



CONCEPT NOTE

A High-Level Round Table on disability and COVID-19 hosted by the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) network

Date: June 25, 2020, 8.30 – 10.00 am EDT

Venue: Zoom, link to be shared with participants separately.

Objective

Building on what has been achieved so far to end discrimination and different forms of inequalities faced by all persons with disabilities, this round table is aimed at devising mechanisms to deliver on the commitments from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2030 Agenda and its related frameworks as well as the Global Disability Summit in 2018 – during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

The round table further intends to pave the road for an inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring that post-pandemic socio-economic plans including social protection measures are fully inclusive of persons with disabilities. This way we can rethink our societies and build back better.

Background

While the COVID-19 pandemic affects all members of society, persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted due to attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers that are reproduced in the COVID-19 response. The pandemic has further exacerbated those barriers and inequalities through leaving persons with disabilities to increased risk of isolation, disruption of support services and discrimination. People with disabilities are more likely to be part of the informal economy which leaves them without adequate means of income during lockdown.

Despite being a population that is particularly-risk prone to COVID-19, persons with disabilities face even greater inequalities in accessing basic services including healthcare, education, employment and social protection during the pandemic. This could erode all the positive developments that the world has recorded in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the set of commitments that the world leaders have entered during the Global Disability Summit in 2018. The world needs to sustain its commitments for an inclusive and just world by bringing the most marginalized to the front in the response to COVID-19. We have the opportunity to deconstruct systemic inequalities across the globe and re-build our society in a way that truly *leaves no one behind*.



The world has a choice either to let these disproportionate impacts exacerbate existing inequalities, or we can embed a strong human rights lens in response and recovery efforts to emerge stronger and more unified than ever.

As members of the GLAD network, we remain committed to supporting people with disabilities during the crisis and after, in the recovery phase. In practical terms, this would require development partners at all levels to review their engagement in the COVID-19 process and commit to putting persons with disabilities and their representative organizations at the center.

The challenges in doing so are complex and can be addressed by creating synergies and collaboration, innovative approaches and determination by stakeholders to become more inclusive than ever and narrow down the gap between our policy aspirations and budgetary allocation on the SDGs.

Themes:

1. Sustain the commitment and make *leave no one behind* a reality for 1 billion Persons with disabilities: keeping our promises in the SDGs;
2. Ensuring the road to the recovery after COVID-19 is inclusive of and accessible to Persons with disabilities.

Participants: Ministers, Ambassadors and other High-Level delegates from GLAD members, heads of UN agencies and leaders from the disability movement

Draft Agenda

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| 8.30 – 8.40 | Welcome and setting the scene |
| 8.40–8.45 | Video (5 min.) voices of Persons with disabilities from around the world on COVID-19 and its impact on their lives. |
| 8.45 – 8.50 | Opening remark by Ms. Amina Mohamed, the United Nations deputy secretary-general |
| | Measures being taken by the UN to ensure that no one is left behind with focus on disability inclusion and how the SDGs can serve as a framework to do so. |
| 8.50–9.10 | Challenges and opportunities in keeping our commitments to <i>leave no one behind</i> . possible speakers from bilateral donors, foundations and financial institutions. (Five min each) |
| 9.10 – 9.50 | interventions by pre-selected discussants. |
| 9.50 – 10.00 | Closing remarks and way forward |
