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## Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups**

## **Monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**

### **Note by the Secretary-General**

1. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, contained in the annex to its resolution 48/96.
2. Section IV, paragraph 2, of the Standard Rules stipulates that the rules should be monitored within the framework of the sessions of the Commission for Social Development. The appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor their implementation is in accordance with section IV of the Standard Rules.
3. In 2009, the Secretary-General appointed Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa) Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development for the period from 2009 to 2011.
4. In 2011, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2011/27, decided to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for the period from 2012 to 2014.
5. The Special Rapporteur delivered an oral report and presented his annual reports to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-eighth, forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions and at its fifty-second session ([E/CN.5/2014/7](#)).
6. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2014/6, requested the Special Rapporteur to submit to the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-third session an annual report on his activities in implementing the resolution.
7. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission the report of the Special Rapporteur on disability pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/6.



## **Report of the Special Rapporteur on disability to the Commission for Social Development**

### **I. Introduction**

1. This is my fifth and final report to the Commission for Social Development, covering my activities pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/6 and in accordance with the provisions set forth in section IV of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.
2. The present report covers my activities during the period from November 2013 to October 2014.
3. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to Member States and United Nations agencies and to the staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat who assisted me throughout the period of my mandate as Special Rapporteur. It was a great privilege to serve as the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development, and I am enormously grateful for the support that I received from Member States and from individuals in the United Nations agencies.

### **II. Background**

4. The current positive developments in the area of disability can be traced back to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
5. Although the Millennium Development Goals did not specifically refer to disability, that framework nevertheless allowed for a process of advocacy by disability leaders in civil society, along with Governments and development agencies, to raise awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities and the imperative of inclusive development.
6. Both the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex) and the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (see [A/68/970](#)) take into account the need for full inclusiveness and reflect an effort to acknowledge the needs of people with disabilities in some of the development priorities.
7. In my previous report, I mentioned the importance of the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and its outcome document, on the theme “The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond” (General Assembly resolution 68/3).
8. The key commitments contained in the outcome document of the high-level meeting referred to the need for inclusive education, accessibility, social protection and employment and improved collection of data on disability, among other commitments.

9. It is encouraging to note that the commitments made by the international community during the high-level meeting are already beginning to be realized. In this regard, the recognition of some of those commitments in the proposed sustainable development goals warrants mention.

10. Clearer commitments to disability could have been made in the current draft of the sustainable development goals, as well as in the related targets and indicators. It is critically important that reference be made to the measurement of the situation of persons with disabilities, so that progress made and obstacles faced in realizing development goals for persons with disabilities are monitored effectively.

11. Meanwhile, we continue to witness an increase in the number of ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As at 2 November 2014, there were 159 signatories to the Convention and 92 signatories to the Optional Protocol, and 151 ratifications of the Convention and 85 ratifications of the Optional Protocol.

12. The seventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held at United Nations Headquarters from 10 to 12 June 2014. Discussions were held on the following themes: incorporating the provisions of the Convention into the post-2015 development agenda; youth with disabilities; and national implementation and monitoring.

### **III. Activities of the Special Rapporteur on disability**

#### **A. Monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules and synergy between the Standard Rules and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

13. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolutions 2011/27 and 2012/11, I have a mandate to act as an interface between Governments, the United Nations system and disabled persons' organizations in pursuing global and regional efforts to advance the disability agenda in the following areas, with a special focus on Africa. I therefore continued:

(a) To raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules;

(b) To promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability issues in development programmes and strategies at the national, regional and international levels;

(c) To promote both international cooperation, including technical cooperation, that is inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities and the exchange and sharing of expertise and best practices on disability issues;

(d) To collaborate, in fulfilment of the above-mentioned tasks, with all relevant stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities.

14. In December 2013, I attended a meeting on disability mainstreaming at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). It was the second meeting on disability

and development organized by ECA and focused on further mainstreaming disability in the policy and programmes of ECA.

15. In January 2014, at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, I attended a round-table discussion on disability and development. The discussion focused on the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland to disability and human rights. I also met with members of Finnish organizations of persons with disabilities, in particular the organizations involved in providing support to disabled persons' organizations in the developing countries.

16. In April 2014, I travelled to Cairo at the invitation of Disabled People's International to attend the launch of its Arab regional structure. It was encouraging to witness the formation of new regional civil society frameworks in a region where such had not been formally established in the past.

17. During that mission, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the League of Arab States to discuss their ongoing work in the area of disability and development.

18. In May 2014, I travelled to Niger to attend the annual general meeting of the West African Federation of Associations for the Advancement of Disabled Persons and to meet with officials of the Government of Niger and the United Nations agencies working in the country. I had the opportunity to meet with officials of the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to discuss their work in the area of disability and the challenges that they faced working in that area in the country. One of the glaring challenges in Niger was the extreme poverty experienced by persons with disabilities.

19. In June 2014, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities invited me to address their annual general assembly. I also met with members of provincial human rights commissions, parliamentarians and representatives of the local chapter of Amnesty International.

20. Towards the end of June 2014, I attended the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention review meeting in Maputo. The Convention provides that States make a specific promise to assist and guarantee the rights of landmine survivors. In fulfilling that promise, the States parties to the Convention have formally expressed that landmine victim assistance should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to human rights, disability, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction.

21. I participated in a round-table discussion and encouraged the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to work closely with existing structures on disability at both the global and local levels, given that there are synergies between the objectives of the two instruments.

22. In August 2014, I visited Kyrgyzstan and met with the Minister for Social Affairs responsible for disability, the Vice-Minister of Education and other government representatives, the Chair of the Human Rights Commission and the leaders of disability organizations in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the United Nations country team.

23. Kyrgyzstan is not yet party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Part of my mission was designed to encourage the Government of Kyrgyzstan to ratify the Convention. In this connection, I provided advice on the

implementation of development priorities in the country. I noticed that the Government faced several challenges with regard to responding to the needs of persons with disabilities and the need to focus more resources on such issues as environmental accessibility, education, employment and health care.

24. After my visit to Kyrgyzstan, I travelled to Tajikistan at the invitation of national organizations of persons with disabilities. The situation in Tajikistan was very similar to that of Kyrgyzstan, with well-developed organizations in civil society but a persistent gap that existed between the demands of those organizations and the policy and programme delivery of the Government. The Government of Tajikistan, however, is working to ratify the Convention and has engaged the United Nations country team to provide assistance in that process.

## **B. Mainstreaming disability in development**

### **Member States**

25. States Members of the United Nations are in the process of developing a new set of development goals, also referred to as the sustainable development goals, as part of the post-2015 development agenda. The proposed goals and targets on sustainable development clearly state that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world. The poorest of the poor are persons with disabilities, and an estimated 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in the developing world. It is therefore imperative that persons with disabilities be included in all development initiatives arising out of the post-2015 development goals.

26. According to the proposal of the Open Working Group, the proposed sustainable development goals include:

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Build sustainable infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

27. The list contains a number of specific references to disability, for instance in the goals dealing with education, inclusive, safe and sustainable human settlements and data and monitoring. Other areas that could be strengthened through a reference to persons with disabilities include the goals dealing with ending poverty and hunger and ensuring healthy lives for all.

28. It is important that the goals make a clear reference to persons with disabilities in relation to social protection floors. This is of critical importance, especially for the least developed countries, where the poverty of persons with disabilities is most glaring. Persons with disabilities in the least developed countries urgently need health care, both of a preventive nature, such as polio vaccinations, and rehabilitation services and health-care support. Women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence and neglect and warrant specific targeting in the post-2015 development goals.

29. The outcome document of the high-level meeting highlighted the role of civil society organizations in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the post-2015 development agenda. Being part of the discussions on the sustainable development goals is a laudable achievement, yet enhanced efforts need to be made to ensure that such references are retained in the targets and indicators of the goals as they are being negotiated. Even more importantly, implementation of the goals will require ongoing and participatory monitoring.

30. Together with the outcome document of the high-level meeting and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the sustainable development goals and the emerging post-2015 development agenda offer a critical opportunity to mainstream and further include the needs of persons with disabilities.

31. The potential of the annual Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with its mandate to promote the implementation of the Convention, could also be further explored with a view to advancing disability-inclusive development. The Conference could contribute to mainstreaming disability in development policies and to their implementation, as well as to monitoring and evaluation to track the progress made and obstacles faced and provide feedback to Member States.

#### **United Nations system**

32. The Secretary-General, in his recent report entitled “Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards

2015 and beyond” ([A/69/187](#)), reviewed recent developments in ongoing intergovernmental processes and assessed opportunities to include disability in the emerging global development framework. The report highlights major challenges in the advancement of the status of persons with disabilities in development. Key challenges highlighted include the lack of disability-inclusive development policies, processes and programmes; the lack of consistent and reliable collection, analysis and monitoring and evaluation of disability data and statistics, in particular the lack of global comparability and coordination; the need for greater international cooperation in the follow-up to the high-level meeting; and the need for continuing efforts towards a disability-inclusive post-2015 agenda at the global, regional and national levels.

33. In follow-up to the high-level meeting, during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly Member States are negotiating a new resolution with a focus on reviewing the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level meeting and providing direction on realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, as well as mainstreaming disability in the next phase of the development agenda beyond 2015.

34. The increased recognition given to the disability perspective in the ongoing processes leading to the post-2015 development agenda can be attributed to greater awareness of the needs of people with disabilities within and beyond the United Nations system. In this regard, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs continues to play a key role within the United Nations system. On 3 December 2013, the Department, with support from and in collaboration with the President of the General Assembly and the Governments of Finland, Japan, Kenya, the Philippines, Spain and Tunisia, organized a series of events and activities on financial inclusion, mental well-being and disability and development to observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2013 under the theme “Break barriers, open doors: for an inclusive society and development for all”.

35. Accessibility is a critical precondition to facilitating the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. Efforts and progress continued in improving accessibility in the United Nations, in such areas as access to information, meetings and platforms. The Accessibility Centre at United Nations Headquarters, inaugurated on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2013, is one example of advances within the Secretariat. The Interdepartmental Task Force on Accessibility has also advanced the development of a comprehensive policy on accessibility for the United Nations Secretariat, which was issued as Secretary-General’s bulletin [ST/SGB/2014/3](#) of 19 June 2014. The policy indicates the ongoing commitment of the United Nations to eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability in the Secretariat and to advancing reasonable accommodation measures to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, including staff members with disabilities, to gain access to facilities, conferences and services, documentation and information and professional development on an equal basis with others.

36. In June 2014, the second forum on disability and development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs included a round-table discussion on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and resilience to take stock of progress in including disability in disaster risk reduction policy and practices.

37. On 23 October 2014, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, together with the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, co-chaired a conference on disability statistics in London. The conference served as a follow-up to promote the dissemination of the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on Disability Data and Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation: The Way Forward, a Disability-Inclusive Development Agenda towards 2015 and Beyond, held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris from 8 to 10 July 2014. The conference in London worked to encourage the strengthening and mainstreaming of disability data and statistics in development cooperation based on the recommendations issued by the Expert Group Meeting. The conference focused on the use of the Washington Group short question set<sup>1</sup> and discussed the integration of disability components into broader statistical data collection efforts to address some of the inconsistencies and persistent challenges in the collection of national data on persons with disabilities. The conference was framed in the context of the emerging post-2015 development framework and the notion of “leaving no one behind” in future development actions.

38. The Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities met on 14 and 15 October by videoconference and decided to further strengthen its collaboration in the promotion of a disability-inclusive post-2015 agenda and in relation to inclusive emergency and humanitarian responses and disaster risk reduction for persons with disabilities. A thematic working group on disasters and conflict will be established to review the current activities of the Inter-Agency Support Group and to develop a workplan for strengthening United Nations inclusion of disability in disaster risk reduction, emergencies and humanitarian crises.

39. UNDP, through the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, played an important role in raising awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and supporting the implementation of the Convention. I met with representatives of a number of UNDP country offices supported by the Partnership, where I observed the successful implementation of the Partnership’s programmes in Member States such as Ethiopia, the Republic of Moldova and South Africa.

40. The World Health Organization recently launched the Global Cooperation on Assistive Health Technology, a good example of further promoting accessibility as both a goal and a means of development for all by engaging broad-based partnerships with Governments, civil society and the private sector to ensure access by persons with disabilities to quality and affordable assistive health products and to advance disability-inclusive development.

### **Development in Africa**

41. Steady progress is being made towards the establishment of the African Disability Forum, which was a major priority that I identified. Working with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and in collaboration with ECA and the African Union, I organized a meeting in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 November 2014 to discuss the proposed constitution of and other documentation for establishing the

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<sup>1</sup> Available from [www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1617](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1617).



Forum. The meeting served as the formal launch of the Forum, and approximately 60 delegates, participants from all the regions of the continent and leaders from diverse disability backgrounds, along with representatives from ECA, the African Union and development partner organizations, participated at the launch of the Forum.

42. Once established, in the next few years the African Disability Forum will continue its close cooperation with the United Nations and seek broad collaboration with partners within and beyond the region to promote the disability agenda in Africa on a sustainable basis.

43. The African Union Commission has undertaken regional consultative meetings to discuss the implementation of the Social Policy Framework for Africa, which includes disability. A regional consultative meeting was held in the East African region in July 2014, and a second meeting will be held on 18 and 19 November in the Southern African region. The purpose of the consultative meetings was to discuss the implementation of the Framework, as well as the Continental Plan of Action for the Extended African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019), and to gather inputs to the draft protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of persons with disabilities. The meeting also aims to consult on the training needs of senior government officials and representatives of disabled persons' organizations.

44. Further objectives of the African Union Commission's consultative meetings are to familiarize States members of the African Union with the new African Union disability architecture and to discuss the new monitoring and evaluation framework that will focus on the implementation of the Continental Plan of Action.

45. At the consultative meetings, a toolkit on disability in Africa will also be presented to the States members of the African Union.

### **C. Fostering disability-inclusive international development**

46. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 2008/20 and 2011/27, requested the Special Rapporteur to act as a catalyst to promote international and technical cooperation on disability issues, including by identifying strategic areas for the exchange and sharing of expertise, best practices and knowledge and information.

47. During the reporting period, I had the opportunity to visit Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Initial networks with organizations of women with disabilities in both countries facilitated my visits. The purpose of the visits was to encourage the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to share experiences and my observations of the ratification and implementation of all international standards concerning disability in different Member States.

48. I also shared information on the human rights-based approach to development and programming with government representatives and disabled persons' organizations and met with senior members of the Government of Kyrgyzstan. During my visit to the country, I emphasized the approach of progressive realization of the Convention, noting that there were some concerns about expectations and capacity to fully implement the Convention.

49. I encouraged organizations of women with disabilities in both countries to meet and cooperate with other organizations in the rest of the world, so that they may be able to observe and learn from some of the successes and challenges that others have encountered.

50. During my interaction with the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, I encouraged relevant stakeholders to work more closely with the current disability community, such as the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Geneva and the secretariat of the Convention in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

51. In Cairo, I met with the League of Arab States and the officials responsible for disability issues. I facilitated the attendance of the officials of the League at the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June 2014; it was the League's first time to be represented at the Conference.

#### **D. Promoting awareness-raising and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules and other international instruments**

52. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 2008/20 and 2011/27, requested the Special Rapporteur to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and other disability-related international instruments.

53. I raised the high-level meeting and its outcome document with members of the Governments of Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Tajikistan during my visit to those countries. I also strongly suggested that those States contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the post-2015 development goals, with a view to incorporating disability concerns and perspectives.

54. In addition, I discussed issues related to the post-2015 development agenda with the leaders of civil society organizations, particularly during my visit to Niger, as it was clear that the issues that they raised with regard to extreme poverty needed to be heard.

#### **E. Collaborating with civil society**

55. My mandate as Special Rapporteur required me to work with civil society organizations, in particular the leaders who represent persons with disabilities.

56. Within my mandate, I have endeavoured to be accessible to all organizations and have worked with all without favour. I especially focused on organizations that represent marginalized groups and those that represent the least developed countries. During the reporting period, several of my missions, for instance to Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Tajikistan, were made possible through the invitation of the national organizations of persons with disabilities in those countries.

## **F. Vulnerable groups within communities of persons with disabilities**

57. During my term, I worked very closely with such organizations as the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and organizations in Africa and in the least developed countries. In supporting those organizations, I was able to assist with the challenges that some of them faced.

58. The establishment of the African Disability Forum was also conceived to ensure that the voice of the marginalized, including persons with mental health issues and their organizations, would be heard within and beyond the regional and global levels when such important issues as the sustainable development goals are discussed.

## **IV. Observations, conclusions and recommendations**

59. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities remain a practical framework that defines obstacles and barriers and provides guidelines on what needs to be done to achieve equalization of opportunities across the board in any given society. The adoption and entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, although a historic milestone, should not signify that the Standard Rules are to be ignored.

60. In the many meetings and encounters in all regions and countries that I had over the years in my capacity as Special Rapporteur, it became clear that the political will of Member States to achieve equalization of opportunities was fairly strong. The rapid ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by States can be cited as one of the most notable signs in this regard.

61. However, as recognized repeatedly by the General Assembly, the existing gaps between commitments and practices on the ground clearly illustrate the challenges ahead of us.

62. Based on decades of experience in implementing and monitoring the Standard Rules and my personal experience as Special Rapporteur over the past six years, I would like to share some observations and recommendations for further strengthening the future work of the United Nations in promoting the rights of and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in all parts of the world.

63. The existence of conventions and other international normative frameworks concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, although extremely important, does not automatically change the situation of persons with disabilities. A heightened level of awareness and knowledge of persons with disabilities and their needs, rights, abilities and contributions is needed at all levels. A positive shift in attitudes towards persons with disabilities to regard them as rights holders and both agents and beneficiaries of development is also needed.

64. One important experience and lesson learned over the years from the implementation of the Standard Rules is that disability should be appreciated and addressed as a cross-cutting issue in development policies and programmes that deal with poverty eradication, urban and rural planning and construction, public transportation, development of information and communications technologies, disaster risk reduction and resilience, universal access to education and social protection floor, among other issues.

65. Commitments to the advancement of persons with disabilities shall be reflected in more concrete terms, in macroeconomic and microeconomic and social policies, with specific legal and policy measures and actions and resource commitments. For instance, investment is needed in promoting accessibility in all aspects of life so that persons with disabilities can participate in society on an equal basis and their abilities and contributions to development are fully liberated.

66. Another important aspect is the establishment and enhancement of United Nations system and regional and national institutional mechanisms to implement, coordinate and monitor and evaluate relevant policies for mainstreaming disability and for the inclusion of the perspectives and concerns of persons with disabilities in all aspects of economic and social development.

67. Since a lack of resources and capacity has been commonly cited as a persistent barrier to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in policies and programmes in many developing countries and, particularly, least developed countries, a focus on international cooperation in the field of disability should be advanced as one of the most effective ways to accelerate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Standard Rules. International cooperation should also include the exchange of expertise and technical cooperation and support.

68. At the international level, disability should be placed higher on the agenda of the work of the United Nations system. Institutional structures for existing political processes need to be strengthened to ensure systematic monitoring and progress within the United Nations system. Mainstreaming of disability in all development agendas and efforts, including in the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda, needs to be recognized as a priority, especially in the work of the United Nations, including the Commission for Social Development. Without the inclusion of the rights, concerns and perspectives of more than 1 billion persons with disabilities, no development goals can be truly achieved.

69. The role played by organizations of persons with disabilities has always been one of the most important contributing factors to retaining disability rights and development issues within the sphere of interest of and as a priority in all agendas. It is important that such organizations be accorded a greater role in policymaking, planning, and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policy and programming at the international, regional, national and local levels.

70. I would like to make the following specific recommendations:

(a) **The post-2015 development agenda should give due consideration to the conditions of extreme poverty and social exclusion that exist disproportionately among persons with disabilities and should include specific targets and indicators to measure progress in the achievement of goals for persons with disabilities. To that end, Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders should further improve coordination among existing international processes and mechanisms to advance disability-inclusive development in the global agenda;**

(b) **The Commission for Social Development should consider options for establishing a standing mechanism to systematically review and monitor progress in realizing all internationally agreed development goals for persons**

with disabilities towards and beyond 2015 and to promote coordination, effective implementation and synergies among United Nations programmes;

(c) With a view to integrating the perspectives and rights of persons with disabilities in development agendas and social policies, collection and reporting of disability data and statistics should be improved and expedited by Member States, in accordance with the decision of the Statistical Commission to provide standardized data collection methods so as to facilitate international comparability and disaggregation of all available data by disability;

(d) The Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as a United Nations mechanism established under the Convention, should include disability, poverty and development in annual sessions in line with the Convention;

(e) More efforts and initiatives, such as the Global Cooperation on Assistive Health Technology programme of the World Health Organization, are needed to further promote accessibility as a means of and a goal in achieving development inclusive of persons with disabilities. Assistive and accessible technologies should also be considered in the implementation of all development policy and strategies, in particular disaster risk reduction and resilience, as well as anti-poverty policy and programmes for persons with disabilities;

(f) Accessibility should be an integral part of the work of the United Nations and should be promoted progressively in all aspects, including its premises, communication and human resource management, as well as in conference documentation and services. In this regard, relevant institutional and resource arrangements should be made, including, as a temporary measure, establishing a fund for accessibility and reasonable accommodation to meet the accessibility requirements of the United Nations.

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