summit and the text for its outcome document:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>

V. 21st Session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The UNFCCC was adopted during the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 and was ratified by 196 States (the COP).

The Post-2015 process brings together the social, economic and ecological aspects of global development. In December 2015 COP 21 (Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) brought together state representatives and organisations to reach an agreement on climate, applicable to all countries – to keep global warming below 2°C.

<http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/cop21-cmp11/what-cop21-cmp11>

VI. High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and Global Indicator Framework

The HLPF is the central platform at the United Nations which is used for the global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will be held every year to monitor progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The first one takes place 11-20 July 2016. It includes the first voluntary reviews of 22 member states as well as thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues.

A key component of the follow-up and review (FUR) process is an annual progress report, prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the United Nations system.

Information for the progress report comes through the global indicator framework which was developed by the so-called Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG) and agreed to at the 47th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2016.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

- Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. report by the Secretary-General: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2016/secretary-general-sdg-report-2016--EN.pdf>
- Global Indicator Framework: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>

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ⁱ **Information on disability in the 2030 Agenda:**
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/about-us/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-and-disability.html>

Sustainable Development Goals and targets

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including **persons with disabilities**, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, **disability** and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, **inclusive** and effective learning environments for all

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and **persons with disabilities**, and equal pay for work of equal value

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political **inclusion** of all, irrespective of age, sex, **disability**, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, **accessible** and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, **persons with disabilities** and older persons

11.7 By 2030, provide **universal access** to safe, **inclusive** and **accessible**, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and **persons with disabilities**

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Systemic issues; Data, monitoring and accountability

17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, **disability**, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

Follow-up and review

Follow-up and review processes at all levels will be guided by the following principles:

Para 74 (g)

They will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, **accessible**, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, **disability** and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.