



**United
Nations**

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



Photo Credit: UNDP Afghanistan

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



United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

Note

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the present publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitations of its frontiers. The term “country” as used in the text of this report also refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas. The designations of country groups in the text and the tables are intended solely for statistical or analytical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgement about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process. Mention of the names of firms and commercial products does not imply the endorsement of the United Nations. Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

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

Copyright © 2024 United Nations
All rights reserved

All queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to:

United Nations Publications
405 East 42nd Street, S-11FW001
New York, New York 10017
United States of America

E-mail: publications@un.org; website: <http://shop.un.org>

Requests to reproduce excerpts should be addressed to: permissions@un.org

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

Introduction

Persons with disabilities over the world have persistently faced barriers to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. The UN flagship report, *Disability and Development Report 2018*, was the first stocktaking of the situation of persons with disabilities vis-à-vis the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Goals. That report identified substantial gaps in the implementation of the SDGs for persons with disabilities and, in order to help address this challenge, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, “to provide an update on the Disability and Development Report to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session”.¹ The UN flagship report, *Disability and Development Report 2024 – Accelerating the realization of the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities*, comes at a critical time. It is the second stocktaking of where we stand on key aspects of mainstreaming disability globally in light of the 2030 Agenda and it is released half way in the period 2015-2030 of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This stocktaking is crucial to identify what is needed to make progress for persons with disabilities in society and development and to provide wide-ranging recommendations for transformative change. Ultimately, the report builds on the 2030 Agenda, together with the CRPD, to offer a road map towards a more inclusive and sustainable world.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its 17 SDGs and 169 targets were adopted by all 193 Member States of the United Nations in 2015. It set out a transformative vision for preserving our planet, promoting peace and ensuring that prosperity is shared by all. The central pledge of the 2030 Agenda is to leave no one behind and to reach those furthest behind first. This historic and ambitious Agenda has direct relevance to persons with disabilities, who face numerous barriers to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. The global commitment to the 2030 Agenda recognizes the promotion of the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities as a cross-cutting issue in line with the CRPD, which as of June 2024, counts with 191 ratifications and over a decade and a half of implementation.

In line with the 2030 Agenda and the CRPD, this report aims to place disability squarely at the centre of the sustainable development agenda. It reviews the current situation and progress made so far towards the sustainable development goals and shows that efforts need to be accelerated to ensure that the goals and targets are achieved for persons with disabilities.

The following chapters focus on the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, providing available evidence on the situation and progress for persons with disabilities in relation to each SDG, as well as related best practices. It also identifies possible strategies to mainstream disability in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of each SDG.

The final chapter provides an overview of SDG progress for persons with disabilities and analyses how disability, as a cross-cutting development issue, will impact the ongoing efforts of the international

community towards inclusive and sustainable development.

Definition of disability

The CRPD recognizes “that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.² Similarly, in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health,³ disability is defined as a limitation in a functional domain that arises from the interaction between a person’s intrinsic capacity, and environmental and personal factors.

The overall experience of disability is diverse as it is the combination of limitations in functioning across multiple domains (e.g., walking, seeing), each on a spectrum of severity, from little or no disabilities to severe disabilities, either within a particular domain or across multiple domains. For each domain, the level of functioning a person experiences depends both on the intrinsic capacity of the individual’s body and the features of his or her environment that can either lower or raise the person’s ability to participate in society. Since domains of functioning are on a continuum, in order to determine prevalence of disability some threshold level of functioning needs to be established to distinguish between “persons with disabilities” and “persons without disabilities”.

Countries, in their data collection activities, do not define persons with disabilities uniformly and have adapted practical definitions and thresholds for their own data collections on the basis of their policy needs. National definitions differ in meaning, scope and severity of disability. This report uses country-led data in order to respond to current national circumstances and priorities, while taking into account of methodologies for internationally comparable data developed by international organizations and groups operating under the aegis of United Nations entities. In particular, data produced using the UNICEF/Washington Group Child Functioning Module, the Washington Group Short Set of Questions⁴ and the WHO Model Disability Survey⁵ are identified throughout the report.

Sources of evidence

Over 200 experts from United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, Member States and civil society (including research institutions and representative organizations of persons with disabilities) contributed to this report. Over a dozen major databases of disability statistics, from international agencies and other organizations, were analysed – covering an unprecedented amount of disability data from over 100 countries. These included databases from Demographic and Health Surveys;⁶ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Eurostat;⁷ International Labour Organization; Integrated Public Use Microdata Series;⁸ Organization for Economic Co-operation

and Development; SINTEF;⁹ Sozialhelden;¹⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; United Nations Statistics Division; United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Database; World Bank Group; World Health Organization and World Policy Analysis Center.

The report covers a wider range of data than the Disability and Development Report 2018 and contains the first global attempt to assess progress towards the SDGs for persons with disabilities. It also covers new areas for which no global research was previously available (for example, the role international cooperation and global trade in enabling the inclusion of persons with disabilities). In addition, non-traditional forms of data were explored to complement data gaps: more than 1.7 million data points of crowdsourced data in computer/smartphone applications were examined to inform an analysis of the accessibility of physical spaces, and social media data were used to analyse the involvement of persons with disabilities in climate change activism and in the representation of women in services for persons with disabilities. Finally, reviews of legislation from all 193 United Nations Member States were conducted and analysed for this report to highlight best practices and to assess the current status of discriminatory laws and inclusive policies.

Assessment of progress

Throughout the report, an assessment of progress is conducted for relevant indicators with data available over time. This progress is evaluated by forecasting the estimate for the target year, which for most SDG indicators is 2030 but for a few of them is 2025 or was 2020.¹¹ Based on these analyses, the report indicates whether the respective target is expected to be met by the target year, if the situation has deteriorated or stagnated, or if there was progress but this progress has been insufficient (i.e., if trends observed so far continue, the target will not be met by the target date). In the latter case, the report also indicates the acceleration in the observed trend needed to meet the target by the target date. Higher acceleration means that more intense efforts are needed to meet the target.

For indicators with an explicit numerical target, this analysis uses this as the target. For indicators without an explicit numerical target, where relevant, the assessment is based on closing the gap between persons with and without disabilities by the target date.

The concluding chapter presents an overview of SDG progress, which summarizes this assessment for all goals.