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Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



Disability and Development Report 2024

Accelerating the realization
of the Sustainable Development
Goals by, for and with persons
with disabilities

Advance Unedited Version



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Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Disability and Development Report 2024
Published by the United Nations
New York, New York 10017, United States of America

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ISBN: 9789211304671
eISBN: 9789210024891 (PDF)
ePUB: 9789213584453

United Nations Publication Sales No. E.23.IV.3

Design and layout
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York

Executive summary

Six years away from the deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the *Disability and Development Report 2024* indicates that persons with disabilities are often being left behind.

According to the available evidence, progress for persons with disabilities has been insufficient for 30 per cent of SDG targets; for 14 per cent, the target has been missed or progress has stalled or gone in reverse. These include targets on access to financial resources, health care, water and information and communication technologies (ICT), and on building the resilience of persons with disabilities during disasters and other emergencies. Only five indicators appear to be on track: that is, the progress observed is consistent with achieving their respective targets for persons with disabilities by 2030. There is evidence of remarkable progress on passing laws mandating equal access to education, on providing early warnings of disasters in accessible formats, on providing online services for persons with disabilities, on making government ministries accessible for persons with disabilities and on the monitoring of bilateral aid dedicated to disability inclusion.

The available evidence indicates that wide gaps persist between persons with and without disabilities, particularly on food security, health, and access to energy and ICT – with gaps above 10 percentage points – and on multidimensional poverty and employment – with gaps above 20 percentage points. For women, indigenous people and rural residents with disabilities, and for persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, the gaps appear to be even wider.

There is evidence that the COVID-19 response was often not inclusive of persons with disabilities, especially in the early stages of the pandemic, with discriminatory practices in treatment, lack of information in accessible formats and reduced access to testing. According to a study carried out in 46 countries, 41 per cent of persons with disabilities versus 28 per cent of persons without disabilities did not have access to COVID-19 testing. Data from a few countries suggests that half of COVID-19 deaths occurred among persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities lost jobs and income at higher rates than others. Early in the pandemic, a third of persons with disabilities lost access to personal assistance, assistive technology or accessibility services – a trend that continued throughout the pandemic driven by inflation and disruptions in the supply chains, including a drop of 10 per cent in exports of assistive products. Based on a study conducted in 46 countries, persons with disabilities faced more difficulties than others accessing and affording food (52 versus 46 per cent), water delivery (31 versus 18 per cent), energy (31 versus 24 per cent), housing (28 versus 24 per cent), health care (34 versus 22 per cent), medicines (40 versus 32 per cent), masks (64 versus 50 per cent) and sanitizers (66 versus 54 per cent). Other studies indicate that one in 5 students with disabilities dropped out of school during the pandemic and 9 in 10 did not have the ICT needed to participate in remote learning. Half of workers with disabilities faced barriers working remotely, such as inaccessible online platforms. The isolation created by lockdowns increased the risk of violence, with a quarter of persons with disabilities experiencing violence

at home and almost half of women with disabilities not feeling safe at home. Lockdowns disrupted data collections creating a lack of evidence to guide pandemic responses for persons with disabilities.

Not all countries introduced measures to support persons with disabilities to face these challenges. Whereas more than 90 per cent of countries prioritized persons with disabilities in COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, only half of households with students with disabilities received financial support for the personal assistance and technology they needed for remote learning, less than half of countries targeted persons with disabilities in their COVID-19 social protection measures and only 10 per cent of countries conducted rapid emergency data collections on persons with disabilities during the pandemic.

Compared to the *Disability and Development Report 2018*, there is now much more data on persons with disabilities, and data availability is at the highest level since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Despite these advancements, only 50 per cent of SDG targets have indicators with enough data to assess progress. For 40 per cent of these targets, the available data provide a snapshot for a single point in time. For 10 per cent, there is not enough data for such a snapshot, including for targets on extreme poverty, child mortality, the health impact of pollution, early childhood development, child labour and the impact of corruption and bribery.

In light of the progress made to date, we must conclude that the world will not achieve the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities by 2030. Depending on the target, progress needs to accelerate to between 2 and 65 times the current speed, especially for targets on making physical and virtual environments accessible for persons with disabilities, on adopting anti-discrimination legislation, on expanding social protection and on implementing measures to guarantee the safety and protection of all persons with disabilities during disasters and emergencies.

As the international community prepares for the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025, all stakeholders need to increase their efforts to advance the SDGs, recognizing that disability inclusion is an essential part of the solution. The world needs to build on the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and to plan better for future crises. The *Disability and Development Report 2024* provides a snapshot of the current situation and of progress made by Goal and target. It identifies concrete steps that global leaders and stakeholders at all levels can take to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities:

Ending poverty (Goal 1)

In almost all countries, the percentage of persons experiencing multidimensional poverty is higher for persons with disabilities than persons without disabilities -- in some countries that percentage is more than double. Reducing this percentage by half by 2030, as called for in target 1.2, will require progress at least 1.3 times faster for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities.

Persons with disabilities tend to earn lower wages, to face additional costs related to disability and to lack access to financial services. A quarter of banks worldwide, a quarter of ATMs in developed regions and half the ATMs in developing regions remain physically inaccessible for wheelchair users.

In 2020, only 17 per cent of countries provided universal disability benefits. Progress since 2017 has been slow, with a mere 2 percentage points increase. Globally, in 2020, 34 per cent of persons with severe disabilities received cash benefits up from 27 per cent in 2016. At this rate, only half the persons with severe disabilities are expected to have access to these benefits by 2030.

The following actions are recommended:

- Mainstream disability inclusion in national poverty reduction strategies, programmes and actions.
- Evaluate the impact of public policies, including social protection schemes, on extra costs associated with disability and on the financial well-being of persons with disabilities.
- Develop a national disability registry of individual disability (and needs) assessment to facilitate targeting of individual social protection.
- Ensure accessibility across the social protection delivery chain.
- Develop a flexible combination of mainstream and disability-specific cash transfers, concessions, subsidies and support services.
- Involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the design and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies and social protection policies.

Ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition (Goal 2)

In developing countries, available evidence indicates that 55 per cent of persons with disabilities experience food insecurity. In Europe, the percentage of persons with disabilities who cannot afford daily meals with protein at least every second day has decreased since 2016, but this progress is insufficient to lower this percentage to zero by 2030.

Children with disabilities appear more likely than children without disabilities to be underweight or stunted, two common signs of malnutrition. Existing data point to 15 per cent of children with disabilities being underweight, 27 per cent stunted, 7 per cent wasted and 3 per cent overweight.

Although food banks are vital during food emergencies, two out of five are not accessible for wheelchair users. More than half of restaurants worldwide, 12 per cent of supermarkets in developed countries and 38 per cent in developing countries are inaccessible for wheelchair users.

The following actions are recommended:

- Mainstream disability inclusion into food security legislation, policies and programmes, based on consultations with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

- Improve coordination among various sectors (including education, social protection, agriculture, fishery, livestock and forestry) to enhance access to food and the accessibility, affordability and safety of food for persons with disabilities.
- Provide equal access to agricultural and other productive resources for persons with disabilities.
- Support the use of disability-inclusive agricultural technology, assistive technology and reasonable accommodation in agricultural employment.
- Ensure that food banks, supermarkets and restaurants are accessible for persons with disabilities.

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being (Goal 3)

Available evidence suggests that persons with disabilities are 15 times more likely to perceive their health as bad or very bad than persons without disabilities; and 7 times more likely than others to lack access to health care when they need it. In various developing countries, more than half of persons with disabilities do not receive health care because they cannot afford it; and one quarter, because they lack affordable transport to health care facilities. In some developed countries, more than 10 per cent of persons with disabilities do not receive health care because they cannot afford it or because the travel time or the waiting list is excessive.

Public health interventions to promote healthy lives and well-being, including nutrition information campaigns and regular testing and monitoring, often do not reach persons with disabilities. Studies in selected countries indicate that gaps in coverage between persons with and without disabilities range from 5 to 45 per cent.

In various developing countries, more than 30 per cent of persons with disabilities report that health-care facilities are not accessible, and in some countries, this percentage reaches 80 per cent. Worldwide, in 2022, 42 per cent of doctors' offices, 29 per cent of pharmacies and 15 per cent of hospitals were not accessible for wheelchair users. In these areas, progress over the past five years has been insufficient. Doctors' offices would need to become accessible at a rate 3 times faster and pharmacies 7 times faster compared to current rates of change to achieve full accessibility by 2030. Progress in making hospitals more accessible has stagnated since 2018.

By 2022, only one third of countries had incorporated disability inclusion in their national health strategies.

The following actions are recommended:

- Include equity for persons with disabilities at the centre of every action taken by the health sector.
- Ensure the provision of affordable, integrated health services for persons with disabilities close to where they live.
- Strengthen multisectoral collaboration to address structural, social and health system factors that contribute to health inequities for persons with disabilities.

- Include and protect persons with disabilities in health emergency responses.
- Involve persons with disabilities, their families and representative organizations in decision making in the health sector.

Reducing maternal mortality and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and reproductive rights (targets 3.1, 3.7 and 5.6)

Persons with disabilities are often excluded from the provision of sexual and reproductive health care. Based on data from various countries, more than 50 per cent of both women and men with disabilities do not have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS. In addition, more than 50 per cent of women with disabilities do not have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods, do not have the births of their babies attended by skilled health personnel and do not receive a timely postnatal check. Moreover, a majority of women with disabilities do not have autonomy in making decisions about their reproductive health and thus are not empowered to exercise their reproductive rights.

The following actions are recommended:

- Promote and protect the bodily autonomy of persons with disabilities.
- Develop laws and policies that guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health care and reproductive rights for persons with disabilities.
- Make sexual and reproductive health-care services safe and affordable and make health-care facilities, communication and information accessible.
- Train sexual and reproductive health-care workers on disability inclusion.
- Educate persons with disabilities about sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4)

Available data from various countries illustrate the barriers that children with disabilities face in accessing education. While 11 per cent of children with disabilities of primary school age remain out of school, this percentage increases to 32 per cent for children with disabilities of upper secondary school age. Only 30 per cent of children with disabilities achieve reading skills equivalent to those expected at grade 2 of education or higher, compared to 37 per cent of children without disabilities; and 23 per cent achieve numeracy skills compared to 27 per cent of children without disabilities.

A few countries have succeeded in lowering out-of-school rates to very low levels for children with disabilities of primary school age, on par with levels for children without disabilities. Meanwhile, among more than 100 countries with available data, 87 per cent have laws or policies protecting the right to education for persons with disabilities, up from 74 per cent in 2016. At this rate of improvement, all countries could have legislation or policies in place to protect this right by 2030.

In 47 per cent of these countries, there are educational materials to support learners with disabilities, up from 34 per cent in 2016; 38 per cent have accessible physical school environments, up from 18 per cent in 2016; and 17 per cent legally guarantee an inclusive education in which learners with and without disabilities are taught in the same classrooms.

The following actions are recommended:

- Establish inclusive education for persons with disabilities in legislation and policies.
- Expand disability inclusion across all levels of education.
- Implement universal design principles and accessibility in schools and other learning environments.
- Provide access to assistive technologies in education.
- Develop teacher capacities in inclusive education and promote the hiring of teachers with disabilities.
- Foster partnerships among representative organizations of persons with disabilities, communities, parents, caregivers, youth, the educational workforce and other stakeholders to advance inclusive education.
- Foster cross-sectoral approaches to education, including access to health, rehabilitation and social protection.
- Mitigate learning losses among students with disabilities caused by school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (Goal 5)

Women and girls with disabilities face multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination and suffer sexual violence and early marriage: existing data suggests that 8 per cent of women with disabilities feel discriminated against due to their disabilities and 9 per cent due to their gender; that 8 per cent of women with disabilities experienced sexual violence in the past 12 months; and that 7 per cent of girls with disabilities aged 15 to 18 are or have been married.

Women with disabilities appear to be engaged in unpaid work at levels similar to women without disabilities (10 per cent of both). Data from various countries indicate that 3 per cent of women with disabilities work as legislators, senior officials or managers, compared to 4 per cent of women without disabilities. Women with disabilities are underrepresented in national parliaments, local governments and national coordination mechanisms on disability. Only two countries specifically require the inclusion of women with disabilities in electoral lists or in elected local deliberative bodies.

Women with disabilities face barriers in accessing economic resources, financial services and technology. Data suggests that as many as 20 per cent of women with disabilities live in income poverty and that the wages of men with disabilities are 17 per cent higher than those of women with disabilities. By various measures, women with disabilities were found to lag behind men with disabilities in digital access and experience.

Among 190 countries, 38 per cent have a gender equality law or a disability law with specific legal protections for women with disabilities; 27 per cent address the situation of women with disabilities in their domestic violence laws and 16 per cent in their sexual harassment laws. Only 9 per cent of countries have legal requirements for the provision of services to women with disabilities who are survivors of violence; a mere 14 per cent legally protect the parental rights of women with disabilities; and just 3 per cent give specific mention to women with disabilities in their laws on incentives for the employment of persons with disabilities and on reasonable accommodation for workers with disabilities.

Worldwide, 27 per cent of countries now have specific legal protections for women with disabilities in their disability law, up from 18 per cent in 2015. At this rate, only a third of countries are expected to have such legal protections in place by 2030.

The following actions are recommended:

- Develop legislation and policies that protect the rights and promote inclusion of women with disabilities.
- Prohibit forced or coerced reproductive health interventions and guarantee free and informed consent in accessing health services.
- Fund interventions, such as grants and awareness-raising campaigns, to support the equality and empowerment of women with disabilities as experts and leaders.
- Build the capacity of non-governmental organizations to promote the equality and empowerment of women with disabilities.
- Increase the leadership and participation of women with disabilities in decision-making in peace and humanitarian action.
- Guarantee access to vote and the right to stand for election and to hold public office for women with disabilities.
- Establish mechanisms to eliminate violence against women with disabilities and to ensure that victims have access to gender and disability responsive services and support.

Ensuring the availability of water, sanitation and hygiene (Goal 6)

In many countries, persons with disabilities are less likely than persons without disabilities to live in a dwelling with a safe source of drinking water, improved sanitation and a bath/shower on the premises, with gaps reaching over 10 percentage points in some countries.

Studies have suggested that a third of persons with disabilities in developing countries have toilets at their homes that are not accessible. Moreover, in many countries, a third or more of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools, health-care facilities and other public settings are not accessible for persons with disabilities. In developing countries, 42 per cent of public places to obtain drinking water are not accessible for wheelchair users. In developed countries, 33 per cent of public toilets remain inaccessible

for wheelchair users.

Lack of accessible water, sanitation and hygiene facilities impact the lives of women with disabilities, who are more likely than women without disabilities to miss school, work or social activities during their menstrual period.

The following actions are recommended:

- Mainstream disability inclusion in water, sanitation and hygiene policies and programmes.
- Involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in water, sanitation and hygiene policy making and programme implementation.
- Allocate financial resources to promote disability-inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene services in households, schools and health-care facilities.

Ensuring access to energy (Goal 7)

In many countries, access to electricity for persons with and without disabilities is now close to universal. However, for countries with mid to low levels of electricity access, gaps between persons with and without disabilities remain and reach ten percentage points or more in several cases. In various countries, among households that include persons with disabilities, the percentage with access to electricity in rural areas is less than half as high as in urban areas. Accordingly, households with persons with disabilities in rural areas were found to be twice as likely as those in urban areas to use polluting forms of energy, like wood and coal.

Many persons with disabilities rely on assistive technologies powered by electricity for independent living or survival. Yet, in 2023, only 39 per cent of countries appeared to have mechanisms to assist persons with disabilities in using this technology during a power outage, and only two-thirds of these mechanisms were designed in consultation with persons with disabilities.

Access to electricity in schools is crucial to allow the use of electricity-dependent assistive technologies. Worldwide, the latest data indicate that 76 per cent of primary schools have access to electricity, up from 66 per cent in 2015. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 32 per cent of primary schools have access to electricity, up from 30 per cent in 2015.

The following actions are recommended:

- Close the gap in energy access between persons with and without disabilities and close the rural-urban gap as well.
- Prioritize access to electricity for persons with disabilities who require or may benefit from electricity-dependent assistive technologies.
- Take into account the energy costs faced by persons with disabilities in designing social protection systems.

- Include special measures for persons with disabilities in energy programmes, such as social tariffs, grants and discounts.
- Promote modern and clean forms of energy in the households of persons with disabilities.
- Make the necessary investments to ensure universal access to electricity in schools.
- Promote coordination among ministries with mandates on disability, energy, assistive technology and social protection to address energy poverty among persons with disabilities.
- Include persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in governing bodies responsible for energy access.
- Make clean energy transition and climate mitigation policies inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Promoting full and productive employment and decent work (Goal 8)

Only 27 per cent of persons with disabilities are employed globally, compared to 56 per cent of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is 10 per cent, higher than the 8 per cent for persons without disabilities. Youth with disabilities are twice as likely as youth without disabilities to not be in employment, education or training. Persons with disabilities face lower wages and overrepresentation in the informal economy and in self-employment. Globally, the percentage of persons with disabilities in employment would have to increase by at least 2 percentage points per year until 2030 to close the gap between persons with and without disabilities.

Many working places are not accessible and lack measures for reasonable accommodation and assistive technologies. The accessibility of employment agencies to wheelchair users reached 62 per cent in 2022, up from 56 per cent in 2018.

The following actions are recommended:

- Adopt legislation that protects persons with disabilities against discrimination on the basis of disability in all matters of employment.
- Promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the green and digital economies.
- Improve the situation of persons with disabilities working in the informal economy.
- Ensure that training, public employment services and programmes, work-based training and business development services are disability-inclusive.

Increasing access to information and communications technology (target 9.c)

For developing countries, available data indicate that Internet use is 11 percentage points lower for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities. To close this gap, Internet access among persons with disabilities will need to increase by 1.2 percentage points per year until 2030. In Europe, despite progress since 2015, persons with disabilities are still twice as likely as persons without

disabilities to not be able to afford a computer; moreover, 1 per cent of persons with disabilities cannot afford a telephone or television, a percentage that has remained stagnant since 2015. In the least developed countries, on average 20 per cent of persons with disabilities use the Internet, far from the universal access by 2020 called for in SDG target 9.c.

In developing countries, households with persons with disabilities in urban areas appear to be twice as likely to have Internet access compared to those in rural areas. In some countries, the gap between women and men with disabilities exceeds 20 percentage points for Internet use and mobile phone ownership.

Available data indicates that a lower percentage of persons with disabilities report having basic ICT skills, with a gap of 3 percentage points on average compared to persons without disabilities but reaching more than 10 percentage points in several countries.

The vast majority, or 98 per cent, of the top one million websites do not comply with international web content accessibility guidelines, and the same is true for 63 per cent of the online portals of national governments. This lack of accessibility is particularly high in Africa, affecting 87 per cent of countries. Based on available data, in 2022 only 27 per cent of Internet cafes were accessible for wheelchair users, up from 20 per cent in 2019.

In 2020, 69 per cent of countries had a regulatory framework on accessibility of ICT. Europe is the region where these regulations are the most common (85 per cent of countries) and Africa the least (45 per cent).

The following actions are recommended:

- Develop and strengthen the implementation of ICT accessibility policies and regulations.
- Make disability inclusion a core feature of digital development investments and programmes.
- Build capacity on ICT accessibility and universal design, including on easy-to-understand ICT formats.
- Involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in ICT development.
- Provide affordable Internet access for persons with disabilities.
- Promote digital skills training for persons with disabilities.

Reducing inequalities and promoting inclusion (target 10.2)

Community services are beginning to develop in various countries to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities, but data from various countries indicates that gaps remain: among persons with disabilities, 43 per cent indicate that joining community activities is problematic, 22 per cent report needing more personal assistance than they receive, and 44 per cent recognize the need but lack such assistance.

Persons with disabilities who need support to make their own decisions seldom receive this support, and someone else is designated to make decisions for them. Available data indicates that only 34 per cent of persons with disabilities report making decisions about their daily lives, including decisions about where and with whom to live and how to spend money.

The lack of community support systems has pushed persons with disabilities to be placed in institutions, in contravention to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The following actions are recommended:

- Adopt legislation and policies to facilitate access to care and support systems for persons with disabilities.
- Invest in community support and care systems.
- Invest in programmes to assist families of persons with disabilities.
- Build capacity on community inclusion.
- Invest in inclusive infrastructure and services.
- Replace segregated institutions with community-based support.
- Make the care agenda inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices (targets 10.3 and 16.b)

Available data suggests that around one in ten persons with disabilities feel discriminated against on the basis of their disability. To combat such prejudice, countries have been adopting legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in various domains, including employment (79 per cent of countries) and education (54 per cent of countries). However, progress has been too slow to ensure that persons with disabilities in all countries will be legally protected against discrimination by 2030; for direct discrimination in the workplace, for example, progress would need to be twice as fast. Expansion of these legal protections is needed especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Oceania and sub-Saharan Africa.

The following actions are recommended:

- Review laws and policies to abolish discriminatory provisions against persons with disabilities.
- Combat negative stereotypes against persons with disabilities through public campaigns.
- Develop mechanisms for reporting and addressing discrimination.

Making cities and human settlements inclusive and sustainable (Goal 11)

According to data for developing countries, 33 per cent of persons with disabilities indicate that their dwelling is not accessible. In Europe, 5 per cent of persons with disabilities live in severely deprived housing, i.e., overcrowded housing with a leaking roof, no bath or shower, or too dark; and 10 per cent have high housing costs, comprising more than 40 per cent of their disposable income. In North America,

only 1 per cent of rented dwellings meets standards of universal design.

Data from a number of countries indicates that a third of persons with disabilities report that recreational facilities are not accessible; for 28 per cent, modifications would be needed to facilitate their participation. Moreover, 43 per cent of persons with disabilities in developing countries consider the transportation system to be inaccessible. Worldwide, only about 70 per cent of transit stations and platforms and bus stations are accessible to wheelchair users.

In developing countries, the accessibility of transportation has been decreasing since 2018. In developed countries, the accessibility of transit platforms for wheelchair users has been deteriorating; for transit and bus stations, however, accessibility has been increasing. At current rates of change, it is projected 79 per cent of transit stations and 91 per cent of bus stations will be accessible by 2030.

Since 2015, among persons with disabilities in Europe, the percentage who reside in severely deprived housing or for whom housing costs are overly burdensome has decreased. At current rates of change, these percentages are projected to reach 2 and 9 per cent, respectively, by 2030.

Concerning public spaces, at current rates of change, accessibility for wheelchair users is projected to increase from 81 per cent in 2022 to 85 per cent in 2030 for car parking lots, from 73 to 76 per cent for libraries, from 72 to 75 per cent for commercial buildings, from 57 to 60 per cent for buildings, from 52 to 55 per cent for playgrounds and from 51 to 55 per cent for museums.

The following actions are recommended:

- Ensure inclusion and equal participation of persons with disabilities in their communities.
- Build awareness and capacity in accessibility and disability-inclusion among architects, engineers, urban planners and managers.
- Adopt commitments to inclusion, universal design and accessibility for public spaces, roads, pedestrian environments and transportation.
- Establish participatory and accessible mechanisms for inclusive budgeting, planning, design and implementation of urban strategies and policies.

Building resilience and reducing exposure and impact from climate-related hazards, other shocks and disasters (targets 1.5, 11.5 and 11.b and Goal 13)

Persons with disabilities often experience a disproportionate negative impact during and in the aftermath of disasters, at times suffering mortality rates twice as high as for persons without disabilities. Worldwide, 84 per cent of persons with disabilities have no preparedness plan for disasters; 39 per cent would have much difficulty or could not evacuate during a sudden disaster; 28 per cent need but have no one to assist them during an evacuation; 11 per cent indicate that information on disaster management or risk reduction is not accessible; more than 80 per cent are not aware of national and local disaster risk

reduction plans; and 86 per cent are not involved in decision-making processes on community disaster management and risk reduction. In situations of conflict and forced displacement, more than 30 per cent of persons with disabilities find essential services unaffordable or lack accessible transport or physical access to the services.

From 2013 to 2023, many aspects of disaster preparedness deteriorated. For example, the percentage of persons with disabilities who lack a preparedness plan for disasters increased by 12 points; the percentage who need but have no one to assist them to evacuate increased by 15 points; and the percentage who are not aware of national and local disaster risk reduction plans increased by 3 points.

Other aspects of disaster preparedness showed little progress or were stagnant over this period. The percentage of persons with disabilities who are not involved in decision-making processes on community disaster management and risk reduction was the same in 2023 as in 2013; and the percentage who would have much difficulty or not be able to evacuate during a sudden disaster decreased by 2 points.

Available data suggests that accessible formats are increasingly available for laws and policies on climate change adaptation (78 per cent of countries), on disaster risk reduction (96 per cent), on safe evacuation from public buildings (75 per cent), on safe evacuation from private premises (86 per cent), for information on prevention, preparation and recovery from disasters (96 per cent) and early warnings (100 per cent). Most information is only released in accessible doc/pdf, with Braille, easy-to-understand and ePub formats less commonly used. The existing data also indicates that more than 60 per cent of countries consult with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in developing disability-inclusive laws, policies and measures related to climate change, disasters and evacuation.

The following actions are recommended:

- Involve persons with disabilities in decision-making processes on disaster response and humanitarian action.
- Develop laws, policies, standards, checklists and indicators for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness, planning and response and in climate change adaptation.
- Ensure that emergency information, commodities, infrastructure and services are inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Mobilize resources for disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response.
- Raise awareness among persons with disabilities of disaster management plans.
- Build capacity among humanitarian actors on disability inclusion.
- Maintain a register of persons with disabilities that records and maps the needs of persons with disabilities during and after disasters.
- Make post-crisis recovery efforts inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- Ensure protection mechanisms for persons with disabilities in emergency and post-crisis contexts to minimize the risk of exposure to violence, abuse and exploitation.

- Ensure accountability for acts or omissions leading to discrimination against, or the exclusion of, persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and disaster response.

Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources, protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goals 12, 14 and 15)

Persons with disabilities face barriers in acting as agents of change to achieve sustainable patterns of consumption and production and the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources. Worldwide, only 59 per cent of recycling premises are accessible for wheelchair users, down slightly from 60 per cent in 2018; and only 67 per cent of shops selling organic or sustainable products are accessible, up from 60 per cent in 2018.

Persons with disabilities face barriers that limit their participation in environmental activism. In 2021, no references to persons with disabilities were found in the academic literature covering environmental activism among youth and in social media from youth groups engaged in environmental activism. When involved, persons with disabilities are often engaged as environmental learners and given few opportunities to act as environmental advocates or educators.

The following actions are recommended:

- Involve persons with disabilities in environmental discussions and decision-making.
- Make recycling facilities and premises for sustainable products and services accessible to persons with disabilities.

Reducing all forms of violence and ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children (targets 16.1 and 16.2)

In some countries, more than 1 in 6 persons with disabilities are beaten or scolded because of their disability; more than 1 in 3 women and 1 in 12 men with disabilities are victims of sexual violence; and more than 1 in 2 children with disabilities receive severe punishment from their caregivers.

Worldwide, available data indicate that 1 in every 3 children with disabilities suffer neglect as well as sexual, physical or emotional violence; they are twice as likely to encounter such violence as children without disabilities. One of the most common forms of violence is in-person bullying by peers, affecting 37 per cent of children with disabilities. Children with psychosocial disabilities are at greatest risk of sexual violence (with a prevalence of 18 per cent) and maltreatment by adults (36 per cent). Children with multiple disabilities are the most likely to experience in-person and online bullying (47 per cent).

Persons with disabilities are also victims of human trafficking for forced begging, sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ removal, forced participation in armed conflict and theft of their disability benefits.

Countries have taken measures to facilitate the reporting and legal prosecution of violence against persons with disabilities and created accessible services to support them. Available data suggest that, in 2023, 58 per cent of countries had emergency numbers accessible to persons with disabilities, 59 per cent had accessible shelters, and 74 per cent provided mental health and psychological support services to those who are victims of violence.

The following actions are recommended:

- Provide training on combating violence against persons with disabilities among families and parent groups, the justice system, teachers and educational staff, service providers, policymakers and legislators.
- Offer trainings for persons with disabilities on their rights and on skills to keep safe and to present themselves at police stations and courts.
- Establish accessible mechanisms to report violence.
- Make shelters and services for victims of violence accessible.
- Design and implement policies and programmes to address violence against persons with disabilities.
- Promote multi-country collaboration to end the trafficking of persons with disabilities.

Ensuring equal access to justice (target 16.3)

Persons with disabilities face obstacles accessing justice. Guardianship laws remain in place in many countries, depriving persons with disabilities of their legal capacity. The justice system often lacks accessibility features and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. In studies conducted in developing countries, a third of persons with disabilities have reported that courts and police stations are not accessible. In some countries, more than two thirds of persons with disabilities do not have access to legal services when they need them, and many officials throughout the justice system have no training on disability inclusion.

Progress has been made in recent years, with more countries moving away from guardianship laws to systems of “supported decision-making”. There has been slow progress in raising the percentage of courts and police stations accessible to wheelchair users, which grew from 54 per cent in 2018 to 59 per cent in 2022.

The following actions are recommended:

- Promote supported decision-making and abolish laws and policies that impose substituted decision-making in legal proceedings against the will of persons with disabilities.
- Empower persons with disabilities to exercise their legal rights and access justice.
- Make the justice system disability-inclusive.
- Train justice officials on disability inclusion.

Developing inclusive institutions, ensuring inclusive decision-making and reducing bribery and corruption (targets 16.5, 16.6 and 16.7)

National public spending on social programmes for persons with disabilities averages 1 per cent of GDP, a level that has remained stagnant since 2017. A majority of countries, or 77 per cent, offer online government services for persons with disabilities, up from 27 per cent of countries in 2014. At this rate of increase, such services would become available in all countries by 2030.

In various countries, more than 10 per cent of persons with disabilities experience discrimination in public services. Persons with disabilities tend to be underrepresented among public service personnel, with representation lower than half their share in the national population in several countries. In some countries, employed persons without disabilities are twice as likely as persons with disabilities to work as legislators, senior officials or managers. Available data suggests that about 30 per cent of persons with disabilities find voting not accessible.

In 2022, only 66 per cent of town halls, 63 per cent of governmental ministries, and 48 per cent of non-governmental organizations were accessible to wheelchair users. Progress since 2018 has been insufficient. To achieve full accessibility by 2030, progress should be 4 times faster for town halls and 19 times faster for non-governmental organizations. Significant progress has been made since 2018 in the accessibility of governmental ministries, which rose from 42 per cent in 2018 to 63 per cent in 2022, and these premises are on track to achieve full accessibility for wheelchair users by 2030.

Limited data suggests that persons with disabilities are slightly less likely to pay or be asked to pay a bribe when interacting with government officials. During disasters, conflicts and other emergencies, persons with disabilities often encounter bribery when attempting to access services.

The following actions are recommended:

- Eliminate legislation that violates the right of persons with disabilities to vote and to participate in political and public life.
- Ensure that public institutions and public services are accessible.
- Increase the participation of persons with disabilities in national public service.
- Support persons with disabilities who stand for political office.
- Make the voting process accessible.
- Strengthen the skills of persons with disabilities to defend their political rights.
- Prevent and respond to impacts of electoral violence against persons with disabilities.
- Ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the development and implementation of anti-corruption programmes.
- Keep adequate levels of public spending for disability inclusion.

Providing legal identity, including birth registration (target 16.9)

In some countries, birth registration is less likely for children with disabilities than for children without disabilities, and in several countries, more than 50 per cent of children with disabilities remain unregistered. These countries would need to increase the registration rate for children with disabilities by 7 or more percentage points each year to ensure that all children with disabilities are registered by 2030.

The following actions are recommended:

- Conduct studies to identify barriers to register children with disabilities and target efforts to address those barriers.
- Provide online, phone-based or mobile means of birth registration, especially in remote areas and during crises and emergencies.
- Provide disability training for officers responsible for the birth registration process.

Ensuring public access to information (target 16.10)

National laws on access to public information do not always address the needs of persons with disabilities: only 6 per cent of countries mention accessible formats in these laws and only 1 per cent of countries explicitly refer to accessible formats for information online. One barrier to the wider use of sign language in the provision of public information is that just 3 per cent of countries recognize at least one sign language as official language.

To achieve target 16.10 by, for and with persons with disabilities, the following actions are recommended:

- Adopt or revise laws on access to information to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities.
- Train staff involved in access to public information on disability inclusion.
- Allocate resources to ensure accessibility of public information.

Mobilizing official development assistance (target 17.2)

Bilateral aid in support of disability inclusion surpassed 15 billion US dollars in 2021, corresponding to 17 per cent of total bilateral aid. However, only around 3 per cent of disability-inclusion aid targets disability inclusion as the main objective of the activity; for the other 97 per cent, disability inclusion is a secondary objective. The sectors receiving the most disability-inclusion aid are transport and health.

The following actions are recommended:

- Encourage donors to incorporate disability-inclusion in their aid, including for climate action and for combating intersectional discrimination.
- Encourage sectors other than disability inclusion to participate in the coordination of disability-inclusion aid.

- Raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities among the private sector involved in aid.
- Involve representative organizations of persons with disabilities in international cooperation activities.

Enhancing the use of enabling technology (target 17.8)

In countries with low levels of the Human Development Index (HDI), only 11 per cent of the persons who need assistive products can obtain them; in countries with medium levels of the HDI, only 33 per cent. The most frequent barrier is cost, affecting 31 per cent of those who lack the assistive products they need. Although 90 per cent of countries have a financing mechanism to cover, fully or partially, user costs of assistive technology, in practice, these costs are often borne out-of-pocket or by families or friends.

Over the past few years, promising steps have been taken to improve access to assistive technology. More than 80 per cent of countries have laws and regulations to support access to assistive technology. Adequate services, human resources and education on assistive technology has progressed more slowly, with less than 50 per cent of countries providing these. At least seven countries have developed national lists of priority assistive products to facilitate acquisition.

The transfer of assistive technology from developed to developing countries can boost access to this technology worldwide. Innovations are concentrated in a few countries, with more than 80 per cent of patents of assistive technology filed in China, Japan or the United States. Bilateral aid dedicated to providing access to assistive technology is small, corresponding to only 0.1 per cent of all bilateral aid dedicated to disability-inclusion.

The following actions are recommended:

- Improve access to safe, effective and affordable assistive technology.
- Involve users of assistive products, their families and representative organizations of persons with disabilities in policy development and programme planning.
- Include assistive technology in emergency and humanitarian responses.
- Provide technical and financial assistance through international cooperation.
- Encourage local production of assistive products.

International trade (targets 17.10 to 17.12)

Trade can serve as an incentive to promote laws and practices to ensure the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society. Among preferential trade agreements negotiated in 2010-2020, 27 per cent included such clauses, which were entirely absent before 1970.

Trade can also play a major role in the availability and affordability of assistive technology. International trade of assistive products is concentrated in developed countries, which account for 74 per cent of the

value of exports of assistive technology. Imports are similarly concentrated: developed countries account for 82 per cent of the value of imported assistive technology. These shares have remained stagnant since 2014. Europe, Northern America and Oceania import annually more than 50 US dollars of assistive products per capita, compared to less than 10 dollars for Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa.

Many assistive products have tariffs imposed at the border. Worldwide, the average tariff is 5 per cent for wheelchairs, orthotics, prosthetics and hearing aids and 5-10 per cent for glasses and lenses. Behind these average values lies a wide range of tariffs, with some being as high as 35 per cent.

About 20 per cent of countries and territories are parties to trade agreements with preferential tariffs for assistive products. About 80 per cent of such agreements set tariffs at 0 per cent for assistive products. About 20 per cent of least developed countries have such preferential trade agreements.

The following actions are recommended:

- Ensure that international trade agreements do not perpetuate inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities.
- Reduce barriers to international trade of assistive technology.
- Keep commitments on exports of assistive technology during emergencies and crises.
- Promote trade of assistive technology among developing countries.

Increasing the availability of data (target 17.18)

An increasing number of countries collect data on persons with disabilities and use internationally comparable methods to do so. However, the capacity to use these methods is lacking especially in least developed countries. Since 2015, questions developed by the Washington Group of the United Nations Statistical Commission have been used in national surveys in more than 30 countries and in 42 of the 51 countries that collected disability data in censuses. The Model Disability Surveys have been conducted in 14 countries.

The availability of data disaggregated by disability in the UN SDG Indicators Database has increased slowly since 2018. At the current rate, fewer than half of the SDG indicators explicitly requiring disability disaggregation are expected to have such data available by 2030.

The following actions are recommended:

- Integrate and harmonize the collection of disability data in national information systems.
- Use internationally comparable methods to collect data on persons with disabilities.
- Establish and maintain regular and standardized systems for disability data collection; and consider establishing a register of persons with disabilities to produce timely, frequent and accurate data.

- Involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in data production and analysis, especially in census planning and operations.
- Build statistical capacity in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries.
- Create a global, online and accessible repository of data on persons with disabilities.
- Increase the amount of data disaggregated by disability in the UN SDG indicator database.
- Release online and hard copy data in accessible formats for persons with disabilities.