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**Social development: social development, including questions
relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing,
disabled persons and the family**

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

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

    The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/140, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its sixty-ninth session on the progress made in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda.

    A major development since the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly has been the adoption of the outcome document 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, in September 2013, which gives new impetus to the international community to follow a path of development that is inclusive of persons with disabilities.

    The present report covers recent initiatives to include disability in development processes, based on information contributed by Governments and entities of the United Nations system, as well as other data available to the Secretariat. While these actions have produced encouraging results, significant shortfalls remain. All stakeholders need to redouble their efforts in order to deliver on the commitments made at the international level. The operationalization of policies at the

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programming level, the full use of the potential of development cooperation for disability mainstreaming and strengthening of the coordination of activities to gather reliable and internationally comparable disability data can lead to rapid progress towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. The report concludes with recommendations for strengthening efforts in those three key areas.

I. Introduction

1.	In its resolution 67/140, the General Assembly expressed its concern about the invisibility of persons with disabilities in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals. The resolution stressed the need for the international community to take action, including undertaking measures to collect reliable data and information in order to assess the progress of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the resolution welcomed the holding of the high-level meeting on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and the contribution that its outcome document would make in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda towards 2015 and beyond. Lastly, the Assembly requested information on the implementation of the resolution, to be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

2.	In accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/124, the Assembly held the high-level meeting, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on 23 September 2013. At the meeting, Member States adopted an action-oriented outcome document entitled "The way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond" (resolution 68/3).

3.	At this critical juncture, in concluding the Millennium Development Goals and building a post-2015 development agenda, the international community aspires to promote inclusive economic development, social progress and environmental sustainability that would respond to the needs of all people. Building on the existing international framework on disability and development, the outcome document of the high-level meeting has re-energized the commitment to move global efforts towards disability-inclusive development to the next level. Since the early 1980s, the United Nations has been advancing global efforts towards the achievement of disability-inclusive development and a disability-inclusive society, in which persons with disabilities participate, as both agents and beneficiaries, in all aspects of development. The international community is now at a critical point, where it needs to translate this commitment into practical actions and concrete results.

4.	The present report provides an overview of ongoing efforts to mainstream disability as an integral part of the global development agenda. The report reviews the extent to which the current work on the post-2015 development framework has addressed and included the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities. It also discusses the role of the United Nations in promoting better coordination for disability-inclusive development. The report summarizes the efforts of Member States and entities of the United Nations system, providing specific examples of responsive policies as well as relevant measures that address disability in development policies and programmes. The report concludes with proposals to address continuing gaps between policy and practice and makes recommendations for concrete steps towards a disability-inclusive global development agenda.

II. Current status of disability inclusion in international development frameworks

5.   The Millennium Development Goals represent a concerted effort to address global poverty. However, persons with disabilities have not been included nor are they visible in the goals or targets and indicators that operationalize this framework. Although remarkable progress has been made in meeting many of the Millennium Development Goal targets, it is difficult to assess whether and how persons with disabilities have been affected by the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals or benefited from its related activities.[1]

6.   Internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be genuinely achieved only if persons with disabilities, and their perspectives, are included in these goals, as well as in targets, analysis, monitoring and evaluation. Through a series of resolutions,[2] the General Assembly has sought urgent action to ensure the realization of internationally agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals, for the estimated 1 billion persons globally living with disabilities. At the same time, the international community has augmented its efforts to address the gap between global commitments and practice on the ground through such efforts as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals draws closer, global, regional and national efforts to include disability in development processes and practices associated with the Goals have gained momentum.

7.   Within mainstream development frameworks, disability has been authenticated as a cross-cutting development issue. It is encouraging to note that the 2013 report entitled "A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015" (see A/68/202) recommended the inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting issue across the successor set of goals and targets.

8.   The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development launched a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals that would build on the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the post-2015 development agenda. The outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want", includes specific references to disability and accessibility, highlighting the fact that sustainable development requires the participation of persons with disabilities. The document also includes references to the responsibilities of States to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and to the enhancement of policies that support equal access and equal opportunities with regard to welfare and education as well as sustainable cities and transportation (see resolution 66/288).

9.   Through the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the intergovernmental process established as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the international community is building a new global development framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals. The sustainable development goals are based on a common understanding that there

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[1] See A/64/180, A/65/173, A/66/128, A/67/211 and A/68/95.
[2] See resolutions 64/131, 65/186, 66/124, 67/140 and 68/3.

is a need, in any future development framework, to incorporate the fundamental principles of human rights, address the negative impact of inequality on development and emphasize the importance of sustainability. It is promising to observe that, through a twin-track approach, the disability perspective has become more visible in the current work of the Open Working Group.

10.   In the summaries of the thematic sessions by the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group,[3] disability merited special attention, and existing barriers in the areas of health; human rights and discrimination; cities and urban development; and access to public services were emphasized and recognized as requiring urgent action to ensure that persons with disabilities could reach their maximum potential and achieve their full and equal participation in society. The Open Working Group also emphasized that there is an urgent need to mainstream the perspective and situation of persons with disabilities in the emerging sustainable development goals in order to achieve inclusive, just and equitable societies.

11.   The high-level meeting and its outcome document decisively encouraged the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the emerging post-2015 development agenda. It further called for action in the following thematic areas: education; health care; social protection; employment and decent work; strengthening and supporting research to promote knowledge and understanding of disability and development; humanitarian programming and response, including disaster risk reduction; increasing social awareness; and women and children with disabilities. Section III includes examples of measures and progress in this regard.

III.   Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the high-level meeting

12.   In response to a note verbale dated 4 April 2014, from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs 21 Member States[4] and 10 entities of the United Nations system[5] provided information on progress made towards the realization of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities. The submissions also provided specific priorities for action towards a disability-inclusive post-2015 development agenda, and some[6] provided data and analysis from recent research on persons with disabilities.

13.   Most reports indicate the persistence of a wide gap in the achievement of developmental outcomes between persons with and without disabilities, particularly

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[3] See Co-Chairs summary bullet points from sessions 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9, available at
http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html.

[4] Australia, Austria, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

[5] The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) , the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization.

[6] Australia, Colombia, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain and Sweden.

in relation to access to employment and decent work, participation in education and access to information and communications technology. It was also commonly reported that women and girls with disabilities continue to experience higher degrees of discrimination, inequality and even violence than those without disabilities.

A. Member States

14. The following section highlights examples of efforts undertaken by Member States to mainstream disability in development processes.

1. Towards a disability-inclusive agenda

15. A number of Member States emphasized efforts to incorporate disability and inclusive development in their national and international priorities in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Jordan recommended the inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting priority, and noted that disability should also be considered as a stand-alone goal. Sweden made explicit references to persons with disabilities in its priority goals that relate to freedom from violence and access to quality education for the post 2015-agenda. Greece and Norway recognized that special attention should be accorded to persons with disabilities and that disability is an integral and cross-cutting issue in their national position papers. Finland reiterated that special attention should be given to marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, in the ongoing work towards a post-2015 development framework.

2. Development cooperation

16. Many donor States highlighted efforts to institutionalize strategies for disability mainstreaming within their development cooperation initiatives beyond 2015. Australia announced a new disability-inclusive development strategy for its international aid and development programme from 2014 onward. Austria released a manual that provides clear guidelines for including persons with disabilities throughout the project management cycle. Italy included disability as a priority issue in its development cooperation action plan for the period 2014-2016. Denmark reported persons with disabilities as a target group in its humanitarian action framework. Sweden included persons with disabilities as one of its five main target groups for aid. Spain incorporated a specific indicator for disability in its international development cooperation framework for monitoring future cooperation programmes. Finland increased funding for its international cooperation and development programme by €3 million for development projects that target disability.

3. Disability-inclusive national development plans and strategies

17. A number of Member States reported the inclusion of disability as a national priority in development plans, programmes and policies. Mexico issued a national development plan for the period 2014-2018 that establishes objectives, strategies and actions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in national development efforts. Indonesia identified persons with disabilities as a priority in a draft national midterm development plan for the period 2015-2019, and also issued a national action plan on disabilities for the period 2013-2022. Colombia reported efforts to mainstream disability in key public policies, including the issuance of a national policy of disability and social inclusion for the period 2014-2022.

4. Data and statistics on disability

18.   Many Member States reported efforts to strengthen the knowledge base on disabilities, implementing a range of research activities, including conducting targeted research on specific groups among persons with disabilities and integrating disability in national surveys and other data collection activities.

19.   Norway reported statistics on disability for a number of indicators in public policy areas, including family issues; social inclusion and participation in education; physical accessibility; employment; access to information and communications technology; and violence. Australia initiated research on disability in countries that are the recipients of aid, including on the issue of women and disability in Cambodia, and hosted a symposium on disability research in August 2014. The Republic of Korea implemented a number of disability-specific surveys as well as general surveys, including data disaggregated by disability. Romania introduced a national study on accessibility in physical environments and on information and communications environments for persons with disabilities. Colombia disaggregated national statistics and research data by disability. Jordan partnered with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to incorporate the Group's short set of questions in its census in 2015.

5. Laws and legislation, policies and regional frameworks

20.   Several Member States reported legislative and policy measures to support national implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Switzerland reported its ratification of the Convention. The Russian Federation was developing new legislation at the federal level for amendments to social security acts for persons with disabilities. Colombia and Indonesia pursued legislation to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. Singapore promulgated new policies to improve accessibility to public service and to provide tax subsidies for caregivers of persons with disabilities, while Norway increased its funding for inclusive education by 15 per cent.

21.   Some Member States reported their increased support to strengthen the role of organizations of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, including policy development. Australia, Italy and Norway funded the capacity-building component in recipient countries, while the Philippines and Romania strengthened support for the capacity-building of national organizations of persons with disabilities to enable them to be included in national policymaking processes.

22.   Member States also reported efforts to strengthen regional frameworks for disability-inclusive development and the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities. In the Asia and Pacific region, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea reported on their intensified efforts to implement the Incheon Strategy[7] in national policies and programmes. The Republic of Moldova introduced minimum quality standards into its national programmes and regulations for support services for persons with disabilities, drawing on European Union policies and standards. Kenya reported efforts to implement the Nairobi Declaration: Inclusive Post-2015 Development Agenda for Persons with Disabilities in Africa and its targets for persons with disabilities.

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[7] Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP, Bangkok, November 2012 (ST/ESCAP/2648).

6. **Challenges to mainstreaming disability in development**

23. Some countries reported on a number of obstacles to the implementation of inclusive development strategies and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in this regard. In particular, they noted challenges in removing barriers to education for children with disabilities, including a lack of sufficient resources and a continuing gap between policy and practice, as well as a persistent gap in income and employment between persons with and without disabilities. A number of countries addressed the challenge of economic and social barriers to services and programmes for persons with disabilities, with developing countries addressing the continuing barriers to political and civil participation of persons with disabilities.

B. **Progress on the inclusion of disability in programmes of work in the context of the post-2015 development agenda by the United Nations system**

24. The United Nations system has continued to innovate and to support the development and implementation of technical, regional and national initiatives to mainstream disability in global issues. A number of United Nations entities have taken steps to promote disability in the post-2015 development agenda. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is leading the dialogue on an inclusive post-2015 framework and has organized a number of events and platforms to promote it. The Department supported the organization of a high-level meeting on disability and development and secured the participation of multiple stakeholders, particularly organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparatory processes and the meeting itself. The Department continued to prompt multi-stakeholder dialogues through a number of consultations, forums and expert meetings, including expert group meetings in 2013 and 2014. The high-level meeting examined disability statistics, monitoring and evaluation, and discussed strategies to integrate targets and measurements for goals related to persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development framework. Together with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the Department also held an event on disaster resilience and disability. The event raised awareness concerning the invisibility of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and advocated for urgent action to include disability in all aspects of disaster risk-reduction policies, programmes and processes. The high-level meeting also examined both previous experience and new ideas for advancing the inclusion of disability in disaster risk-reduction policies, programmes and processes.

25. The regional commissions continued to support Member States in their efforts to implement policies and programmes to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean supported Member States in creating a regional task force on disability measurement that will prepare a regional report on the status of persons with disabilities. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific supported the first session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2013-2022. The Working Group recommended the strengthening of strategic alliances to promote the inclusion of disability in the post-2015 development agenda, and adopted a road map for implementation of the Incheon Strategy. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) reported on the recent Conference on the Arab Decade for

Persons with Disability and beyond: enhancing the knowledge and policy infrastructure for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Arab Region. The outcome document of the Conference outlines a series of steps for the realization of international and national development goals for persons with disabilities. ESCWA also supported an in-depth study of disability statistics and qualitative information on disability-related laws and institutions in the Arab region.

26.   United Nations agencies reported significant progress in increasing awareness of the need for better measurement of the situation of persons with disabilities in order to support the development of evidence-based and responsive policy, programming and service delivery. In some regions, including the Asia and Pacific region, it was noted that disability prevalence data was increasingly being collected by Member States, many of which have operationalized or are beginning to incorporate international survey instruments into censuses and other national surveys, including labour force surveys. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported efforts to improve the standardization of disability data collection and has been collaborating with the World Bank to develop a model disability survey that would provide detailed and nuanced information on the "lived experiences" of persons with disabilities. It was also reported that the involvement, visibility and support of organizations of persons with disabilities has grown significantly across regions since 2010. Reports highlighted that a number of Member States have established national coordination mechanisms that are often interministerial and include or consult with persons with disabilities, to support the harmonization of domestic legislation, policies and programmes with the normative framework provided by the Convention and the adoption of new legislation, policies and programmes that are aligned with it.

27.   The United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[8] carried out the first round of funding and joint projects in Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mozambique, the Republic of Moldova, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, the State of Palestine and some Pacific island countries and territories in 2013. The programme will expand in 2014 to cover additional Member States and projects in Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, the Sudan, Tajikistan and Uganda. In order to support activities that promote the full and meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in global and country-level debates on the post-2015 development framework, the Partnership, in collaboration with the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium, produced a report in 2013 entitled "Towards an inclusive and accessible future for all: voices of persons with disabilities on the post-2015 development framework".

28.   A number of United Nations agencies reported on strengthened disability inclusion in global and country-level programming. The International Labour Organization (ILO) noted successful mainstreaming of disability in country-level technical assistance frameworks. Almost half of its decent work county programmes have prioritized disability issues. ILO is currently preparing a global strategy and

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[8] The membership of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities comprises the following United Nations entities: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO.

action plan to promote employment and the social protection of persons with disabilities. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has included women and girls with disabilities as one of the poorest and most excluded groups in its new global strategic plan covering the period 2014-2017. WHO recently developed an organization-wide disability action plan[9] in consultation with more than 300 contributors from United Nations agencies and Member States. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) updated its 2005 recommendations to further promote accessible tourism, in line with relevant provisions of the Convention and the principles of universal design.

29. Some agencies reported new publications and tools to promote disability-inclusive development and societies. The International Telecommunication Union recently published a report[10] on the role of accessible information and communications technology, such as web services and television as well as mobile devices and services, in enabling the inclusion of persons with disabilities. In February 2014, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched a model policy[11] to promote national efforts on information and communications technology usage in education, particularly through its Institute for Information Technologies in Education. UN-Women launched an online platform entitled "Global Knowledge Gateway for Women's Economic Empowerment" to provide accessible and up-to-date information and resources on economic empowerment for women with disabilities. UNWTO published *The Manual on Accessible Tourism for All: Public-Private Partnerships and Good Practices*, in March 2014, which features technical advice for the inclusion of both cultural and natural heritage assets into the accessible tourism value chain.

30. Most agencies continued to note persistent challenges in obtaining reliable, accurate and comparable data on persons with disabilities at the national level and in specific technical areas, posing significant barriers to the agencies' capacity to provide timely and evidence-based policy support to Member States to address the needs of persons with disabilities. The "double discrimination" and prevalence of violence and abuse against women and girls with disabilities, and their marginalization, were highlighted by many. Also noted were significant challenges posed by national legal frameworks and societal and attitudinal barriers, as well as limitations in resources and institutional capacity at the national level to ensure that development processes and services are responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

IV. Integrating persons with disabilities into development strategies

31. Notable progress has been made in scaling up efforts to mainstream disability as a cross-cutting development issue, but major challenges remain. Section IV discusses some common challenges as well as recommendations for action that emerged from consultations conducted by the Department of Economic and Social

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[9] See WHO global action disability plan 2014-2021: Better health for all people with disability.

[10] See International Telecommunication Study Group, "Access to Telecommunication Services and Information and Communication Technologies by persons with disabilities" (Geneva, International Telecommunication Union, 2014).

[11] See UNESCO, "Model Policy for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies in Education for Persons with Disabilities" (Paris, 2014).

Affairs in preparation for the high-level meeting.[12] The section also discusses the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities not only as moral imperatives, but as essential for accelerating development progress and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

A. Strengthening and applying the international normative framework on disability for an inclusive society and development at all levels

32.   The existing international framework[13] on disability provides a solid foundation to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all dimensions of development, including access to services such as education, employment, social protection and health care, as well as norms and standards on equality, accessibility and international cooperation. The deliberations to finalize the post-2015 development agenda provide a unique opportunity to achieve tangible outcomes for persons with disabilities. At the national level, existing tools may be used to support the harmonization of national legislation, policies and programmes (see A/63/183).

33.   The cross-sectionalities between disability-specific instruments and other relevant human rights and development instruments should be further exploited to address the current gap in meeting even the most basic needs of persons with disabilities around the world. For example, linkages must be strengthened between the Convention and other human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in order to foster synergies among the normative frameworks that deal with the particular concerns and issues facing women and children with disabilities. At the global level, these tools can be utilized to strengthen the inclusion of the disability perspective in internationally agreed development goals.

34.   The synthesis of inputs from the preparatory processes indicates that countries have shared views on the common challenges to addressing the current gap between policy and practice at the national level. Several sources verified that where domestic legislation and policy frameworks on disability exist, they have not always been harmonized in light of the international normative framework on disability, particularly the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Others noted that supportive regulatory frameworks and institutional mechanisms, including

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[12] Sources of information reviewed include: (a) the online consultation entitled "For a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond"; (b) regional consultations; (c) direct submission from Member States, entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations and other individual contributions received by the Secretariat in response to the 10 questions prepared as a core document for the high-level meeting; (d) summaries from the three informal consultations on the high-level Meeting; and (e) other relevant sources, including reports of the Secretary-General and from relevant meetings of United Nations and regional organizations, that identified global and regional priority areas for inclusion in an outcome document of the high-level meeting.

[13] Refers to the three disability-specific instruments: the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with other international norms and standards relating to disability including the recently adopted outcome document of the high-level meeting (see General Assembly resolution 68/3).

monitoring and implementation processes to integrate disability issues into development policies and programmes, are severely lacking.

35.   It was also observed that while several countries are either in the process of ratification or full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, sustainable resources, including technical assistance and development cooperation, are required to accelerate this process. While this may be the case, Governments play the most significant role in making the best use of available resources for the realization of rights of persons with disabilities. In this regard, a twin-track approach of minimum standards to maintain human dignity and to protect persons with disabilities from poverty, within existing resources, together with the progressive realization of social, economic and cultural rights, is needed.[14] Such strategies would further need to be operationalized through measurable targets and indicators, laying out concrete actions in the short and medium terms; the identification of resources; and the assignment of responsibility to a broad range of stakeholders in order to promote ownership and accountability of actions in implementation.

B. Improving disability data and statistics to support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based policies for disability-inclusive development

36.   With a view to integrating the disability perspective in the new development agenda, the Secretariat convened an expert group meeting on disability data and statistics in Paris from 8 to 10 July 2014. The experts assessed the measurability of disability targets and indicators, based on both current and potential data availability.[15]

37.   While considerable progress has been made, significant efforts are still required to incorporate the collection of disability statistics into ongoing systems and to improve the quality and comparability of the information obtained. This need is further heightened given the data needs and reporting requirements identified in the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as those being proposed for the sustainable development goals. The new development agenda is expected to significantly increase the demand for data, in terms of both scope and level of detail (disaggregation).[16]

38.   The generation of internationally comparable data requires the adoption of uniform methods of data collection across all countries. Existing tools developed by the United Nations, such as the Washington Group's short set of six questions, approved by the Statistical Commission,[17] when incorporated into censuses or

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[14] The concept of progressive realization is based, in part, on the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights General Comment No. 3: The Nature of States Parties' Obligations (art. 2, para. 1, of the Covenant) (E/1991/23-E/C.12/1990/8), discussed in *From Rhetoric to Action-Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, by Eilionóir Flynn (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[15] The meeting reviewed existing tools for data collection, such as those developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and new tools, such as the model disability survey that is being developed by WHO and the World Bank.

[16] Compendium of statistical notes for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Statistical Division (March 2014).

[17] The approach to disability measurement advocated by the Washington Group through the short

sample-based surveys, can provide baseline information. To date, 47 countries have indicated that the Washington Group's questions has been included in previous censuses, national surveys or disability modules, while 35 countries used the short set, or some variant of it, in the most recent census cycle, in 2010. The 2020 census cycle provides another opportunity to expand the number of countries using the short set in their census, to move in the direction of producing internationally comparable statistics on disability.

39.   Institutionalizing the collection of disability data using a core tool, such as the Washington Group's short set of questions, can provide a significant portion of the data needed to monitor the Convention and to disaggregate the post-2015 sustainable development goals by disability status.

40.   Recognizing that no census or survey is complete until the data collected is made available to users in appropriate formats, countries should submit data in common reporting formats to the United Nations for further dissemination and to promote the use of existing disability statistics. This will require significant capacity-building efforts at the national level, particularly in developing countries, involving all stakeholders. Once again, the preparation, including training and technical assistance for the 2020 census round, is an entry point for mainstreaming disability data into official statistics.

41.   While census tabulations can be used to make useful comparisons between persons with and without disabilities, extended measures, to gather detailed data on multiple aspects of disability, would enable policymakers to identify interventions needed to maximize the inclusion of disability and persons with disabilities, and subsequently, the equalization of opportunities. Contributing to this goal are current initiatives by the United Nations system, such as the development and testing, led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), of question sets that focus on child functioning and disability and on barriers to full participation in education for use in multiple indicator cluster surveys and other surveys focused on children, and the development of a model disability survey, led by WHO (see E/CN.3/2014/10). Collaboration and coordination is required among various initiatives in the United Nations system and other stakeholders to ensure the usefulness of all data and the promotion of international comparability. This includes data collection efforts undertaken by Governments and their agencies and the United Nations system, as well as initiatives by non-governmental organizations.

C.   Enhancing international cooperation and mobilization of resources on a sustainable basis

42.   To date, development cooperation has largely failed to fulfil its potential to achieve the internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities.[18] The effective translation of the international community's commitment to disability into tangible outcomes requires the creation of an enabling environment in which

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set of questions has been recommended by the United Nations in its Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2 (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.2)A third revision of this document is currently in development, and similar recommendations have been drafted by the Conference of European Statisticians, in preparation for the 2020 census round.

[18] See E/CN.5/2010/6 for an evaluation of the status of disability inclusion in international cooperation at global, regional, and subregional levels.

persons with disabilities can participate on an equal basis with others, as both agents and beneficiaries, in development processes. Recognizing this, the participating stakeholders in the preparatory processes for the high-level meeting made a number of proposals for strengthening international, regional and subregional cooperation and partnerships for disability-inclusive development.[19]

43.   Several submissions received by the Secretariat call for development agencies to adopt a disability strategy that endorses a twin-track approach in which targeted programmes, such as capacity-building by disabled persons' organizations, are implemented together with mainstream programmes designed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. While many bilateral agencies have considerable experience in supporting disability-specific projects, the mainstreaming of disability within their overall frameworks on development cooperation is still a relatively new concept for many (see E/CN.5/2010/6). In mainstream development programmes, persons with disabilities are often grouped together with other marginalized groups for the purpose of measuring the social impact of development projects. However, this approach risks further marginalizing and excluding persons with disabilities, who tend to remain "invisible" within the broader and more "visible" social groups. Aggregate results, in the absence of data disaggregated by disability, may show an overall positive impact, even when conditions have worsened for persons with disabilities.

44.   In a world in which development cooperation is increasingly oriented towards developing a results-based culture, in which measurable targets and indicators are crucial to evidence-based programming, the lack of reliable data and statistics on disability has been a major impediment to the inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting issue.

45.   In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the House of Commons International Development Committee recently released a report on disability and development that calls for greater attention to disability in the work of its Department for International Development.[20] The report contains a number of useful recommendations for development agencies and partners, including to provide a balance between building an evidence base on disability and implementing programming. Recognizing that accurate disability statistics may take time to develop, the report calls for the initiation of ambitious pilot disability programmes that can rapidly be scaled up, building on innovations and successes.

46.   Sustainable financing represents a key challenge for setting in motion a transformative change for persons with disabilities. Harnessing available resources rests on broad political will. Introducing disability-specific budget lines in national and sectoral budgets and evaluating and publishing information on the outcomes of funds allocated to persons with disabilities will be critical for maintaining momentum towards sustainable finance.

47.   Furthermore, the balanced participation of a wide range of stakeholders, particularly persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, will be vital to creating a long-lasting impact based on ownership and mutual

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[19] These proposals are summarized in the draft background paper entitled "Round Table 1: International and regional cooperation and partnerships for disability inclusive development", prepared by the Secretariat for the high-level meeting.

[20] House of Commons International Development Committee, "Disability and development", Eleventh Report of Session 2013-14 (HC 947) (London, 2014).

accountability. Steps should be taken to strengthen new partnerships that can bring together many different types of organizations concerned with social, economic and environmental progress. Collaborative efforts, such as enlisting women's organizations to help monitor outcomes for persons with disabilities, would assist in tackling discrimination that affects multiple social groups. Such collaboration would also be an efficient means for ensuring resources and funds, even if not targeted specifically at persons with disabilities, since it would have a multiplier effect, benefiting them and building a more inclusive society.

D. Rethinking and adapting the United Nations system to improve responsiveness to the needs of Member States in implementing a disability-inclusive development agenda

48.   Concern for and commitment to persons with disabilities are integral to the work of the United Nations. While the approach and response of the Organization to disability have evolved significantly over the past five decades, the notion that the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities is a prerequisite for the realization of human rights, peace and security has remained central. In this context, the international community has long recognized that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is fundamental to all aspects of the work of the United Nations.

49.   Key intergovernmental mechanisms concerned with disability currently include the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee) of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Since its inception, the Conference has established itself as a unique global platform for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. The seventh session, held in 2014, enjoyed a record level of participation, with more than 1,300 persons in attendance, including representation from more than 80 Member States. Given the high level of participation, Member States are increasingly using the Conference as a decision-making forum and platform to explore options for multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote disability-inclusive programming.

50.   The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the most recent international instrument to provide a normative framework for addressing disability in society and development. The Convention has guided discourse at the international level and focused attention on disability as a cross-cutting issue. As noted earlier in the present report, disability is increasingly being accepted as a cross-cutting issue in international development agendas. International dialogue around the Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 development agenda recognizes the importance and cross-cutting nature of disability in the pursuit of global development goals. This international paradigm is also reflected in the current approach of the United Nations system (see resolution 68/3).

51.   Significant progress has been made by the United Nations system in using this international normative framework to innovate and to mainstream disability in its work. However, concerns remain that disability is not fully reflected in the entirety of the work of the United Nations, with the concept of disability mainstreaming inconsistently understood and applied, resulting in uneven outcomes and a gap between policy and practice. These challenges are not dissimilar to those previously faced by gender-mainstreaming efforts. Recent successes of gender mainstreaming

suggest that there is scope to strengthen the United Nations system with regard to disability in order to ensure greater inclusiveness in the work of the Organization and improve responsiveness to the needs of Member States. A review of the implementation of mainstreaming strategies at the global, regional and country level could provide a starting point for understanding existing limitations in mechanisms, processes and capacity, and could highlight entry points to strengthening the responsiveness of the support of the United Nations system and its partners to Member States in this field.

52. The high-level meeting requested recommendations for concrete steps to support the implementation of the outcome document (resolution 68/3, para. 8). In 2015, the Assembly will review progress to date. It could use that opportunity to formulate priorities in conjunction with the post-2015 development framework, with a view to adopting a global plan of action on disability as a cross-cutting issue for a future global agenda, covering development, human rights and peace and security, as was envisaged in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982) and endorsed by the outcome document of the high-level meeting. To this end, the plan could articulate clear targets and indicators, and identify key areas in which further technical assistance and capacity development is required for the operationalization of normative frameworks.

53. A focus on disability, in terms of developmental and societal outcomes within the framework of the current and emerging international development agendas, calls for improved normative and operational linkages. Significant demands on the United Nations system are anticipated, in terms of resources and technical assistance to support Member States in ensuring that future efforts to achieve development goals are disability-inclusive. In this context, a system-wide review of new mechanisms to reinforce and promote organizational policy and practice, including coordination, knowledge-sharing and internal capacity-building, as well as closing the communication gap at the national, regional and global levels, could be considered.

54. Lessons from gender mainstreaming have shown the strength of placing responsibility and leadership at the highest levels when adopting system-wide policies on mainstreaming. Such policies, involving system-wide objectives, indicators, and accountability and reporting frameworks, could be explored to advance overall support to the achievement of inclusive goals.

55. The high-level meeting also called upon the Economic and Social Council to promote the issue of disability and development, including within the framework of United Nations operational activities, to ensure coordination, effective implementation and synergies among programmes (see resolution 68/3, para. 6). In this context, the Council could consider playing a specific role in promoting an integrated approach to disability in the work of the United Nations system as a whole.

56. New and recent changes to the Economic and Social Council, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as well as the increased importance of the Development Cooperation Forum, also present opportunities to advance the mainstreaming of disability. A periodic global report on disability and development, based on the existing biannual and quinquennial reporting to the Assembly, may be considered to benchmark and track global progress in the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in society and development.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

57. The high-level meeting brought momentum and global attention to the advancement of persons with disabilities as agents and beneficiaries in society and development. The outcome document called for stronger more ambitious actions by all stakeholders, in particular at the national level, and at the same time established a vision and a clear mandate for all stakeholders to develop strategic and tangible steps to operationalize the global agenda for disability-inclusive development. The outcome document also requested the General Assembly, in 2015, to review progress towards its implementation (resolution 68/3, para. 10).

58. The present report has reviewed the recent developments in the ongoing intergovernmental process and assessed the opportunities it presents for the inclusion of disability in the emerging global development framework. In this context, the role of the United Nations in promoting better coordination and more cooperative methods for disability-inclusive development has been discussed.

59. While considerable efforts have been made, the achievement of mainstreaming disability remains a global challenge. Despite advances in the development of global policy on disability, further efforts are needed to strengthen normative and operational linkages at all levels. The present report has also explored the role of development cooperation and the ways in which development agencies can further support the implementation of disability-inclusive development in order to bridge current gaps.

60. In pursuing the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, the international community should take all possible measures to close the existing gap between policy and practice. A concerted effort to secure the delivery of policy commitments and to operationalize the mainstreaming of disability in all aspects of development, particularly development programming processes, is desirable. Two tracks should be urgently pursued to accomplish this goal: (a) the collection of disability data and statistics, in accordance with the decision of the Statistical Commission to provide standardized data collection methods in order to facilitate comparability across countries; and (b) disaggregation of all available data by disability (see E/CN.3/2014/35-E/2014/24, chap. I. B). It is possible to generate disability-inclusive development statistics in order to monitor internationally agreed development goals. Data could be collected by Member States through their population and housing census programmes, as recommended by the Statistical Commission.

61. Member States should ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is underpinned by an inclusive approach, guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as other relevant human rights and development instruments, that builds on the core principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, inclusion and accountability. The selection process and the content of the post-2015 targets and indicators for tracking progress must be inclusive of all social groups, including persons with disabilities.

62. The General Assembly may also wish to consider the following specific actions towards 2015 and beyond:

(a) Organize, in the light of its request that the President of the Assembly review, at its seventieth session, the status of and progress made towards the

realization of the development goals for persons with disabilities, an event for such a review to be held in conjunction with the seventieth session of the Assembly (see resolution 68/3, para. 10). The review could consider progress made and bring clarity to next steps to advance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the outcome of the high-level meeting;

(b)   Encourage Member States to promote the realization of the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all economic, social, cultural and environmental spheres, through adoption of a national disability strategy, including a comprehensive long-term vision for improving the situation of persons with disabilities. In order to promote ownership of and accountability for actions in implementation, such strategies should be operationalized through measurable targets and indicators that lay out concrete actions in the short and medium terms, and the assignment of responsibility to a broad range of stakeholders;

(c)   In the light of the need for disaggregated data to support the establishment of a disability-inclusive post-2015 development agenda, encourage Member States to take immediate steps to support the goal of mainstreaming disability data into official statistics and to submit the information to the United Nations. The Assembly may also wish to further consider a periodic global report on disability and development that summarizes disability statistics provided by Member States and provides analysis on the situation of persons with disabilities in economic and social development;

(d)   Encourage all Member States to consider taking measures to build or improve the social protection system, including the social protection floor for persons with disabilities. To this end, the international community should support national efforts, including social protection programmes for persons with disabilities;

(e)   Encourage Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders[21] to further improve coordination among existing international processes and mechanisms on disability in order to advance a disability-inclusive global agenda;

(f)   Call for a systematic review to evaluate and monitor progress in the current mainstreaming efforts by various stakeholders, Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and academic institutions. Establish a coordinating mechanism within the United Nations system to address gaps and effectively respond to needs for technical assistance, including for capacity-building, particularly in the context of a post-2015 development agenda and the implementation of future global development goals.

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[21] These currently include the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.