EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM

EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

issue 2 - 2018

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals:
A European perspective to respect, protect and fulfil the
United Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

An accessible PDF and Easy to Read version of this report is available on the website of EDF: **www.edf-feph.org**

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Glossary

Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs): Organisations comprising a majority of persons with disabilities and their families which represent the interests and defend the human rights of persons with disabilities through self-representation and advocacy.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): At the centre of the United Nations system, it advances the three elements of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

EU budget: The annual EU budget is €145 billion (2015 figures) which represents about 1% of the wealth generated by EU economies every year. The budget is subject to limits established by the Multiannual Financial Framework. This sets the maximum annual amounts which the EU can spend in various policy areas over a given period (usually 7 years).

European Commission: The EU's politically independent executive arm. Its core responsibilities include proposing EU laws and policies and monitoring their implementation.

European Disability Forum (EDF): An independent organisation representing the rights of 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. It is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe and is run by persons with disabilities and their families.

European Parliament: The EU's law-making body. It is directly elected by EU voters every five years. The next elections take place in 2019.

European Union (EU): A unique economic and political union between 28 European countries.

Expert Group: A subsidiary conference formed to discuss issues at a technical (as opposed to political) level and sometimes to make recommendations to the parent conference. Members of these groups are often appointed or elected in their personal capacities.

Expert Meeting: An Informal meeting of representatives of governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, scientific bodies and academia to discuss scientific, technical or other issues. Participation in such meetings is by invitation.

High-level Political Forum (HLPF): The main United Nations platform on sustainable development, it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level.

Major Groups and other Stakeholders: Represent a multi-stakeholder format in which stakeholders from civil society engage actively and meaningfully alongside country representatives. Civil society representatives have the right to fully engage within global-level sustainable development processes through the Major Groups and other Stakeholders format.

Member States (of the European Union): The EU consists of 28 countries, also called member states. Each member state is party to the founding treaties of the union and thereby subject to the privileges and obligations of membership. Unlike members of most international organisations, the member states of the EU are subjected to binding laws in exchange for representation within the common legislative and judicial institutions.

Member States (of the United Nations): The 193 sovereign states that are members of the United Nations and have equal representation in the UN General Assembly.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Set of eight global development priorities launched in 2000 with the aim of reducing poverty, improving health, broadening education access, improving gender equality and ensuring environmental sustainability. They concluded in 2015 and their work laid the foundations on which the current Sustainable Development Goals are built.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Chapter 3 of the 2030 Agenda, made of 17 goals to end poverty, foster peace, safeguard the rights and dignity of all people, and protect the planet. There are seven explicit references to persons with disabilities in the targets of the SDGs.

Stakeholder: an individual, group, or organisation that has a direct or indirect interest or stake in a particular organisation; these may be businesses, civil society, governments, research institutions, DPOs and non-government organisations.

Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities: An official group that coordinates the participation of persons with disabilities in sustainable development and other processes at the United Nations.

States Parties to the CRPD: Countries which have signed and ratified the CRPD and have committed to making the rights of persons with disabilities a reality.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Resolution 70/1 unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. It sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals which aim to mobilise global efforts to end poverty, foster peace, safeguard the rights and dignity of all people and protect the planet.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): An international human rights treaty that reaffirms that all persons with disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies that all persons with disabilities have the right to participate in civil, political, economic, social and cultural life of the community just as anyone else.

UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE): Set up in 1947, it is one of five regional commissions of the UN. Its aim is to promote cross-European economic integration and cooperation and includes Member States from Europe, North America and Asia.

UN General Assembly (UNGA or GA): One of the six principal units of the United Nations, the only one in which all member nations have equal representation, and the main deliberative, policymaking and representative body of the UN.

UN Regional Commissions of ECOSOC: Includes ESCAP: Asia Pacific region; UNECE: Europe region; ECLAC: Latin America and the Caribbean region; ESCWA: Arab Region; and ECA: Africa Region.

Voluntary National Review (VNR): Country-led and country-driven regular and inclusive reviews of progress of SDGs implementation at the national and sub-national levels by Member States at the HLPF. Reviews are voluntary, state-led, undertaken by all countries, and involve multiple stakeholders.

Foreword

From EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis

I am very pleased to introduce you to the second series of Human Rights Reports prepared by the European Disability Forum (EDF). EDF is an independent organisation representing the rights of 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. The purpose of this series is to track progress over time on the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe. In 2016, we marked the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and provided an overview on the commitment to the CRPD in Europe.

This year, we are focusing on the 2030 Agenda for Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For the first time in the United Nations history, persons with disabilities have been included in a global agreement. The 2030 Agenda specifically recognises that more than 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in poverty. This reality is also very much present in Europe, where persons with disabilities can face widespread exclusion from all areas of economic, political, social, civil and cultural life, including employment, education and healthcare.

The motto of the 2030 Agenda is to "leave no one behind". There is a strong inclusion of persons with disabilities in the SDGs with five goals directly mentioning disability: goal 4 (quality education), goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), goal 10 (reduced inequalities), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

This report is welcome as it easily showcases to decision-makers and organisations of persons with disabilities the link between the CRPD and the SDGs in Europe and in international cooperation. It suggests recommendations and advocacies opportunities around the SDGs in order to respect, protect and fulfil the CRPD. In fact, there is a considerable overlap between the provisions of the CRPD and the SDGs. Similarly to the CRPD, the SDGs must be integrated into European and national policies and budgets. The CRPD focuses on disability, the SDGs mainstream the human rights of persons with disabilities. At EDF, we believe that for the 2030 Agenda to be successful, the implementation and the monitoring of SDGs must be disability-inclusive and in line with the CRPD.

I wish you a good read!

Yannis Vardakastanis
EDF President

From OHCHR Regional Representative for Europe, Birgit Van Hout

"Nothing about us without us." These words were the driving force behind the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The active participation of organisations of persons with disabilities in the drafting of the treaty was unprecedented. When the Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006, it crowned years of arduous advocacy. The efforts paid off: not only does the Convention set a high standard for the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities, it is also conceived in a manner that benefits society as a whole. To date, 175 States from around the world have become parties to the Convention, which means that they have contracted the legal obligation to turn the paragraphs of the Convention into reality. It is also the first international human rights treaty ratified by the European Union.

Almost 10 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2015, the international community adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda. In 17 goals and 169 targets, States committed to eradicating poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity by 2030. It is a transformative agenda that has the elimination of inequality and discrimination at its heart. It calls on States to leave no one behind and to reach out to the ones most behind first. We know that persons with disabilities are often among the furthest behind. The Sustainable Development Agenda therefore presents an extraordinary opportunity to accelerate the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities.

States have agreed to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in line with international law, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This means that, just like for the drafting of the Convention, persons with disabilities should be consulted and participate in a meaningful manner in the conceptualisation and implementation of all policies affecting them. It means that States must collect disaggregated data on the situation of persons with disabilities in order to track progress. Government actions may never discriminate and should protect persons with disabilities from discrimination by non-State actors. And, last, but not least, it means that national and local authorities must be held accountable for tangible progress. That, we know, has not always been the case.

Now is the time to close the gap that hinders the full inclusion and development of persons with disabilities and the other gaps lurking underneath, such as the artificial dichotomy between human rights and development, the privileging of civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights, and the gap between developed and developing countries.

Thanks to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, there is now a global political commitment to close these gaps. It is time for inclusive societies where persons with disabilities are enabled to contribute fully and where the benefits of development flow equally to all.

Summary

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has given the European disability movement a strong legal framework to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities in the past decade. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a renewed framework to advocate for the implementation and the monitoring of the CRPD, with an ambitious, universal and inclusive vision that go well beyond the Millennium Development Goals it is intended to replace. At the core of the 2030 Agenda are a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are designed to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure global prosperity. The 2030 Agenda and accompanying SDGs are therefore an unprecedented opportunity for organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) to unite across Europe and the world around a common equity and inclusion agenda. With a new focus on promoting genuine engagement between governments and their citizens, the 2030 Agenda offers DPOs and persons with disabilities a new advocacy framework to actively influence national and international development plans, policies and budgets so they are in line with the CRPD. The 2030 Agenda is also an opportunity for sharing and learning, encouraging national governments to consider what works to promote equitable and sustainable development, alongside exploring its challenges. DPOs have a very significant role to play in raising awareness around inclusive development for their membership and the wider communities in which they work.

This report has been designed as a resource for DPOs and decision-makers to learn more about the 2030 Agenda and what opportunities exist for advocacy around the SDGs in order to respect, protect and fulfil the CRPD. The first chapter provides a broad overview of the CRPD as well as the strong link between the Convention and the SDGs. Chapter two describes the 2030 Agenda, its principles and goals and explains how progress is going to be measured. Chapter two outlines in more details the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The next chapter explains the role of the European Union (EU) in implementing the SDGs with information around what the expectations are for disability inclusion. This section also considers issues related to gender equality, accessibility, employment and international cooperation and suggests recommendations for the EU. The last chapter provides information about the engagement of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level, with a focus on the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process. A number of the most recent VNRs from European Member States are briefly analysed with regards to disability inclusion and concrete recommendations are offered for engaging in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the most ambitious development plan ever created by the international community. As such, focused action by national policy makers is required to put the world on a more sustainable and equitable growth path and DPOs have a critical contribution to make towards achieving this ambition, while realizing the CRPD's vision of a "society for all".

Chapter 1: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The European Disability Forum series on human rights

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent organisation representing the rights of 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. Each year, EDF publishes a new Human Right Report on the rights of persons with disabilities, selecting the topic based on what is most relevant to EDF's members and policymakers across Europe. The first issue of EDF Human Rights Report focused on the United Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), marking its 10th anniversary and providing an overview on the commitment to the CRPD in Europe.

EDF first Human Rights Report is available on EDF webpage:
http://www.edf-feph.org/other-publications.

This issue is the second Human Rights Report and gives an overview of the state of play on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Europe, in order to respect, protect and fulfil the CRPD. The purpose of this series is to track progress over time on the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe. The series stimulate comparison between European countries and study key aspects of the implementation of the CRPD at the national and European levels. For instance, this first EDF Human Rights Report demonstrated the rapid progress in ratifying the CRPD in Europe, albeit with some important gaps. Not all countries have ratified the CPRD or its Optional Protocol and many states have made Reservations and Declarations which limit their commitment to the CRPD.

Countries in Europe that have ratified the CRPD

The CRPD is an international human rights treaty that reaffirms that persons with disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies that persons with disabilities have the right to participate in civil, political, economic, social and cultural life of the community, just as anyone else. The CRPD clearly stipulates what public and private authorities must do to ensure and promote the full enjoyment of these rights by all persons with disabilities.

The CRPD was adopted on 13 December 2006 by consensus of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN). On 30 March 2007, the CRPD was opened for signature at UN Headquarters in New York. Today, 175 countries worldwide (91% of UN members) and the European Union (EU) are States Parties to the CRPD, making it the world's most quickly ratified international human rights treaty.

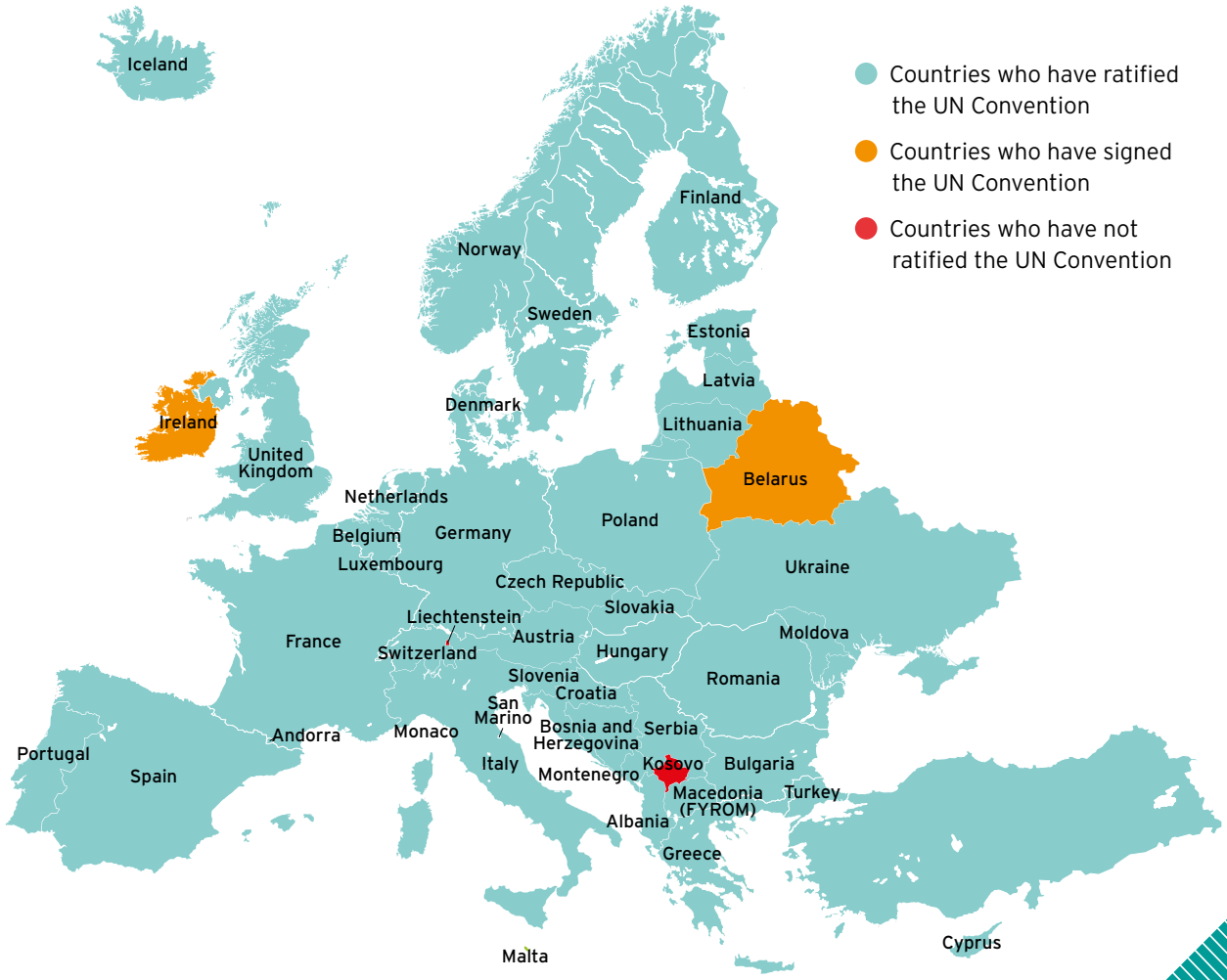
In Europe, the CRPD has also been ratified rapidly. The EU has been a State Party to the CRPD since 2011. Twenty-seven out of the 28 EU Member States have equally ratified the CRPD. Only Ireland remains. All the candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey) are States Parties, as well as three out of the four European Economic Area/European Free Trade Association (EEA/EFTA) countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland have ratified; Liechtenstein not yet). The European microstates of Andorra and San Marino have also ratified; Monaco has not ratified yet.

EDF calls on Ireland, Liechtenstein and Monaco to ratify the CRPD without further delay.

The full text of the CRPD is available on the web page of the CRPD Committee: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD.

Map on the ratification of the CRPD in Europe



The link between the CRPD and the SDGs

In Europe and worldwide, the CRPD has given the disability movement a strong legal framework to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. In fact, the 33 core articles of the CRPD, which cover all areas of life, must be implemented and monitored. The EU and its Member States have a legal obligation to comply. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 SDGs, provide a political momentum to push for the realisation of the CRPD. In fact, there is a considerable overlap between the articles of the CRPD and the SDGs as the 2030 Agenda was built upon existing international and national commitments such as the CRPD.

The CRPD is legally binding while the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are a political vision for a better world to be achieved by 2030. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are both clearly inclusive of persons with disabilities (see Chapter 3) and can be used as an advocacy platform to draw attention of decision makers for the creation of disability-inclusive policies and programs. **Figure 1** shows there are only four goals in the SDGs that do not have some specific links to articles within the CRPD. Beyond the direct links, the 2030 Agenda commits, in the same spirit than the CRPD, to empowering people at risk of vulnerability, including persons with disabilities, as well as promoting universal respect for human rights, equality and non-discrimination.

Figure 1 - Link between the SDGs and the CRPD

CRPD advocacy can be aligned to SDGs advocacy as a way of supporting national governments and the EU to comply with both sets of commitments at national, regional and international levels. Here are two examples:

Example 1: The 2030 Agenda emphasises the need for disability disaggregated data as part of national level monitoring of the SDGs. In doing so, it makes a clear reference to Article 31 of the CRPD which demands the collection of *'...appropriate information, including statistical and research data...'*, which is *'...disaggregated, as appropriate...'* as part of government's mechanisms for tracking CRPD compliance.

Example 2: Article 32 of the CRPD, which commits States Parties to ensure: *'...international development programmes, (are) inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities...'*, means that the EU and its Members States should be promoting development programmes which actively include persons with disabilities. This is reflected in the 2030 Agenda with a specific reference to the percentage of persons with disabilities living in poverty, placing poverty eradication at the centre of the 2030 Agenda: *'People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty)'* (paragraph 23).

Illustration:

EU progress on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international development and implication for the SDGs

In 2015, the European Commission was reviewed for the first time by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as part of its obligations to report on progress towards implementing the CRPD.

EDF and its members were actively involved in this review process. EDF submitted an alternative report to the CRPD Committee and presented its concerns and recommendations on several occasions. All EDF's input to the CRPD Committee was developed by EDF's membership network through joint analysis and recommendations. EDF also consulted widely with other human rights networks in the development of its report and throughout the review process.

The Committee hailed the positive trend to include the rights of persons with disabilities in the financing of EU external actions and the inclusion of disability in priority areas of EU communication around the SDGs. However, the Committee was concerned at the lack of a systematic and institutionalised approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities across all EU international cooperation policies and programmes. The Committee also emphasised the lack of adequate coordination and coherence among EU institutions and the lack of disability focal points. It found that EU international development funds were at risk of being used to perpetuate the segregation of persons with disabilities in contrast with the principles and provisions of the CRPD. For example, there is no safeguards to prevent development funding being used to create or renovate institutional settings for the placement of persons with disabilities, segregated special education schools and sheltered workshops.

As a result, the Committee urged the EU to adopt a harmonised policy on disability-inclusive development and establish a systematic approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in all EU international cooperation policies and programmes, appoint disability focal points in related institutions and take the lead in the implementation of disability-inclusive SDGs. The Committee also recommended that the EU provides mechanisms to disaggregate data on disability in order to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities in EU development programmes.

On 19 May 2017, the EU adopted the European Consensus on Development, meaning a new framework for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States. The document is based on the 2030 Agenda and is therefore considered a direct response by the EU to the 2030 Agenda when it comes to international cooperation. Its brings a real shift for the disability movement as persons with disabilities are truly included in the Consensus with a clear reference and effort to implement and monitor the CRPD (See chapter 4, SDGs in EU international cooperation, pages 34-35).

Chapter 2: The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 25 September 2015 saw the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations in New York. A hundred ninety-three (193) countries committed to this plan of action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure global prosperity. The 2030 Agenda builds on the guiding principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on international law. It is informed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this respect, the 2030 Agenda promotes universal respect of human rights, human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination. Its motto is to "leave no one behind", with the pledge to recognise the dignity of every person and to reach the further behind first. The 2030 Agenda is a 35-page document, divided into 5 sections to guide the world on sustainable development until 2030.

The SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Development contains the five following chapters: 1) Preamble, 2) Declaration, 3) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets, 4) Means of implementation and the Global Partnership, and 5) Follow-up and review. The chapter three on SDGs encompasses a set of 17 objectives to be achieved by 2030 (**Figure 2**). The SDGs are meant to be guiding national and international development agendas. Whilst they have their roots in the eight previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs cover a broad range of issues, including the realisation of human rights for all, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Most importantly, unlike the MDGs, these goals are universal and therefore apply to all countries with the understanding that national and international development policies are linked to global and sustainable progress (**Figure 3**). The SDGs are designed to support sustainable development by integrating economic, social and environmental concerns in an overarching and balanced manner, with the necessity to implement and monitor all the goals. The SDGs represent a unique political commitment, since they call for action to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They acknowledge that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge and a significant requirement for sustainable development. To this end, all countries are called to develop national strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

Whilst the SDGs are non-binding, they symbolise an unprecedented opportunity to set the world on a sustainable course and ensure a life of dignity for all. The SDGs provide a clear policy framework for regulatory actions at national, regional and international levels. All countries are expected to set up political agendas that are in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda and will have a fundamental duty to follow-up and review their progress, requiring quality, accessible and timely data collection.

The 17 SDGs contain 169 targets and 231 indicators for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda development agenda and ensure its ambition becomes a reality by 2030. Persons with disabilities are mentioned 19 times in the SDGs: once in the introduction, seven times in targets and 11 times in the indicators (see chapter 3 for more information).

Figure 2 - The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Figure 3 - Comparison between the MDGs and the 2030 Agenda

MDGs	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2000 to 2015	2015 to 2030
Focused on developing countries	Universal
To reduce extreme poverty	To end poverty, reduce inequality and save the planet through sustainable development
8 goals, 18 targets with 48 indicators	17 goals, 169 targets with 231 indicators
No references to persons with disabilities	• Persons with disabilities mentioned 11 times in the 2030 Agenda • Persons with disabilities mentioned 19 times in the SDGs: once in the introduction, seven times in targets and 11 times in the indicators

Mechanisms for monitoring progress against the SDGs

The High Level Political Forum

To follow-up and review the SDGs' implementation, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to *'conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven'*. The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the global structure set up to assess progress, achievements and challenges faced by all countries as they implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. A key commitment expressed during the development of this structure was that the HLPF should focus political attention towards gaps or areas where commitments are falling behind and provide political leadership and guidance to push for progress.

The HLPF is organised every July at the United Nations in New York. It meets every year under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the UN General Assembly (next in 2019, then 2023, etc.).

Each HLPF has an annual thematic review under which a sub-set of goals are chosen for a more in-depth and integrated review (**Figure 4**). The HLPF sessions also include Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives at national level (**Figure 5**). These reviews are voluntary, state-led and are applicable to all countries (more information available in chapter 5). At the end of the HLPF, a Ministerial Declaration is adopted.

Figure 4 - Annual thematic review topics of the HLPF

Year	Theme of the HLPF	Focus Goals
2016	Ensuring that no one is left behind	No goals reviewed
2017	Eradicating poverty, protecting the planet and promoting shared prosperity	
2018	Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies	
2019	Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality	

Figure 5 - VNRs by European members

VNRs Year	EU member State	EU other status	Total of European VNRs
2016	Estonia, Finland, France, Germany	Georgia, Montenegro, Turkey, Norway, Switzerland	9
2017	Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden	Belarus, Monaco	12
2018	Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain	Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Iceland, Switzerland	15

The Regional Forums on Sustainable Development

The implementation and the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are supported in each world region by the five United Nations Regional Commissions, with the organisation of yearly Regional Forums on Sustainable Development (**Figure 6**). The Forums provide a space for promoting peer learning and cooperation, including effective linkage among global, regional, sub-regional and national processes. They have a significant role to play in promoting sustainable development regionally by facilitating regional reviews – the outcomes of which can then be taken to the HLPF.

EU States are represented by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE) which has the responsibility for convening the annual UN ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. It also coordinates learning from SDGs reviews across Europe as well as its member States from North America and Central and Western Asia. The Forum is open to the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including international and regional organisations, civil society, DPOs, academia and the private sector.

In 2017, the UN ECE Regional Forum for Sustainable Development was organised during two days. The first day saw a preparatory civil society consultation as well as a regional preparatory workshop for the countries from the UNECE region conducting VNRs at the 2017 HLPF. The second day was the actual Forum which was concluded with a report called "Report of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region on its first session". The report was shared at the 2017 HLPF.

Figure 6 - United Nations Commissions responsible for the SDGs per world region

Regions	United Nations Commissions responsible for the SDGs per world region	Organisation of the Regional Forums
Africa	UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	Spring, location changes every year
Arab region	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	Spring, location changes every year
Asia Pacific region	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	Spring, Thailand
Europe, North America, Central Asia and Western Asia	UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)	Spring, Switzerland
Latin America and the Caribbean	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	Spring, location changes every year

Chapter 3: The inclusion of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Leaving no persons with disabilities behind

Inclusion is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with not only a pledge to *'leave no one behind'*[1] right in the preamble but also *'to reach the furthest behind first'*[2]. The 2030 Agenda conveys the notion this ambition is a *'plan of action for people, planet and prosperity'*[3] where people should be allowed to thrive, people should have a voice and people should have effective opportunities to shape the course of development. Unlike the previous MDGs, disability issues and persons with disabilities are therefore included with 11 specific references throughout the 2030 Agenda (**Figure 7**).

However, the 2030 Agenda as a whole focuses on promoting development that is rights based and inclusive, reaffirming the need for States to conform to the Charter of the United Nations - *'to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status'*.[4] It also includes in its Vision a commitment to a *'...world with equitable and universal access to quality education..., to health care and social protection...'* and, *'(A) just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.'*[5] Importantly, the 2030 Agenda sets out to empower people who are at risk of vulnerability including *'(...) all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants'*.[6] In addition, it commits to promoting all possible actions or measures that can support the specific needs of those living in areas affected by complex humanitarian situations or terrorism. Given the universality of the 2030 Agenda, this implies paying attention to the highly vulnerable conditions of refugees with disabilities who are in particular need of international protection.

Overall, the 2030 Agenda provides a new and ambitious framework relevant to all countries and all people, with a clear inclusion of persons with disabilities. Its success will depend on the active implication and engagement of all actors to also ensure the furthest behind are being reached first.

[1] A/RES/70/1 UN General Assembly. P1/35 (preamble)
[2] A/RES/70/1 UN General Assembly. p3/35
[3] A/RES/70/1 UN General Assembly. P1/35 (preamble)
[4] A/RES/70/1 UN General Assembly. p6/35
[5] A/RES/70/1 UN General Assembly. p3/35
[6] A/RES/70/1 UN General Assembly. p7/35

Figure 7 - 11 references to disability in the 2030 Agenda

Chapter in the 2030 Agenda	Section, paragraph, target and page	References to disability
Declaration	Section - The new Agenda Paragraph 19 Page 6	We reaffirm the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international instruments relating to human rights and international law. We emphasise the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, **disability** or other status.
	Section - The new Agenda Paragraph 23 Page 7	People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, **persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty)**, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants. We resolve to take further effective measures and actions, in conformity with international law, to remove obstacles and constraints, strengthen support and meet the special needs of people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism.
	Section - The new Agenda Paragraph 25, Page 7	We commit to providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, and **persons with disabilities**, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society. We will strive to provide children and youth with a nurturing environment for the full realisation of their rights and capabilities, helping our countries to reap the demographic dividend, including through safe schools and cohesive communities and families.

SDGs and targets	Section - Goal 4: Quality education Target 4.5 Page 17	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including **persons with disabilities**, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
	Section - Goal 4: Quality Education Target 4.a Page 17	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, **disability** and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
	Section - Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth Target 8.5 Page 19	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and **persons with disabilities**, and equal pay for work of equal value
	Section - Goal 10: Reduce inequality Target 10.2 Page 21	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, **disability**, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
	Section - Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities Target 11.2 Page 21	By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, **persons with disabilities** and older persons
	Section - Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities Target 11.7 Page 22	By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and **persons with disabilities**
	Section - Goal 17: Partnership for the goals Target 17.18 Paragraph Data, monitoring and accountability Page 27	17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, **disability**, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
Follow-up and review	Paragraph 74 g Page 32	(g) They will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, **disability** and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Persons with disabilities in SDGs' targets and indicators

The SDGs chapter of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been expended with indicators to systematically review and track the progress of each goal and targets. The exercise was conducted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) which was set up by the United Nations Statistical Committee. The IAEG-SDGs put together a global indicator framework agreed on by statistical experts and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2017.

Overall, the 17 SDGs contain 169 targets and 231 indicators for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda development agenda and ensure its ambition becomes a reality by 2030. Persons with disabilities are mentioned 19 times in the SDGs: once in the introduction, seven times in targets and 11 times in the indicators (**Figure 8**). A key message presented in the introduction of the indicator framework is that all SDG indicators *'...should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics...'*[7], while target 17.18 focuses entirely on developing the capacity of national systems to produce reliable data that can be disaggregated by markers such as disability. The presence of disability markers within indicators is highly significant because it will enable key progress areas to be systematically measured in relation to persons with disabilities. If there are gaps in progress affecting persons with disabilities, in relation to both countries and sectors, then it should be much easier to identify and take measures to reduce the inequalities.

[7] Annex III Revised list of global Sustainable Development Goals indicators, E/CN.3/2017/2

Figure 8 - Reference guide to disability markers in the SDGs

Introduction
Sustainable Development Goal indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, **disability** and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Goal	Target	Indicators
	1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	**1.3.1** Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/ systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, **persons with disabilities**, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable
	4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including **persons with disabilities**, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations **4(a)** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, **disability** and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	**4.5.1** Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as **disability status**, indigenous peoples and conflict- affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated **4.a.1(d)** Proportion of schools with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for **students with disabilities**
	8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and **persons with disabilities**, and equal pay for work of equal value	**8.5.1** Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and **persons with disabilities** **8.5.2** Unemployment rate, by sex, age and **persons with disabilities**
	10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, **disability**, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	**10.2.1** Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and **persons with disabilities**

continued overleaf

	11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, **persons with disabilities** and older persons **11.7** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and **persons with disabilities**	**11.2.1** Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and **persons with disabilities** **11.7.1** Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and **persons with disabilities** **11.7.2** Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, **disability status** and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months
	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	**16.7.1** Proportions of positions (by sex, age, **persons with disabilities** and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions **16.7.2** Proportion of population who believe decision- making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, **disability** and population group
	17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, **disability**, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	

There are also a number of goals, targets and indicators that whilst not specifically referencing disability do nevertheless imply that persons with disabilities should be visible (**Figure 9**). Terms including: 'for all'; 'the vulnerable'; 'most disadvantaged'; 'non-discriminatory'; 'equal access'; and 'universal access' are used throughout the global indicator framework and suggest that persons with disabilities would be expected to be included in any measures of progress.

Figure 9 - Goals that imply disability inclusion

Goal 3. Ensure health lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

However, without specific advocacy and attention paid to these types of markers then persons with disabilities will not necessarily be included. It is very important therefore to ensure that reviews of progress go beyond just those measures that specifically reference disability. Theoretically, all reviews should be working towards disaggregating indicators by disability where possible, as the global indicator framework notes in its opening statement.

The stakeholder group of persons with disabilities

Within the UN system, there is a mechanism through which different representative groups can have a voice and participate in all UN global development discussions. In fact, it was recognised back in 1992 during the Earth Summit, that without the participation of a broad range of different social groups, sustainable development would not be possible. Nine 'Major Groups' were therefore created, including:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous Peoples
- Non-Governmental Organisations
- Local Authorities
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Business and Industry
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Farmers

At the Rio+20 Conference, the importance of engaging these groups was once again affirmed. In the outcome document, 'The Future We Want', the role of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) was highlighted as playing an important role in work around sustainable development. In addition, four 'other stakeholders' were invited by governments and encouraged to actively participate in UN processes related to sustainable development. They include:

- Local communities
- Volunteer groups and foundations,
- Migrants and families
- Persons with disabilities

The MGoS system is working highly effectively under the coordination of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

The group representing persons with disabilities within this system is called the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities. This is currently led by both the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium. The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities aims to ensure that persons with disabilities, along with their representative organisations and related non-governmental organisations, advocate with a unified voice on all development issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities within UN processes. The group play a very significant role in raising the rights of persons with disabilities during sustainable development discussions. The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities is organised in internal and external working groups. The internal groups focus on the HLPF and include:

- Working Group A: Drafting of official submissions
- Working Group B: Drafting position papers on sub-themes in line with SDGs goals under review
- Working Group C: Planning and organizing side events
- Working Group D: Organisation of Bilateral Meetings
- Working Group E: Accessibility at the HLPF

- Working Group F: Communication
- Working Group G: Voluntary National Reviews
- The external working groups include:
- Working Group D: Science, Information and Technology Event
- Working group E: Data/SDG indicators
- Working Group H: Financing for Development

All persons with disabilities and their organisations can join the **Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities** to advocate for disability-inclusive SDGs.

Chapter 4: The role of the European Union in implementing the 2030 Agenda and disability-inclusive SDGs

Competences of the EU

The EU played an influential role in the negotiations of the 2030 Agenda and has committed to implement the SDGs both in its internal and external policies. However, two years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the EU has yet to develop an overarching vision to implement and monitor the SDGs in its strategies and policies. At this stage, fragmented initiatives have taken places but without a clear direction, political will and ambition. Policies to implement the SDGs in the EU come within different areas of competence, which mean that to achieve any SDG in the EU or in any given Member State, action needs to be taken at both the EU, across all institutions, and at the national level.

The competences of the European Union to adopt laws are defined in the EU Treaties, in its Articles 2 to 6 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (hereafter called TFEU). The EU has only the competences conferred on it by these Treaties. This is called the principle of conferral. Under this principle, the EU may only act within the limits of the competences given to it by the EU Member States in the Treaties. Competences not conferred upon the EU in the Treaties remain with Member States at the national level. The Treaty of Lisbon clarifies the division of competences between the EU and EU countries. These competences are divided into three main categories:

- Exclusive competences
- Shared competences
- Supporting competences

The EU has exclusive competence in certain policy areas. This means that only the EU can legislate and adopt binding acts. The Member States are no longer permitted to make their own laws in these areas. Article 3 of the TFEU defines the following areas as exclusive competences:

- Customs union
- Establishing rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market
- Monetary policy for Euro area countries
- Conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy
- Common commercial policy
- Conclusion of international agreements under certain conditions

Regarding other policy areas, the EU has shared competences. This means that both the EU and Member States can adopt laws, but EU law has primacy over any adopted national law, and may override the right to make national laws in the area covered by an EU law. In other words, the Member States can act only if the EU has chosen not to. When the EU has chosen

to adopt EU law, Member States have to implement this law. The competences shared between the EU and Member States are listed in Article 4 TFEU:

- Internal market
- Social policy, but only for aspects specifically defined in the Treaty
- Economic, social and territorial cohesion (regional policy)
- Agriculture and fisheries (except conservation of marine biological resources)
- Environment
- Consumer protection
- Transport
- Trans-European networks
- Energy
- Area of freedom, security and justice
- Shared safety concerns in public health matters, limited to the aspects defined in the TFEU
- Research, technological development, space
- Development cooperation and humanitarian aid

Supporting competences are defined in Article 6 of the TFEU: the EU can only intervene to support, coordinate or complement the action of EU countries. Legally binding EU acts must not require the harmonisation of EU countries' laws or regulations. Supporting competences relate to the following policy areas:

- Protection and improvement of human health
- Industry
- Culture
- Tourism
- Education, vocational training, youth and sport
- Civil protection
- Administrative cooperation

Member States have given the EU the competence to address disability issues in the Amsterdam Treaty. Article 10 of the TFEU states that in "defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on ... disability". Moreover, Article 19 TFEU states that the EU has the power to act, including adopting legal instruments, to combat discrimination on the grounds of disability.

SDGs in the EU

At the regional level, the EU needs to develop an overarching vision with a clear strategy on how to engage in implementing and monitoring the SDGs. This vision must also provide guidance to European Member States. So far, the EU came up with several fragmented initiatives, where no or little guidance is available for the European Commission and other EU institutions.

On 22 November 2016, the EU presented a strategic package for achieving sustainable development in Europe and around the world. It included a press release entitled 'Sustainable Development: EU sets out its priorities', an overarching communication on next

steps for a sustainable European future along with a Staff Working Document describing broadly the contribution of the various EU policies and legislation to the SDGs, as well as a Questions & Answers about the sustainable development in the EU. The package also included document about a revision about the EU international cooperation framework (see next section) and communication about a post-Cotonou framework on the future relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. Civil society platform like SDGs Watch Europe, of whom EDF is a member, expressed its disappointment with the EU sustainable development package, explaining that *'little new information about how the EU intends to make the 2030 Agenda a reality in Europe. It was a justification of business-as-usual, which had not deliver on the ambitious commitments of the new global agenda'*[8].

On the 31st May 2017, EUROSTAT, the EU agency working on statistics, published **its own set of SDGs indicators** comprised of 100 indicators and structured along the 17 SDGs. The document is welcomed by EDF as we see a clear will to collect data on persons with disabilities compared to the first draft in March which excluded disability. In fact, the set includes 15 disability indicators where data "disaggregation is possible" (**Figure 10**). However, the document lacks a clear alignment with the targets and the indicators of the SDGs, where for instance, the disability indicators of the global framework (see **Figure 8** page 25) have disappeared. Additionally, disability indicators are not included in three goals that remain critical to tackle poverty and inequality among persons with disabilities. They are: goal 4 (quality education), goal 5 (gender equality) and goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

On the 20 November 2017, EUROSTAT published its first annual monitoring analysis of the situation in the EU and its Member States, using for the first time the EU-SDGs set of indicators. The report is called: **'Sustainable Development in the European Union — Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context'**. It provides a statistical presentation of trends relating to the SDGs in the EU over the past five years ('short-term') and, when sufficient data are available, over the past 15 years ('long-term'). Data on persons with disabilities is available, even data regarding goal 4 (quality education) and goal 8 (decent work and economic growth). SDG Watch Europe has expressed criticism towards this new report, explaining the content does not address the 2030 Agenda's ambition and paints a misleading picture of the EU's performance on the SDGs[9]. When it comes to disability, EUROSTAT has been using the EU-SILC instrument, where disability is approximated according to the concept of global activity limitation, which is defined as a 'limitation in activities people usually do because of health problems for at least the past six months'. Collecting data on disability using that perspective is incomplete. The absence of data also on people living in institutions and people facing homelessness is another gap.

On the 22nd May 2017, the **EU multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs** was created. Individuals and organisations were asked to apply to engage in the initiative to support and advice the European Commission and other stakeholders on the implementation of the SDGs in the EU. EDF applied in November 2017 but was not successful despite the fact that under Article 4.3 of the CRPD, the EU must legally comply to the following: *'In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organisations.'* The exclusion of DPOs from this stakeholder platform is inconsistent also with the UN level

[8] SDG Watch Europe press release 23rd November 2016

[9] SDG Watch Europe news from the coalition: 'Not fit for purpose: SDG monitoring report fails to illustrate how far the EU is from a sustainable future' 20th November 2017

stakeholder engagement which includes persons with disabilities within the UNs major groups system. The EU multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs held its first meeting at the time this current publication was being prepared and no further information is available (December 2017).

Figure 10 - List of EU-SDGs disability indicators

Goal	Number of references to disability	Disability indicators in the EU-SDGs set of indicators
	5	• **01.11** People at risk of poverty or social exclusion • **01.12** People at risk of poverty after social transfers • **01.13** Severely materially deprived people • **01.14** People living in households with very low work intensity • **01.22** Share of total population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor
	1	• **02.11** Obesity rate
	2	• **03.14** Self-perceived health • **03.41** Self-reported unmet need for medical examination and care
	1	• **06.11** Share of total population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household
	1	• **07.10** Percentage of people affected by fuel poverty (inability to keep home adequately warm)
	1	• **10.24** Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income
	3	• **11.12** Overcrowding rate by degree of urbanisation • **11.21** Distribution of population by level of difficulty in accessing public transport
	1	• **16.19** Share of population which reported occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area
Total	**15**	

SDGs in EU international cooperation

On 19 May 2017, the Council adopted a new European Consensus on Development. This joint statement by the three European institutions (European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council) sets out a new framework for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States. The document is a direct response by the EU to the 2030 Agenda agreed in September 2015, when it comes to international cooperation.

EDF welcomes the document as it brings a new shift with a true inclusion of persons with disabilities and a real policy effort to implement and monitor the CRPD. The EU Consensus on Development reinforces the commitment made in the 2030 Agenda and in the Progress Report on the implementation of the current European Disability Strategy to engage actively in disability-inclusive development to reach the furthest at risk of marginalisation while promoting, protecting and fulfilling human rights for all. The Consensus is a clear and positive response to the Concluding observations on the initial report of the EU by the CRPD Committee in 2015, who recommended a "systematic approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in all EU international cooperation policies and programmes" and for the EU to "take the lead in the implementation of disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals" (page 10).

The explicit reference to the rights of persons with disabilities within the EU Consensus on Development symbolises an outstanding improvement for accelerating the implementation of a rights-based approach to development cooperation. Indeed, the previous EU Consensus on development did not provide any real commitments to foster the rights of persons with disabilities within the EU's external actions. By contrast, the new EU Consensus embraces a rights-based approach that strengthens links between SDGs and the rights of persons with disabilities.

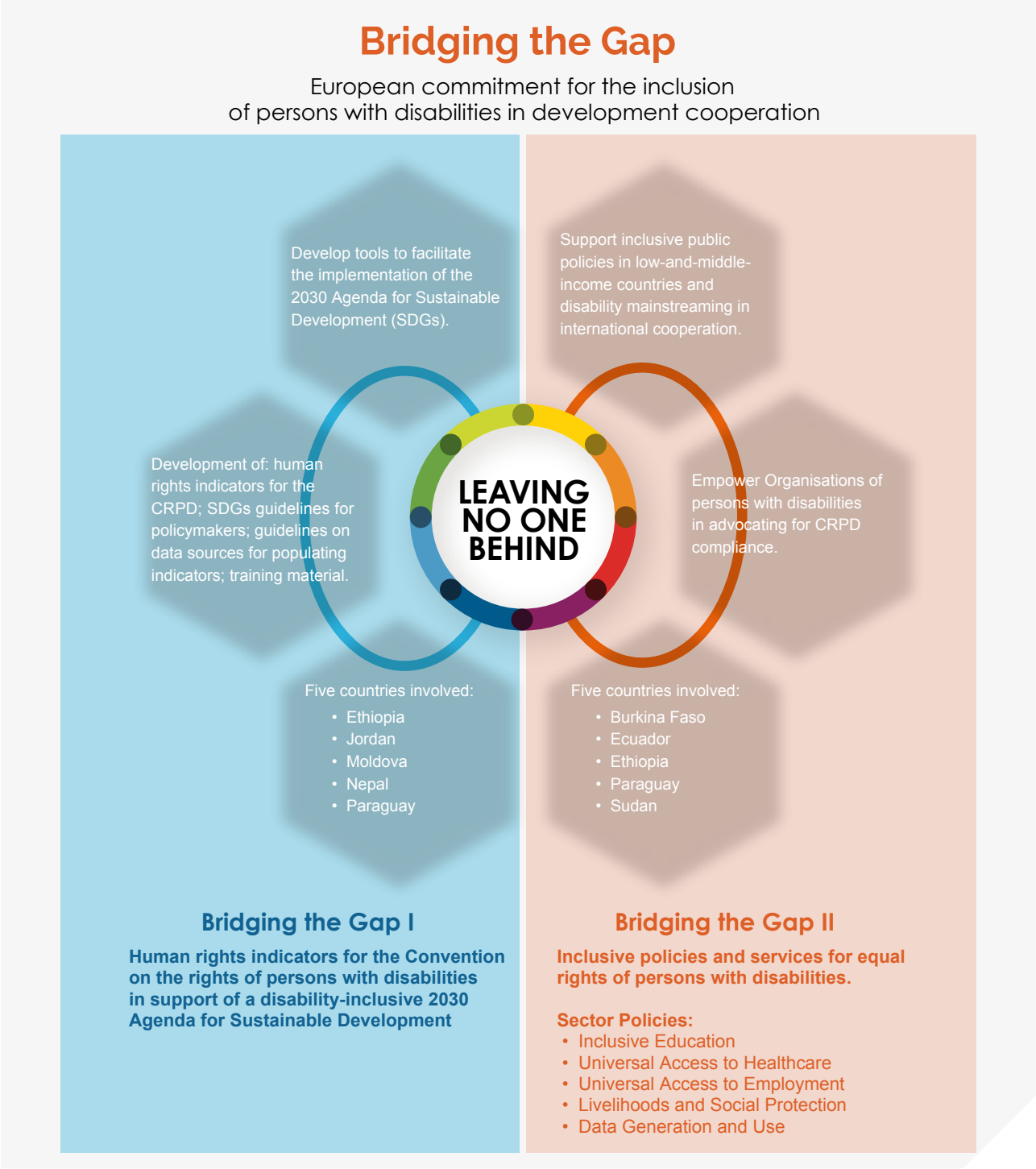
The values underpinning the EU's action on the international scene are enshrined in Art. 21(2) of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU): 'democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law'. International cooperation and development policy are therefore a fundamental part of the EU political strategy to tackle global problems and build a sustainable world. This framework shows that a disability inclusive EU external action is crucial to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. It expressly mentions that persons with disabilities will not be left behind and multiple discrimination towards vulnerable individuals will be specifically addressed. Gender equality is placed at the heart of the EU agenda for achieving the SDGs in order to promote women's rights, gender equality and empowerment of women.

An example of this commitment is the EU-funded project **Bridging the Gap**, which carries out actions aimed at increasing the inclusion of persons with disabilities at both the international and country level. The project is a coordinated response to the CRPD and the Consensus, and consists of two mutually reinforcing parts:

- "Bridging the Gap I: Human rights indicators for the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities in support of a disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and
- "Bridging the Gap II: Inclusive policies and services for equal rights of persons with disabilities".

At global level, the project is led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). At the country level, Bridging the Gap is implemented by a consortium led by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP), and composed of three EU Member State's development agencies: Austria (ADA), Italy (IADC) and Spain (AECID), as well as the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and EDF. The project is carried out in five partner countries in South America and Africa: Ecuador, Paraguay, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Ethiopia. **Figure 11** provides an overview of Bridging the Gap.

Figure 11 - Example of project financed by the EU: Bridging the Gap



EDF's perspective for disability-inclusive SDGs

EDF is a unique platform which brings together organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe. EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families. It is a strong voice of and for persons with disabilities in Europe.

EDF's vision: Persons with disabilities in Europe are fully included in society on an equal basis with others. Our human rights, as outlined in the CRPD, are fully respected, protected and fulfilled. The principles of the CRPD are central to this vision, and they inform our advocacy objectives and our way of working.

EDF's mission: To ensure persons with disabilities' full inclusion in society with access to our human rights through active involvement in policy development, implementation and monitoring of the CRPD in Europe.

Disability rights strategy 2020-2030

In May 2017, EDF adopted its Strategic Framework for 2017-2021[10] during our annual general assembly. We identify the overarching goal to advocate for the creation of a new framework for the rights of persons with disabilities in the EU, the current one finishing in 2020. Specifically, we aim for a comprehensive disability rights strategy 2020-2030, which will be implemented via an inter-institutional agreement at the EU level. The new comprehensive disability rights strategy should be aligned to the implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs, as its time period will coincide with the endpoint of the 2030 Agenda. The objectives of this comprehensive strategy should be mainstreamed in the EU budget 2021-2027. It should cover all the provisions of the CRPD, with a budget allocated for its implementation and a well-resourced monitoring mechanism. It needs to be based on the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the European Union and include in its actions the preparations of the second report of the EU to the CRPD Committee and the participation in the second review of the EU. It also needs to be integrated into the follow up to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the European Pillar of Social Rights. We believe that in order to raise awareness about this strategy, 2021 should be named as the Second European Year for the rights of persons with disabilities.

Gender equality

Gender equality and women's empowerment are mentioned under Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda which identifies equality as a persistent challenge for countries worldwide. EDF fully shares the vision of the European Commission of ensuring equality for all persons and recognises that inequalities between men and women are still very real and alarming. Women with disabilities constitute 16% of the total population of women in Europe[11]. This figure is based on the current female population of just below 250 million. It means there are approximately 40 million women and girls with disabilities in the EU.

Currently, the EU legal framework does not tackle multiple discrimination against women with disabilities. For example, the Employment Directive (Council Directive 2000/78/EC) does not allow for multiple grounds of discrimination to be raised within the same

[10] Internal EDF document available on request.

[11] Ad hoc module of the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) on people with disabilities and long-term health problems, 2002

judicial claim. The principle of gender equality between men and women and the relevant EU gender equality policies, such as the EU 2011-2020 Gender Equality Pact[12] do not mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities. In general, the EU's legal framework handles gender and disability separately in its policy and this has resulted in the invisibility of women with disabilities' needs and women with disabilities continue being the victims of multiple discrimination[13].

One positive aspect with regards to the EU's internal policy on violence against women with disabilities, is the EU's signing of the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence. Article 39 of the Convention considers forced sterilisation a crime, which is a practice that unfortunately still affects many women and girls with disabilities today.

The new external cooperation framework of the EU, the European Consensus on Development, acknowledges gender equality as a core and fundamental value to achieve the SDGs. Gender equality positively impacts on progress on democracy, human rights, health, education, growth and conflict resolution and gender action must be mainstreamed across all relevant policies. The EU Consensus points out that 'the EU and its Member States will continue to play a key role in ensuring that no-one is left behind, wherever people live and regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status or other factors. This approach includes addressing the multiple discriminations faced by vulnerable people and marginalised groups.' The importance of addressing multiple discrimination is also highlighted by the new EU Gender Action Plan that aims at transforming the lives of girls and women through EU External Relations in the period 2016-2020.

Accessibility

Accessibility relates to a number of SDGs including goal 1 (poverty), goal 4 (education), goal 5 (gender equality), goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities). At EU level, general legislation on accessibility does not exist. Potentially the most important piece of legislation to explicitly tackle accessibility is the proposed European Accessibility Act (EAA), which has yet to be adopted. This Act is supposed to provide accessibility requirements for a range of goods and services on the internal market of the EU, as well as for public procurement at national level and when using EU funds. However, it is likely to still not address the issue of accessibility on EU level fully.

Several pieces of EU legislation oblige Member States to include accessibility requirements in legislation relating to transport, ICT, public procurement and the use of EU funds such as the European Structural and Investment Funds.[14] However, even in areas such as transport where the EU has relatively strong competences, the approach differs between the different transport modes and addresses e.g. rail accessibility proportionally more than other modes.

[12] As an annex to the Council conclusions on the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011 – 2020 (available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/119628.pdf)

[13] EDF Manifesto on the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities in the European Union (2011), p. 17 (available at http://www.edf-feph.org/Page.asp?docid=26614&langue=EN)

[14] European Structural and Investment Funds are financial tools aiming to reduce regional disparities in terms of income, wealth and opportunities. Europe's poorer regions receive most of the support, but all European regions are eligible for funding under the policy's various funds and programmes. They fund inter alia, infrastructure, including accessibility, employment opportunities and lifelong learning activities.

There is also a problem with the correct implementation and enforcement of existing legislation, such as the Passengers' Rights Regulations for the different transport modes.

As for accessibility to information and communication technologies and systems, the EU adopted in 2016 a Directive on the Accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. Additionally, the electronic communication framework adopted in 2009 (known as the Telecoms Package) also ensures equal access and choice for end/users with disabilities. Besides, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of 2010 includes a soft approach towards media accessibility. Both the Telecoms rules and the Audiovisual Directive have had a very different implementation across the EU, resulting in countries progressing on accessibility and many others lagging behind. Currently, these two pieces of legislation are being revised by the EU institutions, and the European disability movement expects stronger accessibility provisions accompanied by a robust enforcement mechanism.

However, the EU lacks legal initiatives on other important areas, such as consumer protection, tourism, urban planning, or the built environment, and does not have a systematic mechanism in place to mainstream accessibility in all relevant EU legislation and policy. A lack of coherence on a horizontal level has led to a "patchwork" of different pieces of sectorial legislation, which often approach and define accessibility in different ways and lead to significant gaps in the legislative body. The EU has yet to adopt a Universal Design approach in all its policies and programmes that acknowledge human diversity and ensures accessibility for persons with disabilities. In fact, accessibility can help to leave no one behind and ensure the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society while shaping the future of sustainable development for all.

Employment and social rights

80 million persons with disabilities live in the EU, number which, according to demographic trends, will raise to 120 million by 2020. The number of women with disabilities is higher than the number of men - 29.5% versus 24.5%. The employment rate of persons with disabilities is much lower than those without disabilities - 48.7% versus 72.5%[15] A high number of young persons with disabilities are early leavers from education and training than young persons without disabilities - 22.5% versus 11%. Lower number of persons with disabilities complete tertiary education or equivalent compared to persons without disabilities - 29.5% versus 42.5%. Persons with disabilities are at a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to persons without disabilities - 30% versus 21.5%. Additionally, the degree of disability - severe versus moderate - does increase significantly the risk of poverty or social exclusion. However, this risk significantly decreases for people aged 65 and over in almost all EU Member States mainly due to the social protection provided by pensions after retirement.[16]

The EU has taken several initiatives to promote the employment of persons with disabilities with regards to its internal and external policies, both legislative and soft law measures.

In 2000, the EU adopted the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, age, sexual orientation and religion regarding employment and vocational training. The Directive also obliges employers to take reasonable accommodations to enable someone with a disability to work on an equal basis with others.

[15] http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16995&langId=en
[16] http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16995&langId=en

Under current EU law, any national of a Member State has the right to seek employment in another Member State. The European Commission has created an online portal for mobility of workers across the EU, which provides comprehensive information for workers and employers, including information on living conditions in another country. Unfortunately, the portal is not fully accessible and provides little specific information for workers with disabilities and for workers with children with disabilities[17].

Also, parents of children with disabilities, particularly mothers, face discrimination with regard to hiring procedures, salary and social security payments[18].

On the 17 November 2017, the EU adopted a European Pillar of Social Rights (Social Pillar)[19]. The Social Pillar is constituted of 20 voluntary principles based on social rights and on ad hoc legislative initiatives. It aims at delivering new and more effective rights for citizens in three main areas: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market, Fair working conditions, Social protection and inclusion. The Social Pillar includes, inter alia[20], the specific principle on the rights of persons with disabilities and specific legislative proposals one on work life balance[21] and a potential one on access to social protection for people in employment[22]. These and other policy actions are fundamental for persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights and live independently in the community.

"Today we commit ourselves to a set of 20 principles and rights. From the right to fair wages to the right to health care; from lifelong learning, a better work-life balance and gender equality to minimum income: with the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU stands up for the rights of its citizens in a fast-changing world." President Juncker on the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, 17 November 2017

The 2030 Agenda presents a unique opportunity to strengthen the EU's work around sustainable development, while using the articles of the CRPD as a foundation on which the Social Pillar could stand, when it comes to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. As such, European policies must now be reviewed to translate the Agenda 2030 and the Social Pillar into national and regional implementation strategies, in line with the CRPD.

Goal 8 focuses on the promotion of "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". Target 8.5 has a clear reference to disability: "By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value."

Goal 10 emphasises on reducing "inequality within and among countries". Target 10.2 states the following "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status."

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[17] The European job mobility portal (available at https://ec.europa.eu/eures/page/homepage?lang=en)

[18] European Commission, Study on the situation of women with disabilities in light of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (VC/2007/317), 2009.

[19] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en

[20] Other initiatives include revision of existing legislation on the right to written statement when starting a job and the possibility to include basic rights in it and on directive regulating working time definition and compensation. More information here http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1313&langId=en and here http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1314&langId=en

[21] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311&langId=en

[22] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?&catId=1312&langId=en

These goals, together with other goals to end poverty and to make our cities sustainable, are directly related to the Social pillar **principles**, including the one of social protection (principle 12), inclusion of persons with disabilities (principle 17), long term care (principle 18), access to housing (19) and essential services (20).

To monitor the implementation of the Social Pillar, a Scoreboard with indicators[23] has been developed. However, this tool is not included in the broader exercise of developing EU SDGs indicators and unfortunately the indicators included in the Scoreboard are not disaggregated by disability.

The Social Pillar will represent the broad framework for the EU investment on social rights in the future. Preparation of the future EU budget should include allocation of adequate financial resources to the implementation of the Social Pillar as part of the broader implementation of the SDGs. It is key for the Social Pillar to not only translate economic concerns, but also fully includes social rights to overcome socio-economic inequalities led by austerity measures. It is therefore important for the Social Pillar to be in line with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and serves as tool to implement the CRPD at both the European and national levels.

Disaggregation of data by disability

The inclusion of specific references to disability status and persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is highly positive. However, collecting data on persons with disabilities remains challenging because the process is deemed not easy. Moreover, the current Framework does not look into impairment and severity differences – both of which can have significant impact on experiences of inclusion.

A key issue in the collection of data on disability is that countries, and even different agencies within countries may define disability in different ways. This leads to data which is unreliable, inconsistent and non-comparable – in other words, data which is of limited use for measuring progress and impact. It might seem like a straightforward thing to identify how many persons with disabilities there are in a population - but simply asking people to state if they have a disability is not effective and will result in very low response rates.[24] Additionally, asking one question on 'limitation in activities people usually do because of health problems for at least the past six months' using the EUROSTAT EU-SILC instrument is misleading because persons with disabilities fully included on society might not respond accurately to that question , based on a health approach.

Understanding what disability actually means is the first issue. There is so far no universally agreed definition of what constitutes a disability. Whilst the CRPD refers to persons with disabilities as: *'...those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'* (Article 1), each country will vary in what it officially classifies as a disability based on its own policies and provisions. These may or may not be in-line with the CRPD.

In response to the challenges surrounding the collection of disability disaggregated data, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) was established by the UN Statistical Commission with the task of creating a comparable population based measure of disability that is consistent with a rights based understanding. This resulted in the production of a

[23] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/scoreboard
[24] Mont D., (2007) *Measuring disability prevalence*. SP discussion paper no. 0706, World Bank

series of question sets, commonly referred to as the Washington Group Questions which enable data to be sensitively collected on prevalence including numbers, types and severity of disabilities. There are a number of question sets including the most basic WG Short set, containing six questions (**Figure 12**); the WG extended set; and the WG Child Functioning sets (for children aged 2-4 years and from 5-18 years).

Figure 12 - The Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability

The Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability

The next questions ask about difficulties you may have doing certain activities because of a HEALTH PROBLEM.

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
a. No – no difficulty
b. Yes – some difficulty
c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
d. Cannot do at all

2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
a. No – no difficulty
b. Yes – some difficulty
c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
d. Cannot do at all

3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
a. No – no difficulty
b. Yes – some difficulty
c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
d. Cannot do at all

4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
a. No – no difficulty
b. Yes – some difficulty
c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
d. Cannot do at all

5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
a. No – no difficulty
b. Yes – some difficulty
c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
d. Cannot do at all

6. Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?
a. No – no difficulty
b. Yes – some difficulty
c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
d. Cannot do at all

Questions taken from **http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com**

The advantage of the WG questions is that they are very basic and simply to ask if a person experiences any difficulties in a number of different domains (vision, hearing, mobility, communication, cognition, and self-care, with anxiety, depression, fatigue and pain included in the extended question sets) which are ranked on a scale from no difficulty to cannot do at all. The results produce a continuum along which everyone can be placed. Disability is defined and recorded by identifying all those with difficulty in at least one domain recorded at a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all. This cut off point provides the most accurate representation of the population that has an impairment which is significant enough to cause some level of activity limitation (in other words, a disability).

The WG questions have now been used in population based surveys, and censuses around the world with growing use amongst development programs for more localised household surveys and project mapping exercises. As a result, more reliable and comparable data on disability is being generated which should help inform progress against the SDGs. EDF advocates for the use of the Washington group short set of questions to be used, in addition to other already use instruments such as the EU-SILC, to ensure stronger disaggregated data by disability.

Recommendations for the EU

EDF has already been considering how best to support the EU on delivering the 2030 Agenda. In June 2017, EDF and the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament hosted a meeting involving a range of different stakeholders from Europe and Africa alongside experts and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to discuss ways in which to effectively implement the SDGs within the EU. The discussions revealed that the European Commission remains uncertain about the best ways to ensure implementation of disability-inclusive SDGs since it currently has no guidance from which to draw. A significant opportunity therefore exists for DPOs to raise awareness amongst European policy-makers of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in relation to the SDGs and support them to develop disability inclusive programmes.

EDF put together some recommended actions for consideration by the EU which DPOs can use as the basis for lobbying European policy-makers around disability inclusive implementation of the SDGs. Grouped together under different targets, the following suggestions have been designed to help DPOs consider which priority areas to get involved with (**Figure 13**):

Figure 13 - Recommendations for the EU in relation to the implementation of the SDGs

Overarching recommendations

- The EU must publish an **overarching EU strategy/framework for the SDGs** to promote political coherence and coordination, actively including persons with disabilities and other groups at risk of marginalisation
- The EU must publish a comprehensive **disability rights strategy 2020-2030** aligned to the implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs, as its time period will coincide with the endpoint of the 2030 Agenda
- The EU must be a **leader** with a clear and inclusive 2030 Agenda **implementation plan, with targets and timeline**
- The **human rights agenda**, including the CRPD, must be reflected in all regional and national work to align to the 2030 Agenda
- The EU must invest in **capacity-building and awareness-raising** so European citizens know about the SDGs
- The EU must **report its progress to the HLPF** with the submission of a VNR
- The EU must work on **all the goals** and not just cherry-pick one
- The EU should ensure that at the global level, **disability disaggregated data** is collected by all countries using the Washington Group data sets to ensure comparability
- The EU must participate in the **European Regional Forum for Sustainable Development**, which is currently being led by the UN ECE
- The EU must actively **consult and involve persons with disabilities and their representative organisations** in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs
- 2021 should be declared the **European Year of Persons with Disabilities** to raise awareness, encourage debate and change attitudes

Recommendations in relation to EU policies

- The 2030 Agenda, the CRPD and the rights of persons with disabilities **must be reflected in EU policies, with sustainable development** at the core of:
  - the European Pillar of Social Rights
  - Juncker's white paper
  - Europe 2020
  - The European Semester
  - The Annual Growth Survey
  - The next European Disability Strategy
  - The European Accessibility Act
- The EU must pressure **European Member States to implement** the 2030 Agenda and to include persons with disabilities in development plans
- Every new and current policy must have a **sustainability check**, including the new EU budget
- The link between the **SDGs and the UNCRPD must be translated into guidance** for policy makers
- The new **European Consensus on Development** must be implemented

Recommendations in relation to the EU budget

- The SDGs must be included in the new **European budget 2021-2027**, with budget guidelines for EU member states
- Disability must be a **marker in the new EU budget** to appreciate how much money is spent in this field and recognise the value in investing on persons with disabilities

Recommendations in relation to collaboration

- The EU must have a clear **focal point/coordination mechanism** to ensure the 2030 Agenda strategies are mainstreamed in programmes and policies
- Persons with disabilities must be included in the new **EU Multi-Stakeholder platform**
- Civil society must **break down silos and collaborate** together for stronger advocacy
- Civil society must **work together** with national governments and European institutions
- **Companies and allies** have to engage and be held accountable in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- **Consultation and participation with DPOs** must be systematic

Recommendations in relation to the EU-SDG goals and indicators

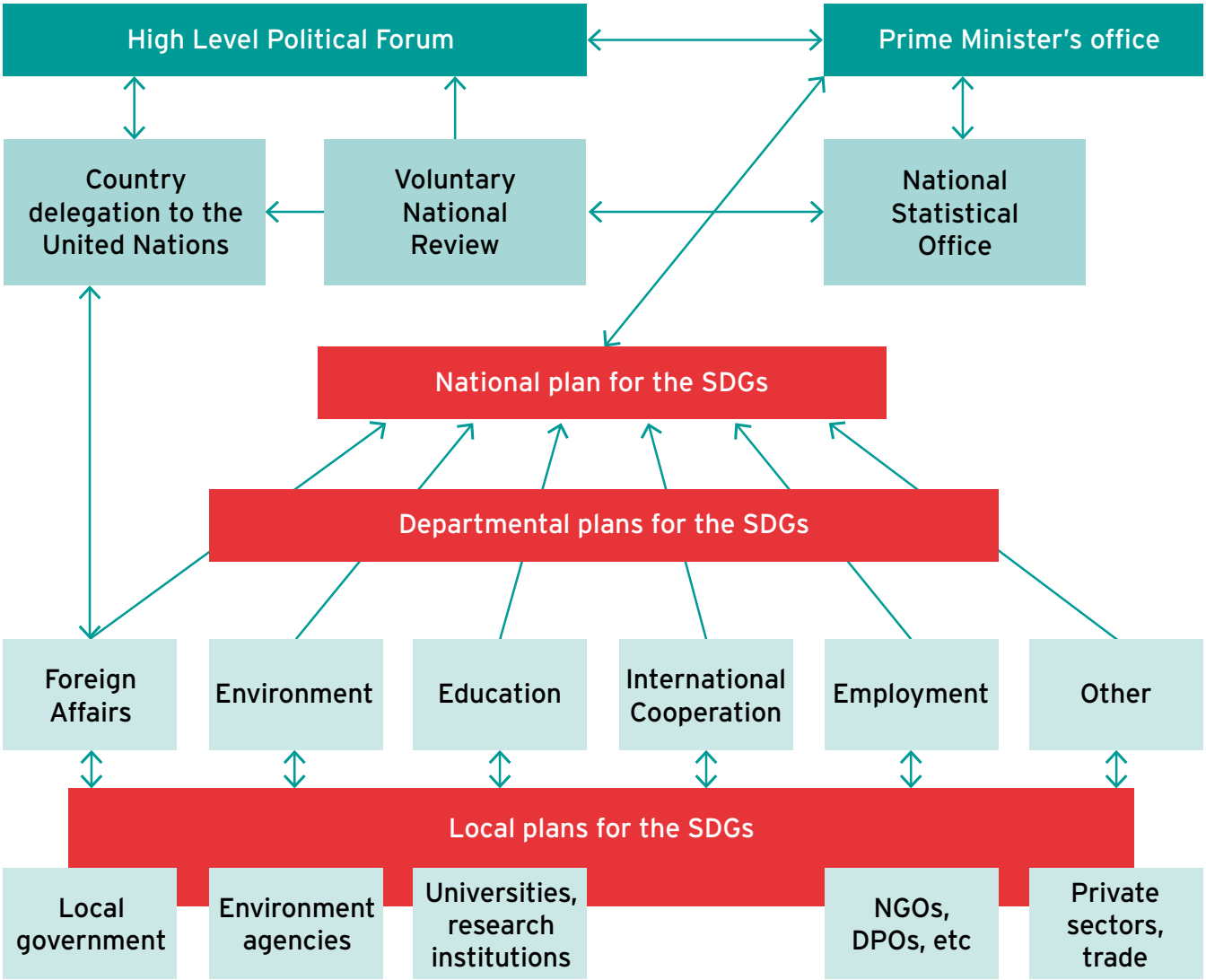
- **Data disaggregation by disability** for the EU goals 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work and economic growth) **must be included in the EU-SDGs set of indicators**
- Disability data must be disaggregated by type using the **Washington Group set of questions**
- **Homelessness** must be tackled with EU indicators in the EU-SDG goals
- Data must be collected on **people living in institutions**
- Data must be collected using **new methods and sources**
- **Civil society**, and in particular representative organisations of persons with disabilities must be included to support getting new or complex data

Chapter 5: The engagement of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level

The implementation and the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda at the national level is usually led by the Prime Minister's office (or its equivalent), with a wide range of other ministries responsible for actions (**Figure 14**). The extent to which governments are coordinated, engaged, transparent and inclusive varies from one country to another. However, a common process to all UN Member States is the Voluntary National Review, where countries inform the High Level Political Forum of their national progress toward the implementation of the SDGs.

Figure 14 - Mapping of the SDGs process at the national level

Mapping adapted from the InterAcademy Partnership report (November 2017) "Supporting the SDGs: a guide for merit-based academies".



Voluntary National Reviews

The annual Voluntary National Review (VNR) process culminating in the High Level Political Forums (HLPF), are the mechanisms through which progress against the SDGs is being measured at both the national and international level. So far, a total of 65 countries, including 27 European countries (See **Figure 5** on page 19) have been through a VNR processes, there have been two VNR synthesis reports and an overall SDGs progress report produced in 2017.

A significant opportunity exists for civil society, including DPOs, to engage with national governments over ensuring equitable planning because of the way in which the SDGs are designed to align with national development priorities. The SDGs represent a truly global and highly ambitious set of development outcomes which if they are to be achieved, require that national governments incorporate them into their national development plans and budgets. Hence at the moment, many countries are in the process of identifying where each goal sits within current national government plans. They are also analysing any gaps in progress which the goal targets imply. In this sense, the SDGs whilst being global targets, are being slowly incorporated into national development plans. The VNR process then becomes a significant opportunity to share progress, challenges and innovations at the global level even though it is focused on national outcomes.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for civil society for a number of reasons. The ambitious nature of the SDGs emphasises the need for government ministries to work together in tangible ways and also, most importantly to involve a broad range of stakeholders from the public and private sector along with civil society. One point the 2016 summary of Voluntary National Reviews made was the *'...multi-ministerial and multi-stakeholder involvement, with nearly all countries reporting involvement by a wide range of government and non-governmental stakeholders...'*.[25] Moreover, since the VNRs are presented at a global forum (the High Level Political Forum), it is also an opportunity for advocacy to extend beyond national contexts. For the disability movement, it represents a chance to highlight and influence the domestic inclusion agenda whilst also helping to further progress at international level. It is important therefore that national DPO movements get involved in VNRs – not just to influence plans locally but also to ensure the issue of disability inclusive development remains visible at the global level.

Whilst this sounds positive, actual engagement by national governments in the production of their VNRs does vary considerably. It is worth noting that countries are not compelled to produce VNRs, the UK for example has so far not indicated when it will do so. However, countries are required to *'conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national level which are country-led and country-driven'*, but regular reviews by the HLPF are voluntary.

In line with the pragmatic nature of the SDGs, there is also no standardised reporting format although common reporting guidelines do exist. For example, in 2016, only 37% of the VNRs analysed by a BOND/UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development report included a section on 'leave no one behind' although the majority of reports did mention the issue. What was clearly lacking in most reports was detailed consideration of the issues[26]. Finland did provide a section on 'leave no one behind' in which it noted that it found reaching out to 'communities, children and youth, people with disabilities and migrants'

[25] *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews, 2016*, Division for Sustainable Development, DESA. p.23.
[26] Cutter A., (2016) *Progressing national SDGs implementation: Experiences and recommendations from 2016*. BOND, UK.

particularly challenging and suggested that it would develop new models for interacting with these groups as part of the process for designing their National Implementation Plan for Agenda 2030.[27] This means that it is important to be aware of when national governments are expecting to go through a VNR process and what format the reporting is likely to take. A good resource to monitor in this regard, is the UN's Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform website which has comprehensive information on all aspects of the SDGs.

Reviewing the VNRs from the perspective of disability inclusion

Whilst this process is obviously still very new, an informal review by EDF on SDGs implementation at the 2016 High Level Political Forum revealed that EU Member States have so far focused attention mostly around Goals 8 and 10 in relation to disability. There are a number of actions reported for Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) around improving the participation of persons with disabilities in the job market and in Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities) on improving the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities.

By contrast, the VNR reports do not make any reference to Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) or include measures related to Goal 4 (Quality education) on measures that would see the construction and upgrading of education facilities in ways that are child, disability and gender inclusive. So far, EU countries have also failed to provide disability disaggregated data to monitor the SDGs' implementation.

Much of the reporting around the specific protection of the rights of persons with disabilities was based around domestic measures. There was considerably less attention paid to rights issues within Member States' international development work. Nevertheless, some good practice is emerging; the external cooperation plan adopted by the German government promotes vocational training and the establishment of job placement systems in developing countries. By doing so, it contributes towards facilitating access to job market for persons with disabilities. Moreover, in some of the 2017 VNR reports (notably from Belgium and Netherlands) reviewed, there were commitments made to ensure issues around inequality were being followed up through international development programmes.

Template for the analysis of a VNR report

The following questions aim at assessing whether the voluntary national reviews submitted to the High-Level Political Forum are inclusive of persons with disabilities and DPOs. The involvement of DPOs in the review process concerning the SDGs' implementation at the national level is crucial to ensure that persons with disabilities will be not left behind.

1. How many references to persons with disabilities can you find in the VNR submitted by your country to the HLPF?
2. In what areas (i.e. education, employment or mobility) are persons with disabilities expressly mentioned?

[27] *National report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Finland.* Prime Minister's Office Publications 10/2016.

3. In what areas further political actions are required to promote the rights of persons with disabilities?
4. Does the VNR refer to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)?
5. How many references to organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) can you find in the VNRs?
6. Are organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) adequately involved in the drafting of national report? If yes, in what ways?

Similar questions have been asked to EDF members for countries having presenting their VNR at the HLPF. The outcomes are explained in **Figure 15**.

Figure 15 - Snapshot view of some recent EU VNRs

Belgium - VNR 2017

Persons with disabilities are mentioned a number of occasions in the report, most notably in goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10.

The report does not contain a section specifically related to an analysis of the 'leave no one behind' agenda. It reports goal by goal. However, it does have a section on overarching strategies and initiatives within which the 'leave no one behind' motto is referenced. This is especially in relation to Belgium's international development work.

The report mentions that civil society were involved in the VNR process through its existing advisory council structures which enabled representatives to provide inputs at various stages through the process. Nevertheless, the Belgian Disability Forum regrets that the National High Council of Persons with Disabilities, which is the official advisory council of persons with disabilities at Belgian federal level, was not involved in the process. There was no mention of DPOs or the specific participation of persons with disabilities.

There was no explicit reference to any emerging policies or legislation specifically related to disability.

Denmark - VNR 2017

Persons with disabilities are specifically mentioned on a number of occasions, most explicitly in relation to employment.

The report does not contain a section specifically related to analysis of the 'leave no one behind' agenda. It reports goal by goal.

DPOs in Denmark have played an active role in the national VNR process, as part of a civil society coalition

There is no reference to new or emerging policies or legislation that would directly benefit persons with disabilities, but it does mention existing policies and programmes (such as those around social protection). However, some of the mentioned programmes have been criticised by civil society for being insufficient or not as precisely targeted as they should be.

Estonia – VNR 2016

Persons with disabilities are specifically mentioned on a number of occasions in goals 1, 8, 10, and 11. In addition goals 3, 4, 5 and 17, whilst not directly referencing disability, do imply inclusion.

The report does not contain a section specifically related to analysis of the 'leave no one behind' agenda. It reports goal by goal.

DPOs in Estonia were not originally active in the VNR consultation process. However, since then DPOs were invited to participate in the National Commission for Sustainable Development in November 2017. The meeting was an opportunity for civil society to contribute towards the development of national indicators, a number of which DPOs are suggesting to disaggregate by disability. It is envisaged that consultations with the National Commission will continue up to three times a year.

In terms of new or emerging policies and legislation, the employment capacity reform was mentioned along with wider State reform processes that will impact on disability inclusion. There are a number of reforms in the pipeline which will be influential in improving accessibility and inclusion which DPOs are now able to follow up on through involvement with the National Commission.

Finland – VNR 2016

Disability is referenced a few times in the report, specifically under a thematic analysis section entitled 'ensuring that no one is left behind', covering both domestic and international issues.

'Leave no one behind' is given a section as a cross-cutting issue which does include some reference to disability, specifically in relation to Finland's recent ratification of the CRPD.

There is some mention of policies and legislation that could impact on persons with disabilities, especially around the implementation of the CRPD. Domestically, it mentions reforms of social and unemployment security which will incentivise the employment of people with 'partial working ability' or disabilities through programs such as the 'Career opportunities for people with partial working ability'.

It notes that a member of the Finnish Disability Forum will be invited to join the Commission in 2016.

France – VNR 2016

Persons with disabilities are specifically mentioned once in goal 3. It mentions that France needs to expand its policies in favour of persons with disabilities, focusing on accessibility, vulnerability and inclusion in society.

The report does not contain a section specifically related to analysis of the 'leave no one behind' agenda. It reports goal by goal. However, it does contain some analysis in relation to this issue, although not specifically in relation to disability.

(continued overleaf)

For example, the report indicates a willingness to:

- Ensure gender equality in education;
- Recognise women and youth as the most vulnerable to poverty;
- Fight against racism and homophobia.

DPOs were not formally involved in the national VNR consultation process although an online consultation platform was open for public contributions.

There was no explicit reference to any emerging policies or legislation specifically related to disability, but the report points out that French metropolises invest significantly in making public transportation accessible.

Germany – VNR 2016

Persons with disabilities are specifically mentioned in the report on a number of occasions in relation to both national and international programs, specifically around the 'leave no one behind' agenda and in relation to education, employment, reducing inequalities and peace and justice.

'Leave no one behind' is given a small section as a cross-cutting issue which does include some reference to disability. In particular, this section mentions the need for and challenges around collecting disaggregated data (although disability was not specifically mentioned).

NGO stakeholders were consulted in the process of producing the report and were able to discuss their ideas with the German Government through a variety of dialogue formats.

In terms of policies and legislation, the report pays particular attention to its obligations under the CRPD by expressly outlining the goal of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide.

The report mentions that a large number of civil society representatives alongside other stakeholders played an active part in consultations as part of the National Commission on Sustainable Development.

Italy – VNR 2017

Disability and persons with disability are referenced in indicators for progress in four of the five core areas of focus in the National Sustainable Development Strategy - People, Planet, Peace and Prosperity. The disaggregated indicators used are those mentioned in the 'Revised list of global SDGs' produced by the IAEG-SDGs.

The report does not contain a section specifically related to analysis of the 'leave no one behind' agenda and it is not referenced in the text.

The VNR presented in 2017 was more of a strategy document rather than a progress one with reporting on its targets envisaged on an annual basis. The report mentions that over 200 NGOs were contacted as part of the development of this strategy. There was no mention of DPOs or the specific participation of persons with disabilities.

(continued overleaf)

There was no explicit reference to any emerging policies or legislation specifically related to disability.

Netherlands – VNR 2017

The VNR report contained no specific mention of persons with disabilities, with only general references to CSOs.

This report does have a couple of paragraphs under section one entitled 'leave no one behind' where it references the need to reach the most vulnerable in both the Netherlands and through its international actions. Persons with disabilities were not mentioned in this analysis.

DPOs were not actively consulted as part of the VNR process although the report indicated that civil society had participated.

There was no explicit reference to any emerging policies or legislation specifically related to disability.

Sweden – VNR 2017

Disability and persons with disabilities are specifically referenced throughout the report, most notably in relation to goals 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11 and 16.

The report does not contain a section specifically related to analysis of the 'leave no one behind' agenda and it is not referenced in the text.

The report indicates that civil society are involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but it doesn't specify how information for the VNR was obtained. There was no mention of DPOs or the specific participation of persons with disabilities.

In terms of policies and legislation, the report pays particular attention to its obligations under the National Strategy on Equal Rights and on improving measures to remove the relatively high levels of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities.

Recommendations for DPOs at the national level

Given how significant the SDGs are in relation to inclusive development, DPOs should consider looking at ways to get involved to advocate on the issue. With the considerable overlap between the CRPD and the SDGs, there are plenty of opportunities to use the SDGs as a mean to promote equitable development. Below is a list of suggested activities which DPOs might like to consider:

- Raise awareness amongst DPOs and share information with national members
- Invest in national training on the SDGs for DPOs
- Build the capacity of other DPOs by sharing information and learning
- Train experts on the SDGs within DPOs

- Find out what part of government is responsible for monitoring implementation of the SDGs - **check on the SDGs website of the UN**
- Find out who the government focal point is for the CRPD and advocate for SDG awareness
- Find out what the government has done so far and what is it planning to do
- Find out what other CSOs are doing and consider collaborating with CSOs we would not necessarily engage with (e.g. environmental)
- Engage in goal 17 (partnership) by cooperating with other DPOs, academic institutions and governments
- Engage with the national civil society coordination or other coordination fora of the SDGs
- Engage with National Statistic Offices (NSO) and find out what type of data is being collected
- Use EDF and the International Disability Alliance materials / tools to engage in advocacy
- Use the SDGs and CRPD links to influence actions plans in all sectors
- Advocate for SDGs indicators to be translated at national level with data disaggregated by disability

Recommendations for inclusive VNRs

These recommendations have been adapted from World Vision' s report (October 2017): "Tracking SDGs Progress to Leave No One Behind: Recommendations for an update on the Guidelines for Voluntary National Reviews", with its permission. It is suggested that DPOs ask countries volunteering to report at the HLPF to:

- Report on all 17 goals in Voluntary National Reviews
- Include a dedicated section on leaving no one behind in its VNR to highlight the status and situation of vulnerable groups in relation to the SDGs, such as persons with disabilities
- Highlight the strategies, policies and initiatives to support persons with disabilities, progress achieved and remaining challenges in reviewing specific SDGs and targets
- Include a dedicated section on data, outlining all efforts and measures to ensure the full disaggregation of data by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- Include a statistical annex with disaggregated data, in order to assess the overall status of the SDGs as well as the status of specific groups in relation to the goals, targets and indicators
- Highlight consultations with groups at risk of marginalisation, including persons with disabilities, in preparing for its VNR
- Include the views and perceptions of persons with disabilities, in reviewing specific SDGs and targets. Persons with disabilities have been recognised as active agents of change in the 2030 Agenda
- Include independent contributions from stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, in the national review
- Include stakeholder representatives, including persons with disabilities, in the country's delegation and VNR presentation at the HLPF

Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda represents an ambitious vision that goes well beyond the original MDGs. At the core of this agenda are a set of 17 goals and targets which are designed to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure global prosperity. In recognition of the significant levels of inequality that exist between and within communities, it also places a much greater emphasis on promoting the realisation of human rights; on empowering those who are vulnerable; and on creating societies that are equitable, tolerant and accessible to everyone. Disability is recognised as being an important marker within the indicator framework and there are already a number of targets and indicators that specifically require disaggregation by disability.

The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are an unprecedented opportunity for DPOs to unite across Europe and the world around a common equity and inclusion agenda. The fact that all governments must incorporate the SDGs into their national development plans and budgets and the possibility to share challenges and learning during an international forum means DPOs can influence the domestic inclusion agenda at the same time as helping to further progress at international level.

Another important aspect of the SDGs is the way in which they closely align with the CRPD. There is considerable overlap between the provisions of the CRPD and the SDGs with only three of the SDGs not having some specific links to articles within the CRPD. In this sense, the SDGs should be regarded as being a very useful tool for implementing the CRPD.

With the new commitment to promoting widespread engagement between governments and their citizens, the 2030 Agenda offers the opportunity for DPOs and persons with disabilities to actively influence national and international development agendas, plans and budgets. Given the SDGs are so focused on removing inequality and discrimination and empowering those who are at risk of vulnerability, new ways of capturing the voice and experiences of those on the margins of communities will be needed, along with the promotion of rights based data collection models such as those developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. DPOs need to be involved in developing and delivering these methodologies and engaging with a wide range of different stakeholders from civil society to the public and private sectors. That also means that DPOs should work to ensure representation from the grassroots through to the international levels and across different sectors.

The 2030 Agenda is also about sharing and learning, encouraging national governments to consider what works to promote equitable and sustainable development, alongside exploring its challenges. This is also true for civil society and DPOs will have a very significant role in raising awareness around inclusive development for their membership and the wider communities in which they work. Capacity building of DPOs will at times be required, whether that is in a domestic or overseas context making the production and dissemination of information, tools and materials really important.

In terms of challenges, the SDG processes are still new with diverse stakeholders to engage with. There remains a lack of awareness and understanding across the disability sector and at policy level around the links between the CRPD and the SDGs. It means work still has to be done on building capacity. Given the generally low human and financial resource capacity of DPOs around the world, this will require a greater investment by donors in their development.

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