



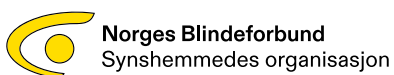
Atlas  
Alliance

# “Nothing without us”

Global Disability  
Summit Oslo 2022



The Atlas Alliance is an umbrella organisation for seven disabled persons' organisations working to promote the rights and living conditions of persons with disabilities in the Global South.



# Contents

Nothing without us!.....	4	The Civil Society Forum .....	16
GDS London 2018: The Charter for Change .....	6	GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2022: The Commitments .....	18
Goals and ambitions for the Global Disability Summit 2022.....	8	Screening of commitments <sup>2</sup> .....	20
The UN Secretary-General António Guterres: “We need the leadership of persons with disabilities.” .....	9	Overview all commitments.....	21
Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre: “We have come together to commit to change.” .....	10	The Commitments as seen by the nordic DPO umbrellas .....	25
Minister of International Development Anne Beathe Tvinneheim, GDS closing speech: “The right things to do are also the smartest!” .....	11	Equality for all.....	28
Mr Yannis Vardakastanis, President, International Disability Alliance “Nothing without us” .....	12	Eliminating Stigma, Combatting Discrimination, and Overcoming Ableism: Where are the GDS 2022 Commitments?.....	30
Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary General, Norwegian Refugee Council “We can, we must, we will do better” .....	13	The big issue and the disturbing facts: “Most is without us” .....	33
Ms. Inger Ashing, CEO, Save the Children International “Mainstreaming disability inclusion as a cross-cutter” .....	14	Tracking disability inclusion in multilateral organizations: A tool for change.....	35
From the Co-Chairs’ Summary .....	15	Commitments concerning youth with disabilities, GDS 2022.....	39
		Reflections, challenges and recommendations .....	42
		Appendix 1 Table of commitments .....	45

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# Nothing without us!

“Until now the motto of the disability rights movement was “Nothing about us without us”. But everything, every possible agenda, is about persons with disabilities, so simply we are calling for changing of the motto to “Nothing without us”. Because there is no conversation, no community or area of life from which persons with disabilities should be excluded.”

PRESIDENT OF IDA,  
MR YANNIS VARDAKASTANIS,  
AT THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM, GDS 2022

There is little doubt: The Global Disability Summit 2022 was a success and delivered specific and tangible results on implementation of equal rights for all, based on the CRPD and focusing on disability in development and humanitarian assistance. The co-hosts Norway, Ghana, and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) did a great job in mobilizing governments, multilateral actors, civil society including disabled persons organisations, and other stakeholders. Even though the summit had to be digital more than 1400 commitments were delivered, and more than 50 high level speakers contributed during the two days of the summit.

The message from the high-level speakers is strong and clear, and it challenges all stakeholders. In our continued advocacy we, the civil society organisations, must listen, remember – and hold persons and institutions to account. The depository of promises and good intentions is rich, as we document also on the coming pages:

“We need more disability-inclusive development. Persons with disabilities are often among the poorest and most disadvantaged members of the community. They must be at the front and centre of our efforts [...]

We need broader and deeper cooperation. We must take a whole-of-society approach to ensuring disability inclusion.

[...] we need the leadership of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities and their representative organizations. The foundation of our cooperation must be based on active consultation with persons with disabilities in their full diversity and their full inclusion in decision-making-processes. We must realize the powerful call of persons with disabilities: ‘Nothing about us, without us.’”

UN SECRETARY GENERAL  
ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

“Today, we have come together to commit to change. To step-up our efforts to improve the lives of persons with disabilities around the world [...] If the Sustainability Development Goals are to be achieved, social and economic development must be rights-based and disability-inclusive. We shall leave no one behind”.

PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY,  
JONAS GAHR STØRE



**Marit Sørheim**  
Executive Director  
The Atlas Alliance



**Morten Eriksen**  
Policy Advisor  
The Atlas Alliance

“During the Summit, participants reaffirmed the “Charter for change” adopted by the 2018 London Global Disability Summit [...] Participants underlined the importance of meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities. Participants committed to making Disaster Risk Reduction and humanitarian action inclusive, to support actions that advance inclusive and accessible quality education, to design equitable health programs and policies, to eliminate barriers to economic empowerment, and to strengthened community inclusion. These are not just the right thing to do, they are also the smartest thing to do for societies at large”

MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT, NORWAY,  
ANNE BEATHE TVINNEREIM

“Participants are committed to a human rights-based approach to inclusive development with a particular focus on gender equality [...]

Participants are committed to promoting meaningful engagement of OPDs through leadership and diverse representation of all persons with disabilities at the front and centre of change, as leaders, partners, and advocates” [...]

Participants reconfirmed their commitment to change practices to make all humanitarian action fully inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities [...]

GDS CO-CHAIRS, CLOSING REMARKS

In this report we analyse some commitments of a more systemic character which directly relate to the main theme, disability in development. We concentrate primarily on commitments given by the OECD-DAC countries, since as duty-bearers and donors they have a specific responsibility to secure inclusive development.

In this report we present some important figures from the general picture of international development aid (ODA) as well as some main findings from the Fafo report on Tracking Inclusion delivered to GDS 2022.

- World-wide Official Development Aid (ODA) in 2021: Almost 1 800 billion USD
- The number of projects targeting persons with disabilities made up less than 2% of all international aid projects between 2014 and 2018.
- Aid projects targeting disability inclusion represent less than 0.5% of all international aid financing between 2014 and 2018.

The Atlas Alliance will support and argue for the new slogan “Nothing without us” and the principle of ownership to our own agenda and development. Because there is no conversation, no community or area of life from which persons with disabilities should be excluded.





## GDS LONDON 2018: The Charter for Change

**The first Global Disability Summit took place in London 2018 with the governments of the UK and Kenya, as well as with The International Development Association IDA, as co-hosts.**

**A main outcome was the “Charter for Change”, a call for action in 10 points signed by national governments and other stakeholders.**

**The following statements describe the ambitious and visionary perspectives for the summit:**

“We gather here in London and across the world to achieve a common aim: to ensure the rights, freedoms, dignity and inclusion for all persons with disabilities.

Important progress has been made in the decade since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). But we must do more. We must strive for real change through the Convention’s implementation and the delivery of

the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. Now is the time.

**So today we commit to:**

1. Catalyse political will and leadership to turn our promises into change; in long-term plans that we invest in, implement and review.
2. Promote the leadership and diverse representation of all persons with disabilities to be front and centre of change; as leaders, partners and advocates. This includes the active involvement and close consultation of persons with disabilities of all ages.
3. Eliminate stigma and discrimination through legislation and policies that make a difference, promoting meaningful leadership, and consistently challenging harmful attitudes and practices. All people deserve dignity and respect.”

# THE GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2018

## CHARTER FOR CHANGE

#DisabilitySummit #NowIsTheTime



**We gather here in London and across the world to achieve a common aim: to ensure the rights, freedoms, dignity and inclusion for all persons with disabilities.**

Important progress has been made in the decade since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). But we must do more. We must strive for real change through the Convention's implementation and the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. Now is the time.

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1. Catalyse political will and leadership to turn our promises into change; in long-term plans that we invest in, implement and review.
2. Promote the leadership and diverse representation of all persons with disabilities to be front and centre of change; as leaders, partners and advocates. This includes the active involvement and close consultation of persons with disabilities of all ages.
3. Eliminate stigma and discrimination through legislation and policies that make a difference, promoting meaningful leadership, and consistently challenging harmful attitudes and practices. All people deserve dignity and respect.
4. Progress and support actions that advance inclusive quality education for people with disabilities, with the necessary resources to put plans into practice: every child has the right to learn from birth.
5. Open up routes to economic empowerment and financial inclusion so that persons with disabilities can enjoy decent work and achieve financial independence. This will mean creating more and better jobs, providing social protection, ensuring the necessary skills training, making workplaces accessible and hiring people with disabilities.
6. Revolutionise the availability and affordability of appropriate assistive technology, including digital, which will enable persons with disabilities to fully participate and contribute to society.
7. Change practices to make all humanitarian action fully inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. We will mainstream inclusion across all Disaster Risk Reduction and humanitarian sectors, and implement our commitments in the Charter 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action'.
8. 'Leave no one behind' and put the furthest behind first. We will champion the rights of the most under-represented and marginalised persons with disabilities, of all ages, affected by any form of multiple discrimination, and notably women and girls with disabilities.
9. Gather and use better data and evidence to understand and address the scale, and nature, of challenges faced by persons with disabilities, using tested tools including the [Washington Group Disability Question Sets](#).
10. Hold ourselves and others to account for the promises we have made here today. We agree that our individual commitments will be reviewed, assessed and published on a regular basis, with the results published on-line.



# Goals and ambitions for the Global Disability Summit 2022

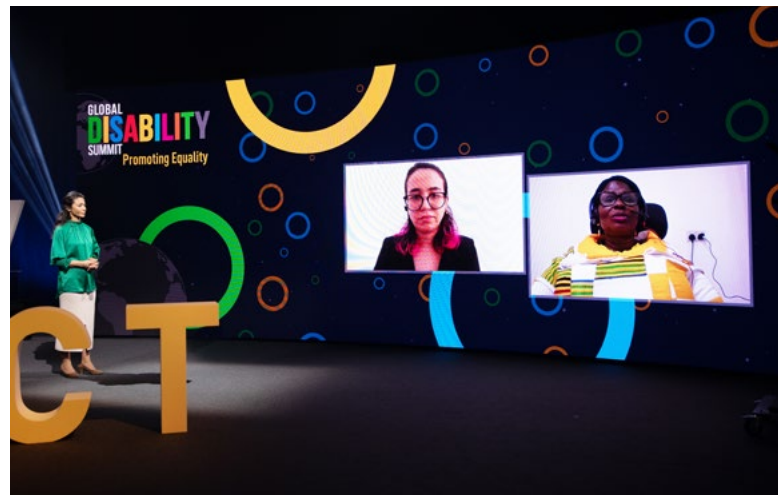
The Global Disability Summit 2022 was co-hosted by the governments of Norway and Ghana, as well as with the International Disability Alliance IDA, with the Atlas Alliance as the supporting Norwegian DPO umbrella.

The most significant change in the goals and ambitions for the Summit is the very clear focus on disability in development, inclusive development and strengthening of DPOs in the Global South. This can be seen as a direct follow up of the Charter for Change about promoting the leadership and diverse representation of all persons with disabilities to be front and centre of change – reflecting clearly the principle of “Nothing about us without us”.

The following goals were agreed upon:

- To raise global attention and focus on inclusive sustainable development building on the first GDS;
- To showcase progress, and good practices, stemming from the first GDS;
- To mobilise targeted and concrete commitments on disability inclusion and inclusive development;
- To strengthen capacity of organisations of persons with disabilities in the Global South and their engagement with Governments;
- To mobilise for inclusion of persons with disabilities in line with the principle of leaving no one behind following the CRPD principles of “nothing about us without us”

The following themes were selected on the basis of input from different stakeholders, as well as an analysis of elements from the London Summit (2018) that



**Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame (Executive Director, Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations) and Fernanda Santana (General Secretary, Brazilian Association for Action in the Rights of Autistic People) talk with GDS moderator Natalie Becker-Aakervik**

should be strengthened. The selected themes are:

- strengthening engagement with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) *in particular* in the Global South
- inclusive education
- inclusive livelihoods and social protection
- inclusive health
- inclusion in situations of conflict and crisis, including from climate change

Gender is a cross-cutting theme.



# THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTÓNIO GUTERRES: “We need the leadership of persons with disabilities.”

**UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged all countries to do more to put people living with disabilities “front and centre” of their post-COVID recovery plans: We need more disability inclusive development, we need broader cooperation and we need the leadership of persons with disabilities.**



**In opening comments to the meeting the UN chief insisted that people with disabilities were often the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society. He said that persons with disabilities were dying “at vastly higher rates”, all because they faced “persistent barriers in health systems”. In developing countries “which are strangled financially”, Mr. Guterres noted that people with disabilities were among the first victims.**

– The last two years have painfully demonstrated the urgent need for all of us to work together to advance the rights of persons with disabilities around the world.

In 2018, governments and organizations came together to make ambitious global and national commitments to disability inclusion.

This Summit provides an opportunity to reflect on those efforts and commit to do more. I see three priorities.

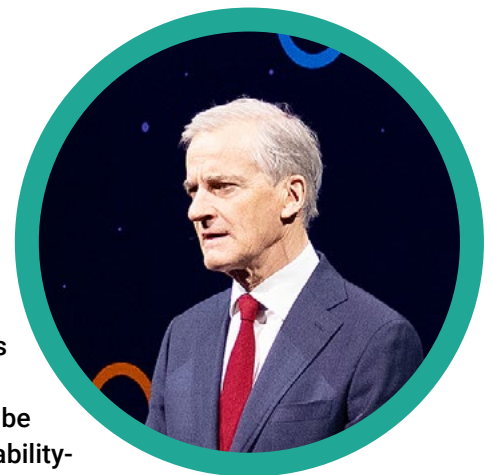
– First, we need more disability-inclusive development. Persons with disabilities are often among the poorest and most disadvantaged members of the community. They must be at the front and centre of our efforts.

– Second, we need broader and deeper cooperation. We must take a whole-of-society approach to ensuring disability inclusion. Only by working together – across governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector – can we effectively implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for persons with disabilities.

– Third, we need the leadership of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities and their representative organizations. The foundation of our cooperation must be based on active consultation with persons with disabilities in their full diversity and their full inclusion in decision-making-processes. We must realize the powerful call of persons with disabilities: ‘Nothing about us, without us.’

PRIME MINISTER JONAS GAHR STØRE:

“We have come together to commit to change.”



– Today, we have come together to commit to change. To step-up our efforts to improve the lives of persons with disabilities around the world. In many countries, persons with disabilities are among the most marginalised. The pandemic has increased inequalities. Improving the lives of persons with disabilities will have a significant impact, for individuals, but also for society at large. If the Sustainability Development Goals are to be achieved, social and economic development must be rights-based and disability-inclusive. We shall leave no one behind, said the Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in his opening speech

– Together we must and can combat various types of barriers, such as stigma and discrimination. We must and can promote equal access to social services and participation. And we must and can ensure meaningful engagement by persons with disabilities. My government will do its part. Norway has now developed its first comprehensive strategy for promoting disability inclusive development.

Our international commitments are largely about changing the way we and our development partners work. Our approach will be more disability inclusive in prioritized sectors such as global education, global health, and climate change. To get it right, we will strengthen our engagement and partnership with persons with disabilities and their organisations. We will ensure traceability of our efforts and enhance data collection to make the situation for persons with disabilities more visible.

We will spend 210 million Norwegian kroner over the next three years to implement the strategy. At a national level we confirm our intention to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Norwegian law.

Today, I feel we are part of something important. But it doesn't stop here. This is just the beginning.

MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ANNE BEATHE TVINNEREIM, GDS CLOSING SPEECH:

“The right things to do are also the smartest!”

During the Summit, participants reaffirmed the Charter for Change adopted by the 2018 London Global Disability Summit. Further, participants underlined the need for Covid-19 pandemic recovery measures to be inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. Participants underlined the importance of meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities. Participants committed to making disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action inclusive, to support actions that advance inclusive and accessible quality education, to design equitable health program and policies, to eliminate barriers to economic empowerment, and to strengthened community inclusion. These are not just the right things to do, they are also the smartest things to do for societies in general, as the Minister of International Development said at the closing of the GDS 2022.



It was a pleasure to see the UN Secretary General, the many heads of state and governments, ministers, heads of multilateral organizations, multilateral development banks, civil society organizations, and private sector companies committing to lasting change for persons with disabilities over the last two days.

Together we have mobilized broadly and created a movement that started in London and will not end in Oslo.

As the Norwegian Minister of International Development I proudly echo the words of Prime Minister Støre from yesterday. Norway has developed its first

comprehensive strategy for promoting disability-inclusive development. This strategy will guide our development cooperation moving forward. Our international commitments are rooted in this strategy.

**I am confident that the spirit and inspiration of GDS will lead to lasting change for persons with disabilities in every corner of the world through our joint action. And with these words I close the Global Disability Summit 2022.**

## MR YANNIS VARDAKASTANIS, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY ALLIANCE

# “Nothing without us”

### Opening Speech, Global Disability Summit 2022

We are coming together once again after a GDS in 2018 that changed the way the disability rights movement sees and does advocacy. It was a moment where it was obvious to us from the disability rights movement that the work will never be the same again.

Between the two summits we witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic, which catastrophically affected persons with disabilities. The pandemic not only deprioritized lives and rights of persons with disabilities, not only pushed millions of persons with disabilities into poverty and out of jobs, but also reminded us that discrimination is still very present.

Against this backdrop, we are gathering today to reposition disability rights once again on the right track. It must be the priority topic of governments and multilateral agencies, of the private sector, academia and civil society once again.

The disability agenda cannot be fragile anymore. Persons with disabilities cannot be overlooked anymore.

GDS 2022 therefore holds an incredible responsibility, while indeed an opportunity as well, to do exactly that. To say to the world that persons with disabilities cannot be overlooked anymore in anything that affects their lives.

We are fully aware of the momentum we created with this GDS and therefore, we are also here to present our commitments. We commit to promote leadership and representation of OPDs including underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities, to deliver technical assistance to donors and the UN system, to facilitate access to funding for our members and partners in the Global South, and to co-lead with the International Paralympic Committee the WeThe15 campaign.

Simply by being present at this event we have created the change we want to see in the world. We are affirming that we are all committed to change.



#### **From Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis' opening speech at the Civil Society Forum:**

Until now the motto of the disability rights movement was nothing about us without us. But everything, every possible agenda is about persons with disabilities, so simply we are calling for changing of the motto to nothing without us. Because there is no conversation, no community or area of life from which persons with disabilities should be excluded.



MR. JAN EGELAND, SECRETARY GENERAL,  
NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

“We can, we must,  
we will do better”



### Speech “Commitments session” Global Disability Summit 2022

Our mission as humanitarian workers is to help people in need, in their hour of greatest need.

We must admit there is one group in particular that we are too often failing when disasters, conflict and crisis strike – and that is people with disabilities.

Therefore, six of the largest Norwegian humanitarian organisations have now committed to work together, learn from each other, partner with the Atlas Alliance and other organisations with and for people with disabilities, so that we can help better. We can listen more, and we can consult more, and involve more people with disabilities in all our work.

Building on the innovative Together for Inclusion partnership, we have already started our joint planning. We will take new steps, and we will do it after this summit.

I have myself, in recent weeks and months, seen how many people living with disabilities have vast unmet needs for protection and assistance. I’ve seen it in Syria among refugees. I’ve seen it in Afghanistan among the drought and conflict affected. And last week, among the elderly living along the frontlines in eastern Ukraine.

We can, we must, we will do better. We’re committed to work with, and for, people with disabilities.

MS. INGER ASHING, CEO, SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

## “Mainstreaming disability inclusion as a cross-cutter”

Excerpt from speech «Session on Meaningful Engagement», Global Disability Summit 2022

Last year, Save the Children launched our new [Disability Inclusion Policy](#), which lays out how we will work systematically across our programmes and all our offices to promote the inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence of both adults and children with disabilities.

Also last year, together with partners, we launched the first comprehensive guideline for [Disability Inclusive Child Safeguarding](#), which works to combat the specific risks faced by children with disabilities while participating in mainstream humanitarian and development programs.

Over the last three years, Save the Children has worked to ensure that our programmes become more disability inclusive by mainstreaming disability inclusion as a cross-cutter and by providing targeted activities to children with disabilities and their families.

Our focus is to remove barriers and enable equitable access and use of services and decision-making processes. But also to support children with disabilities and their parents. We do this partnering with different representative organisations of persons with disabilities, including national umbrellas, parents’ associations, disability-specific organisations and youth-led organisations.

One example of this is the Together for Inclusion Programme, which is implemented in six African countries and where Save the Children Norway is a partner. On the Norwegian side, this Norad-supported consortium consists of 16 partner organizations, seven of which are organizations of persons with disabilities.



# From the Co-Chairs' Summary

**During the Summit, participants reaffirmed the Charter for Change. The charter from 2018 acknowledged the important progress that had been made in the decade since the adoption of the CRPD. But it also pointed to the need for intensified efforts to generate change through implementation of the Convention and fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

During the 2022 Summit, participants reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that political will and leadership generate lasting and meaningful change for persons with disabilities.

Since the London Summit in 2018, the world has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants underlined the need to build back better, and for pandemic recovery measures to ensure that systems and societies are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

During the Summit, the co-chairs noted the following:

- Participants are committed to a human rights-based approach to inclusive development with a particular focus on gender equality. An intersectional and holistic approach is necessary for moving forward.
- Participants are committed to promoting meaningful engagement of OPDs through leadership and diverse representation of all persons with disabilities at the front and centre of change, as leaders, partners, and advocates. This includes the active involvement and close consultation of persons with disabilities of all ages and their representative organisations across all stages of programming and on all issues that concern them. For this to happen, participants made a commitment to support OPDs in developing their organisational and technical capacity to be able to play this role as strong counterparts.

- Participants reconfirmed their commitment to change practices to make all humanitarian action fully inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, and mainstream inclusion in disaster risk reduction and response to the impacts of climate change. They also made a commitment to strengthen the participation of persons with disabilities and engagement with ODPs in humanitarian and climate action.

The following issues were also covered: Inclusive education, Inclusive health, Economic empowerment and Community inclusion.<sup>1</sup>

As co-chairs, we value the high-level engagement from all stakeholders. We reaffirm our commitment to eliminating stigma, barriers, and discrimination against persons with disabilities through legislation, policies and advocacy work done together with organizations of persons with disabilities. This will make a difference for 15% of the world's population.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants reaffirmed their commitment to progress and to supporting actions that advance an inclusive and accessible quality education system for all learners with disabilities, with the necessary resources to put plans into practice: every child has the right to learn.

Participants emphasised the need to achieve health and well-being for all persons with disabilities, which will only be possible when disability inclusion is a priority for the health sector. It is important that all stakeholders collaborate in designing equitable health programmes and policies, addressing inequalities in social determinants of health.

Participants stressed their commitment to eliminating barriers to economic empowerment and financial inclusion so that persons with disabilities can secure a livelihood, enjoy decent work, and achieve financial independence.

Participants acknowledged the need for an increased effort to strengthen community inclusion, including by providing disability-inclusive social protection schemes, promoting community-based services that ensure the well-being of persons with disabilities, and guaranteeing the availability and affordability of appropriate assistive technology. Participants recognized the need to ensure all commitments be delivered. The GDS commitment tracking system should serve as the platform where all parties can share their progress.

# The Civil Society Forum

## Introduction

Under the rubric of the Global Disability Summit 2022, a Civil Society Forum was organised digitally on February 15th, with a view to amplify the voice of persons with disabilities and assess the realization of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and the principles of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The Civil Society Forum 2022 had a global audience wherein 1463 participants registered for the event. These participants were representing both organizations of persons with disabilities and mainstream organizations. In the spirit of Nothing about us without us, the forum was hosted by Gagan Chhabra who is a blind project manager for inclusion at the Atlas Alliance. It is the largest umbrella organization working for disability rights in international development and humanitarian action in Norway.

### **Nothing Without Us**

One of the core themes which stood out from the opening session was the shift in the focus within the Disability Movement. In 1998, James I. Charlton wrote the book "Nothing about us without us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment". This has been a popular banner under which the global disability rights movement has been mobilized to demand better representation, more inclusion, and equal human rights. Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis suggested sharpening this slogan further, to Nothing without us. If we want to create inclusive communities, resilient societies, and a sustainable world, we have to appreciate the fact that disability is a part of human condition, and it is a

universal phenomenon. We have to include persons with disabilities while designing all policies and building all projects. All funding in the domain of international development work and humanitarian action should be disability inclusive. In addition, persons with disabilities have to be part of all conversations and monitor all international development work if we want to realize the SDGs and fulfill the 2030 agenda of "Leaving no one behind". This priority on including persons with disabilities in all development work was also echoed by other speakers in the opening session.

### **Creating a Social Movement Together**

A core theme of this session was that disability is a part of human diversity, and we should strive to create a broad-based social movement together. There are avenues which overlap between the disability movement on one hand, and gender movement, climate justice movement, and racial equity movement on the other. We should strive to have a broad tent wherein individuals from diverse age groups, genders, nationalities, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds can come together and advocate for disability justice and human rights for persons with disabilities. It is time to integrate persons with disabilities and their agenda across all different social movements.

### **Sailing Together in the Same Canoe**

One of the core themes of the session was that we live in an interconnected world and that the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated that no one is safe until everyone is safe. Martine Abel-Williamson from New Zealand shared the wisdom from indigenous people that we all are sailing together in the same canoe. Therefore, it is crucial to build systems, structures and





# GLOBAL DISABILITY

societies which are fully inclusive for all irrespective of ability status. The pandemic has revealed how persons with disabilities are often excluded from the labor markets, marginalized in the health systems, and often forgotten in processes of agenda setting. After the pandemic, we have a unique opportunity to reshape societies and reimagine our common future which are fully inclusive for persons with disabilities. This should not be a sole responsibility for persons with disabilities and disability organizations. It is a collective responsibility for all of us as we sail together from the turbulent covid times to a more inclusive future.

## Closing Session

Closing off, Rita Kusi Kyeremaa, Executive Director of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations and representative of the Civil Society Reference Groups, shared her perspectives concerning the Civil Society Declaration. This declaration took the discussions and the input from civil society actors as a point of departure to argue for better realization of disability rights and a more focus on inclusion of persons with disabilities within the SDG's agenda. The Civil Society Declaration was presented in the Global Disability Summit, in order to accentuate the accountability of key stakeholders, such as the national governments, multilateral institutions, donor agencies, and civil society partners.

# GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2022: The Commitments

**The commitments<sup>2</sup> from stakeholders and participants represent the most important and specific outcomes of the Global Disability Summit. The Summit saw an increase in the number of commitments from the first GDS in 2018 of almost 50% to more than 1400. This is a confirmation of the engagement that was created and hopefully also of the importance of the Summit when it comes to implementation.**

The co-hosts did a formidable job in developing the menu of suggested commitments in dialogue with several stakeholders, including DPOs and NGOs. The following is a presentation of the main commitments in general and a more in-depth analysis of the two selected topics “Overarching commitments/tracking expenditure” and “Commitments to secure and enhance meaningful engagement of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)”. We give an overview of the commitments in these categories, and then look closer at some of them as well as those of the Nordic Countries and the EU.

The invitation to give commitments was extended to several groups of stakeholders, of which the Atlas Alliance considers the OECD-DAC national governments and the multilateral organisations as the most important. These countries and multinationals have a major responsibility as donors and channels for international development assistance, and they are therefore the focus of this report.

The following is a quote from the invitation to the stakeholders and participants, shared on the official GDS portal:

With less than eight years to go before we reach the target year for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, GDS22 will promote actions to increase inclusiveness and equality in line with the principle of leaving no one behind and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We expect the Summit to lead to concrete political commitments that will bring about genuine change for persons with disabilities and will help to reduce inequalities and foster inclusive development, and humanitarian action, guided by a human-rights approach [...]

The themes were selected on the basis of input from different stakeholders, as well as an analysis of elements from the London Summit (2018) that should be strengthened. The selected themes are:

- overarching commitments
- strengthening engagement with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) *in particular in the Global South*
- inclusive education
- inclusive livelihoods and social protection
- inclusive health
- inclusion in situations of conflict and crisis, including from climate change

Gender is a cross-cutting theme.

<sup>2</sup> The commitments portal is hosted by IDA and found here: <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/commitments>

## Examples of proposed commitments

### Proposed commitments at overarching level

1. Reduce discrimination and stigmatisation by promoting attitudinal change in communities and across all development cooperation, and addressing intersectionalities.
2. Disaggregate data by disability, gender and age in data collection and statistics.
3. Commit to tracking expenditure and efforts for inclusion in national accounting and development cooperation.
4. Increase consultation and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and systems, and in international cooperation.
5. Support efforts to align existing legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), using the participatory approach of law reforms as required by the CRPD.
6. Promote accessible information and access to democratic processes and elections, and promote inclusion and diversity in political representation.
7. Develop cross sectoral policies and design action plans in partnership with the full range of stakeholders and communities to facilitate the meaningful inclusion of all children and adults with disabilities, with a special focus on gender equality.
8. Invest in accessible and disability inclusive needs assessment, information management systems, and outreach mechanisms that facilitate coordinated support for community inclusion.
9. Invest in transforming, developing, or scaling up person-centric and gender responsive community support and care systems that foster choice and autonomy for the diversity of persons with disabilities across the life cycle.
10. Mobilise resources to ensure that public services are inclusive by actively working towards with the aim of removing physical, institutional, and attitudinal barriers.
11. Pursue a progressive shift from segregated institutions towards harmonised and community-based support.
12. Support multi-stakeholder coordination and efforts to strengthen the knowledge-base on achieving community-based support in different contexts.

### Proposed commitments to secure and enhance meaningful engagement of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)

1. Promote underrepresented groups and address intersectionality
2. Support partnerships with other social movements
3. Increase funding to support OPDs' priorities
4. Adapt funding conditionalities to OPD support
5. Mainstream OPD engagement across funding
6. Support the building of a diverse disability rights movement and OPDs, including underrepresented groups
7. Remove legal, social and other barriers to participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations
8. Commit on the need to involve persons with disabilities in countries under stress and with shrinking civil space
9. Ensure conducive policy environment
10. Support awareness-raising to combat attitudinal barriers, either OPD-led or with the active involvement of OPDs

# Screening of commitments<sup>3</sup>

## **Why this screening of commitments that are relevant to disability in development?**

- To assess and consider their value and relevance according to the GDS goals and targets
- To assess the extent to which the stakeholders/ participants can be held to account
- To contribute to the follow-up of GDS 2022 and to the preparations for the GDS 2025

## **Goals and ambitions for the GDS 2022:**

The following goals and ambitions are used for screening the comments

- To raise global attention and focus on inclusive sustainable development building on the first GDS in 2018
- To mobilise targeted and concrete commitments on disability inclusion and inclusive development
- To strengthen the capacity of organisations of persons with disabilities in the Global South and their engagement with their respective governments

## **The criteria for our screening:**

Relevance to the goals and targets of GDS and disability in development:

- Focus on inclusive sustainable development
- Mobilise commitments on disability inclusion and inclusive development
- Strengthen DPOs in the Global South and their engagement with governments
- Mobilise for inclusion – leaving no one behind and “Nothing without us”
- The SMART indicators: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.



# Overview all commitments

Thematic overview	Total number	National govt	OECD govt*	Multi- lat.	CSOs	DPO	Other
<b>Overarching</b>	350	90	34	66	115	23	
<b>Meaningful engagement</b>	267	65	18	15	103	41	
<b>Inclusive education</b>	230	80	9	24	64	28	
<b>Inclusive health</b>	184	70	7	22	57	16	
<b>Inclusive livelihoods</b>	207	79	8	26	54	18	
<b>Inclusion in conflict and crisis</b>	182	61	10	38	54	9	
<b>Other/all themes</b>							202
<b>TOTAL NUMBER<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>202</b>

\* incl. Japan

## Comments on the commitments

In the following we focus on the OECD-DAC countries, since these countries are of special interest when it comes to disability in development – they represent the big spenders, what we have called “the big fish”. The way they commit to using their funding and organising their contributions has strong impact on the agenda of equity and inclusion. Also, as a Norway-based DPO the Atlas Alliance focuses especially on Norway as international actor, as well as the group of actors and donors that Norway belongs to in the OECD-DAC group of countries.

We have also chosen to focus primarily on the commitments we find the most challenging for this group of countries at this stage: Expenditure tracking and DPO engagement, as well as the question of DPOs in the lead.

Overall, we see that the overarching commitments and the commitments on meaningful engagement are the two categories where most stakeholders have given commitments. As the overarching commitments address systemic issues and meaningful engagement is about participation and involvement, this is a good overall picture. We also appreciate that reducing stigma

has high general support, as does disaggregating data by disability, gender, and age in data collection. The other main themes also have broad support, even inclusion in crisis and conflict. This is of specific interest since we know that persons with disabilities are especially vulnerable in crisis situations, and that knowledge about inclusion in crisis is very low. Norway is able to track less than 1% of its spending on inclusion in crisis and conflict.

Several of the countries that have the largest financial resources, i.e. the OECD-DAC countries, have given few, if any, commitments. Their willingness to commit to expenditure tracking is almost non-existing. Indeed, the highest number and broadest range of commitments come from the countries with the least financial resources. Understandably, these countries may see the GDS as a funding opportunity. The fact that e.g. Germany, France, and the Netherlands have not given any commitments is an issue that should be addressed by the co-hosts as well as by national DPOs/CSOs. These countries must absolutely get on board with their specific commitments for the next GDS.

<sup>3</sup> All numbers relating to commitments are taken from the GDS secretariat portal. There seem to be some variations and differences between the database on the portal and the same data that can be downloaded as an excel sheet. Numbers in this report are mainly from said excel sheet and may thus differ slightly from those on the portal. However, there are no substantial deviations.

Four issues are important and need more attention and follow-up from the big donors:

Reducing discrimination and stigma:	6 OECD-DAC countries gave commitments
Disaggregating data by disability, sex, and age:	5 OECD-DAC countries gave commitments
Consultations and meaningful participation:	8 OECD-DAC countries gave commitments
Tracking expenditure:	3 OECD-DAC countries gave commitments

The first of the following tables gives an overview of the largest donors on the OECD-DAC list and the number of their commitments. The second one provides an overview of the largest donors in the Global South.

THE MOST COMMITMENTS FROM OECD-DAC-COUNTRIES	
Japan (marked as donor in portal)	19
The UK	15
The US (by far the largest donor)	13
Spain	13
Sweden	12
Australia	10
Belgium	8
Norway	7
Finland	7
The EU	6
Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria	0

COMMITMENTS FROM TOP COUNTRIES - GLOBAL SOUTH	
Sierra Leone	47
Somalia	39
Malawi	29
Zambia	29
Panama	28
Uganda	23
Ghana	17
Mozambique	15

The number of commitments is just an indicator of engagement and willingness to commit. A more comprehensive and deeper analysis is needed to give a picture of quality and value. After all, the question of quality – and ability to implement – is the most important one. Some countries give not commitments, but references and reports of things that are already being done, while others give commitments that are not specific, measurable, achievable or relevant – i.e. not very SMART.

A very clear example of this comes from the Swedish commitments (see attachment). On the commitment on Meaningful Engagement Sida writes the following:

“Sida provides support to the Swedish membership-based organisation MyRight [...]. MyRight works to ensure fulfilment of human rights of persons with disabilities globally, and that persons with disabilities can live independently, free from poverty, and in inclusive societies.

MyRight works in partnership and supports OPDs around the world - umbrella organisations that bring together disability law organisations in a country, regional collaborations and larger and smaller organisations that bring together people with certain disabilities.”

It is impossible to know whether this is a commitment to continued support, more support or better support – or just a report of ongoing work.

On the other side we find the EU, Switzerland and Denmark with examples of SMART commitments that address vital issues (see attachment). There is obviously a need to secure higher quality of the commitments, and to give the co-hosts a mandate to reject commitments. Even though this too has its challenges.

Comments on the commitments from the Nordic countries and the EU are given in a separate chapter.

## Some specific challenges

### 1. The broad menu of commitments

The total menu of commitments consisted of more than 60 commitments, categorized under six main themes. Some commitments were relatively similar and appeared under several main themes. Because of the seemingly “soft” approach without specific priorities taken when the list of commitments was developed, the list became too long to form a more strategic agenda. It seems no one took the necessary holistic round of “killing some darlings” after all the good intentions and proposals had been heard.

This reflects the fact that a common analysis was never established as to what are the most important challenges to bringing equal rights and inclusion forward in international development and humanitarian aid. This is not an easy task and would be altogether impossible as a broad and inclusive process with all stakeholders involved. But it is the privilege and responsibility of the co-hosts to carry out such an exercise, and they must be open about the analysis and its consequences. Such an analysis would have been a useful tool for prioritizing which commitments to include in the menu, thereby limiting the total number.

Instead, we now have a multitude of more or less good intentions and references to work in progress interspersed among specific commitments with measurable plans and actions.

### 2. “COSP light” or disability in development?

There seems to be different opinions and views on what the GDS is all about, as well as a lack of understanding from many stakeholders. Is it supposed to be a “COSP light” with the full CRPD agenda, or is it a specific global summit on disability in development, based primarily on articles 11 and 32 of the CRPD?

The GDS 2022 co-hosts did well in extending an invitation that was more explicit on the importance of focusing on disability in development and the Global South. However, we still need to consider the implications and consequences – for the donors as well as for the “recipients” and partners. Rightly done, the GDS could be a new instrument for promoting rights-based and inclusive development and humanitarian assistance, as well as for developing and promoting new and better ways of cooperation.

We keep our focus on the OECD-DAC countries because

of their position as donors. They have the responsibility to ensure that their almost 2 billion USD of annual development funding is spent in an inclusive and rights-based way, and that no development initiatives or humanitarian assistance exclude persons with disabilities.

### 3. Meaningful engagement or DPOs in the lead?

MAIN COMMITMENTS MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT	
Total number of commitments, meaningful engagement	267
Promote underrepresented groups	57
Support partnerships with social movements	42
Support diverse disability movement	41
Combat attitudinal barriers	32
Increase funding	21
Mainstream OPD engagement	16

The issue of meaningful engagement or, even better, DPOs in the lead is not yet a priority for the stakeholders, especially not for global donors and national governments.

Several commitments have been given on the issue of engagement and participation, especially from NGOs/CSOs and governments in the Global South. The OECD-DAC –countries on their side have only given 18 commitments on this issue. In addition, they are relatively vague and hard to follow up, making it difficult to hold stakeholders to account. However, one commitment given by Denmark clearly stresses the need for ownership by the local partner:

**“Denmark will work to provide a voice for people with disabilities as outlined in the strategy for development cooperation, the World We Share. Denmark will place a special focus on strengthening local leadership, including transfer of funds, ownership and decision-making power to local partners through the close partnership with the Disabled People’s Organisations Denmark (DPOD) and through the strategic partnerships with 18 Danish CSOs.”**

None of the commitments given are about DPO-led awareness raising, as proposed in the menu of commitments: “Support awareness-raising to combat attitudinal barriers, either OPD-led or with the active involvement of OPDs”.

Of the many commitments on meaningful engagement given by the NGOs, none that we can see put DPOs in the lead. This implies that DPOs are not invited to own their own development agenda as funded by either governments or NGOs. This situation is even more surprising given that the donor community claims a growing concern and engagement for local ownership and “localisation”, i.e. that the local partner should have strong ownership of programmes and projects that concern their social and political situation. It is a positive sign that NGOs and CSOs have a strong commitment to meaningful engagement, with about 25% of their commitments related to this topic (117 commitments). Still, we look forward to seeing this group of important stakeholders further stressing DPO ownership and DPOs in the lead.

#### 4. Tracking inclusion/expenditure: The elephant in the room?

MAIN OVERARCHING COMMITMENTS – ALL STAKEHOLDERS	
Total number of overarching commitments	350
Reduce discrimination and stigma	63
Disaggregate data by disability, sex and age	56
Consultations and meaningful engagement	46
Develop cross sectoral policies	24
Accessible public services	21
Tracking expenditure	10*

\* OECD-DAC countries 3, multilaterals 4, CSO/NGO 3

The set of overarching commitments is by far the largest group of commitments, with 350 commitments or 25% of all commitments. They address several systemic issues that are vital for CRPD implementation. The “surprise” here is that only four multilaterals and three OECD-DAC countries commit to tracking expenditure. The use of the OECD-DAC –policy marker is voluntary, and only 2/3 of the countries have so far used the marker in their ODA, making this situation understandable, but still a great challenge.

As we have stated elsewhere in this report and as the report from the research institute Fafo (see separate chapter) documents, it is very difficult to establish how much of the 180 billion USD spent annually on development aid and humanitarian assistance is planned and/or reported as inclusive. It is a sad surprise that **only 10 (7 from donors/multilaterals) of the more than 1400 GDS commitments given by the different stakeholders support the overarching commitment of tracking inclusion**. This reflects the fact that **less than 0,5% of funding to global aid was found to be inclusive in a recent study** (ref Walton 2020 quoted in the Fafo report). The share of Norwegian funding found to be inclusive is also very low, with targeted/principal support less than 0,7%, and mainstreamed/ significant funding around 3%. The inclusive share of humanitarian assistance is less than 1%.

Until the flow of funding is transparent and tracking of inclusion is made possible, many of the other commitments concerning disability in development will have little value. Therefore, tracking inclusion should be a top priority for the next GDS.

# The Commitments as seen by the nordic DPO umbrellas

The commitments from the following countries are found in Appendix 1.

## Disabled Persons Organisations, Denmark (DPOD)

### 1. How relevant and ambitious would you say that the commitments from your country are?

At the GDS 2018, the Danish MFA signed the Charter for Change, but did not engage much further, including submitted no commitments. DPOD have not seen much in terms of implementation of the Charter for Change.

This year, however, the Danish MFA, represented by the Minister of Development Cooperation, submitted four commitments. These commitments are a significant step forward, and mostly in line with some of what DPOD has advocated for during several years, e.g. Danish membership of the GLAD Network.

Although the commitments are relevant, there is still a ways to go to ensure a systematic approach to inclusion of persons with disabilities across Danish development cooperation and humanitarian action. In recent years, DPOD has advocated for an action plan on leaving no one behind which would set up a framework for inclusion of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities. Such a framework (action plan, guidelines, strategic plan or similar) is, however, still not on the Danish MFA's table at this point.

### 2. To what extent and how will you follow up the commitments given?

Following up on the commitments and using them as a lever in the on-going consultations with the MFA is a key priority for DPOD.

*“The commitments from the Danish MFA at the GDS 2022 were a significant step forward... (But)... Although the commitments are relevant, there is still a ways to go to ensure a systematic approach to inclusion of persons with disabilities across Danish development cooperation and humanitarian action.”*

(DPOD Denmark)

### 3. What are your expectations for the next GDS?

DPOD's expectations for the participation of the Danish MFA at GDS 2025 include the following:

- That significant progress and achievements have been made on the four existing commitments
- That high level staff of the MFA as well as the Danish Minister of Development Cooperation attend the summit and that the minister gives a presentation.
- That new commitments building on the achievements and general progress on inclusion of persons with disabilities are submitted by the Danish MFA, and that these commitments point towards the development of a framework of how to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities across Danish development cooperation and humanitarian action

Our hope is that the Danish participation and commitments at the GDS 2025 will to a larger extent address the development of a cross-cutting and systematic approach to including persons with disabilities throughout Danish development cooperation and humanitarian action – in line with article 32 in the UN CRPD as well as the SDGs and the promise to leave no one behind.

## Disability Partnership Finland (DPF):

### **1. How relevant and ambitious would you say that the commitments from your country are?**

Finland is strongly committed to promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities, and this is reflected in the commitments. Finland's policies have been consistent for years, and since the first GDS in London great progress has been made in putting the words into action. Thus, we can say that Finland walks the talk.

We see the commitments as both relevant and ambitious and we trust that Finland will be serious about their implementation. This is seen e.g. in the adoption of the OECD-DAC disability marker in the planning and reporting of CSO work and humanitarian aid. The challenge is that if we look at all of Finland's official development assistance, more than two thirds of it are channelled through multilateral actors. The decisive question is how much can Finland influence their policies and implementation?

### **2. To what extent and how will you follow up the commitments given?**

Disability Partnership Finland has a secretariat of four staff, so resources for systematic follow-up are very limited. Nevertheless, we meet with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs several times a year and our good working relations give us the opportunity to discuss the commitments with them. The MFA also contacts us to get the opinion of disabled persons' organizations on matters concerning disability inclusion. For example, we were asked to comment on the guidance text of the disability marker.

### **3. What are your expectations for the next GDS?**

It is important to focus on the capacity of disabled persons' organisations and the individuals representing them to meaningfully participate in international processes and in cooperation with international donors. Finland needs more persons with disabilities with experience from the Global South and knowledge of development questions, human rights and international funding mechanisms.

## Responses from MyRight, Sweden:

### **1. How relevant and ambitious would you say that the commitments from your country are?**

They are thematically relevant, but they mirror current undertakings rather than ambitions for the coming year(s), thus they cannot really be seen as commitments, let alone good commitments.

### **2. To what extent and how will you follow up the commitments given?**

Given that the Swedish [government's] commitments are a list of things that are already being done today, MyRight will not follow them up as we would proper commitments. Instead, we will use them in our advocacy vis-à-vis Sida.

MyRight is aware that Sida/Sweden has expressed a hesitation to enter into yet another system of monitoring/follow-up. We also recognise that the GDS system may be seen as somewhat less clear than, for instance, the UPR and the CRPD treaty body monitoring system. It is nevertheless important that the increased ambitions which Sida sometimes expresses are also shown in GDS commitments.

### **3. What are your expectations for the next GDS?**

Given that there are other monitoring systems in place, it would be useful to clarify the exact role of the GDS commitments. As for Swedish participation, we hope for at least the same level of participation as this year (cabinet minister level) and, of course, for much clearer commitments from our government.

Our assumption is that this is possible, but that it might take some advocacy work from MyRight and the rest of civil society.



## Responses from The Atlas Alliance

### **How relevant and ambitious would you say that the commitments from your country are?**

The commitments from the co-host country, Norway, cover some important issues, especially those about tracking inclusion and disaggregating data by disability. It is also important that mainstreaming disability across sectors comes across clearly and consistently.

More surprising is what is not mentioned. Norway, represented by prime minister Jonas Gahr Støre, launched its first strategy for disability inclusion at the Global Disability Summit. We see this document, *“Equality for all. Norwegian strategy for disability-inclusive development”*<sup>4</sup>, as a milestone and a possible “gamechanger” for inclusion in Norwegian development work, so why it is not mentioned as a commitment is difficult to understand.

Another area in which we miss Norwegian commitments and engagement is for persons with disabilities in crisis and conflict. Norway sees the responsibility for long term development co-operation as separate from that for humanitarian assistance. We need to see the same strong engagement in humanitarian assistance as in the development aid.

Reference is also missing to the OECD-DAC marker that Norway uses and, in the strategy, commits to promote in international development co-operation.

### **To what extent and how will you follow up the commitments given?**

We will include these commitments in our plan to follow up the government’s new strategy “Equality for all”. However, since the government’s strategy is more specific and ambitious than the commitments, the strategy will be the basis for our follow up.

### **What are your expectations for the next GDS?**

First of all, we hope that Norway will actively use its experiences as co-host and share them with the new hosts Germany and Jordan’s they prepare for arranging the next summit. Secondly, we will work for Norway to take a lead when it comes to tracking inclusion and the use of the OECD-DAC marker, as well as the meaningful participation of DPOs, with DPOs in the lead. We also expect Norway to have strong and clear ambitions on disability in humanitarian assistance.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/equality\\_strategy\\_2022.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/equality_strategy_2022.pdf)

# Equality for all

## NORWAY'S STRATEGY FOR DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (2022–2025)

From the new Norwegian strategy “Equality for all”, presented at the Global Disability Summit 2022:

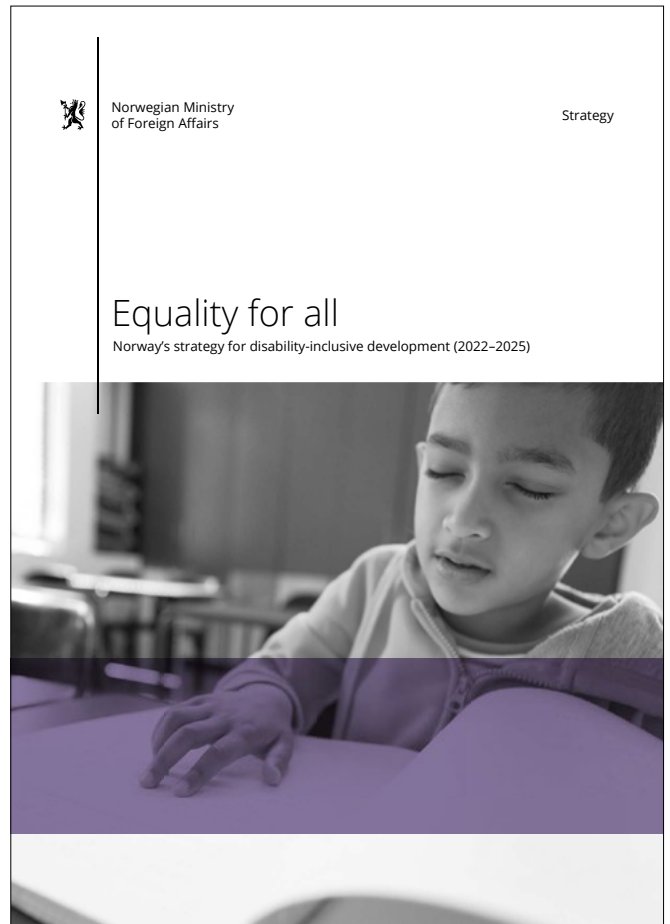
### Summary

“This strategy provides a foundation for future efforts to promote inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Norwegian development cooperation. Norway has two primary objectives for its activities in this area: i) to promote compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ii) to work proactively to support the core principle of the 2030 Agenda to ‘leave no one behind’ [...].

A clear, human rights-based approach to development cooperation provides a framework for enabling rights holders to claim their rights and for ensuring that those who have an obligation to fulfil these rights do so [...]. In order to succeed, efforts must be focused on achieving both systemic change and change at the local level.

The development cooperation is to have a twin-track approach in which mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities is combined with targeted measures. Integrating the rights of persons with disabilities as a cross-cutting element of development cooperation policy design, plans and programmes is crucial for ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to take part in social development on an equal footing with the rest of society. [...]

There are three strategic action areas for driving change towards disability inclusive development: changing attitudes, increasing accountability and promoting meaningful engagement.



Changing people's attitudes towards disability is essential to counteract stigmatisation and combat the ignorance that leads to exclusion. Accountability entails making challenges and needs visible, identifying necessary actions, and monitoring what is being done by whom. Efforts relating to the compilation of data and statistics as well as reporting and tracking are crucial in this regard. The involvement and participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations is vital to ensure sound, relevant policy design and inclusive initiatives that address the challenges that the target groups confront in their daily lives.”

**Selected action points demonstrating what the government will do:**

- work to change attitudes and seek to highlight the issue of multiple discrimination, including discrimination against women and girls with disabilities;
- help to achieve target 17.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals by working to ensure that development cooperation data and statistics include markers for disability and gender;
- work with partners and the OECD/DAC to encourage more actors to report on the policy marker for inclusion of persons with disabilities, and to increase reporting on and tracking of efforts to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- work with partners to increase the participation and involvement of persons with disabilities and their organisations in relevant development cooperation efforts;
- continue to support the organisations of persons with disabilities so that they can act as advocates and channels representing persons with disabilities and enabling them to exercise and claim their rights;
- support the efforts of Norwegian civil society organisations to incorporate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their work, and encourage them to promote universal design in their activities;
- continue to support cooperation between organisations of persons with disabilities and civil society organisations to promote mutual exchange of experience and learning;

(For more action points, please see the strategy document available here: [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/equality\\_strategy\\_2022.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/equality_strategy_2022.pdf))

# ELIMINATING STIGMA, COMBATTING DISCRIMINATION, AND OVERCOMING ABLEISM:

## Where are the GDS 2022 Commitments?

Despite the very clear message from London and the Charter for Change in 2018, the GDS 2022 failed to follow up the clear ambition about fighting stigma, combatting discrimination and challenging negative attitudes and practices.

Only six commitments were given from national governments as donors and duty bearers (OECD-DAC countries), and only seven were given by the multilateral organisations. In our opinion, only one commitment from UNICEF can be pointed to as an example to follow.

### **Attitudinal Barriers**

The Preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) acknowledges that disability partly results from attitudinal barriers which prohibit persons with disabilities from exercising their human rights on an equal basis with other<sup>5</sup>. According to the World Report on Disability, attitudinal barriers are a major cause of concern, which contribute to the exclusion of approximately 1 billion persons with disabilities from the educational sphere, employment arena, political domain, and sociocultural discourse<sup>6</sup>. Across developed or developing countries and at institutional and individual levels, attitudinal barriers could manifest in the form of rampant stigmatization, implicit or explicit forms of discrimination, or ableism. Persons with disabilities and their organizations have for long argued for the removal or reduction of disabling attitudinal barriers, and for the creation of inclusive and enabling societies.

In 2018, persons with disabilities, their organizations, and allies gathered together in London for the first-ever Global Disability Summit to promote the realization of the rights, freedoms, dignity, and inclusion of all persons with disabilities. The Summit concluded with the visionary document “Charter for Change”, which was grounded in the principles of the CRPD. Goal 3 in the Charter for Change espouses to eliminate stigma, combat discrimination, and challenge negative attitudes and harmful practices on one hand, and to promote meaningful leadership of persons with disabilities and their organizations on the other<sup>7</sup>. The subsequent Global Disability Summit in 2022 reaffirmed and accentuated the theme of reducing stigma and combatting discrimination encountered by persons with disabilities<sup>8</sup>. The Global Disability Summit in 2022 was a resounding success in that it gave rise to more than 1400 commitments from national governments, multilateral agencies, donors, and civil society partners. However, only a handful of the commitments concerned the reduction of the attitudinal barriers encountered by persons with disabilities. The following paragraph highlights a couple of commitments which could assist in eliminating stigma, reducing discrimination, and combatting ableism.<sup>9</sup> These commitments could be taken as examples for other countries, multilateral

5 United Nations (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol. Downloaded 19.05.2022. Available at: <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

6 World Health Organization (2011). World report on disability. ISBN 978 92 4 068800 1 (pdf).

7 Global Disability Summit (2018). The Global Disability Summit 2018: Charter for Change. Downloaded 19.05.2022. Available at: [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/gds\\_charter\\_for\\_change.pdf](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/gds_charter_for_change.pdf)

8 Chair Summary (2022). Global Disability Summit 2022 Co-Chairs’ Summary. Available [here](#)

9 These commitments are retrieved from the Global Disability Summit Commitments Portal, which could be accessed here: <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/commitments>.



**Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, talks with summit moderator Natalie Becker-Aakervik**

agencies, donors, and civil society organizations to follow or replicate.

### Sample Commitments

One of the key multilateral stakeholders which protects and promotes the rights of children and adolescents is UNICEF. The commitment which UNICEF shared at the Global Disability Summit in 2022 is quite comprehensive, as it accentuates the challenge of ableism and commits to combatting it, along with other attitudinal barriers which are encountered by children and young adolescents with disabilities. The commitment reads as follows:

“UNICEF commits to reduce ableism, stigma, discrimination, and other forms of violence against children with disabilities and support their social inclusion. A) Support the implementation of global resource pack on effective Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) measurable approaches to address ableism, stigma, and discrimination against persons with disabilities. B) Support national and sub national stakeholders to develop and implement integrated, evidence-based, multi-level and cross sectoral strategies to address negative attitudes, beliefs, norms, stigma,

and discrimination against children with disabilities at individual, family, community and system level. C) Support effective measurement of strategies aimed at addressing negative attitudes, beliefs, norms, stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities.”

Some national governments and multilateral agencies also committed towards creating action plans and disability inclusion strategies to reduce the attitudinal barriers encountered by, and increase the meaningful participation of, persons with disabilities. A case in point of national governments’ commitments is the one from Switzerland:

1. Switzerland develops an action plan 2022-2024 for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Switzerland’s international cooperation.
2. Switzerland successfully implements the 2022-2024 Action Plan.
3. Switzerland commits to increased consultation and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and systems and in international cooperation.

Similar to the commitment made by the national government of Switzerland, the multilateral agency United Nations Women underscores the importance of creating an action plan to combat discrimination and promote inclusion of persons with disabilities. The UN Women's commitment states that:

**Develop an Action Plan (2022-25) in 2022 to update and implement the UN-Women Global Strategy on Disability Inclusion for mainstreaming disability inclusion throughout its work in policy, program, normative and intergovernmental support based on lessons learned and new developments such as UN Women's Strategic Plan (2022-25), UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), UN's Common Agenda." Following a similar trajectory like the national government of Switzerland and the multilateral agency UN Women, International Fund for Agricultural Development asserts the need of framing a disability inclusion strategy. Their commitment states that: "IFAD's upcoming Disability Inclusion Strategy will promote attitudinal change at institutional level and in our operations, and address intersectionalities.**

### **Concluding Takeaways**

After reviewing and analysing the commitments made by different stakeholders, three critical takeaways emerge.

First, attitudinal barriers are a major cause of concern for persons with disabilities globally and reducing and eliminating attitudinal barriers is often considered an important principle or goal. Even so, out of more than 1.400 commitments, only a handful of commitments were made to reduce or eliminate these barriers. In other words, the stakeholders of the Global Disability Summit are not walking the talk with regard to realizing the goal of lowering attitudinal barriers and promoting disability inclusion.

Second, not only are commitments concerning combatting attitudinal barriers and promoting disability inclusion few and far between, but also their quality is often wanting. Some of the commitments are vague, and it seems that the stakeholders are obfuscating their responsibilities by employing ambiguous and aspirational language, and by avoiding concrete and actionable commitment.

Third, only one stakeholder, i.e. UNICEF, explicitly mentions the term ableism. Attitudinal barriers such as racism have previously been encountered by other minority groups.

### **The stakeholders committing to the Global Disability Summit could explicitly state the need and means to combat ableism in all its forms.**

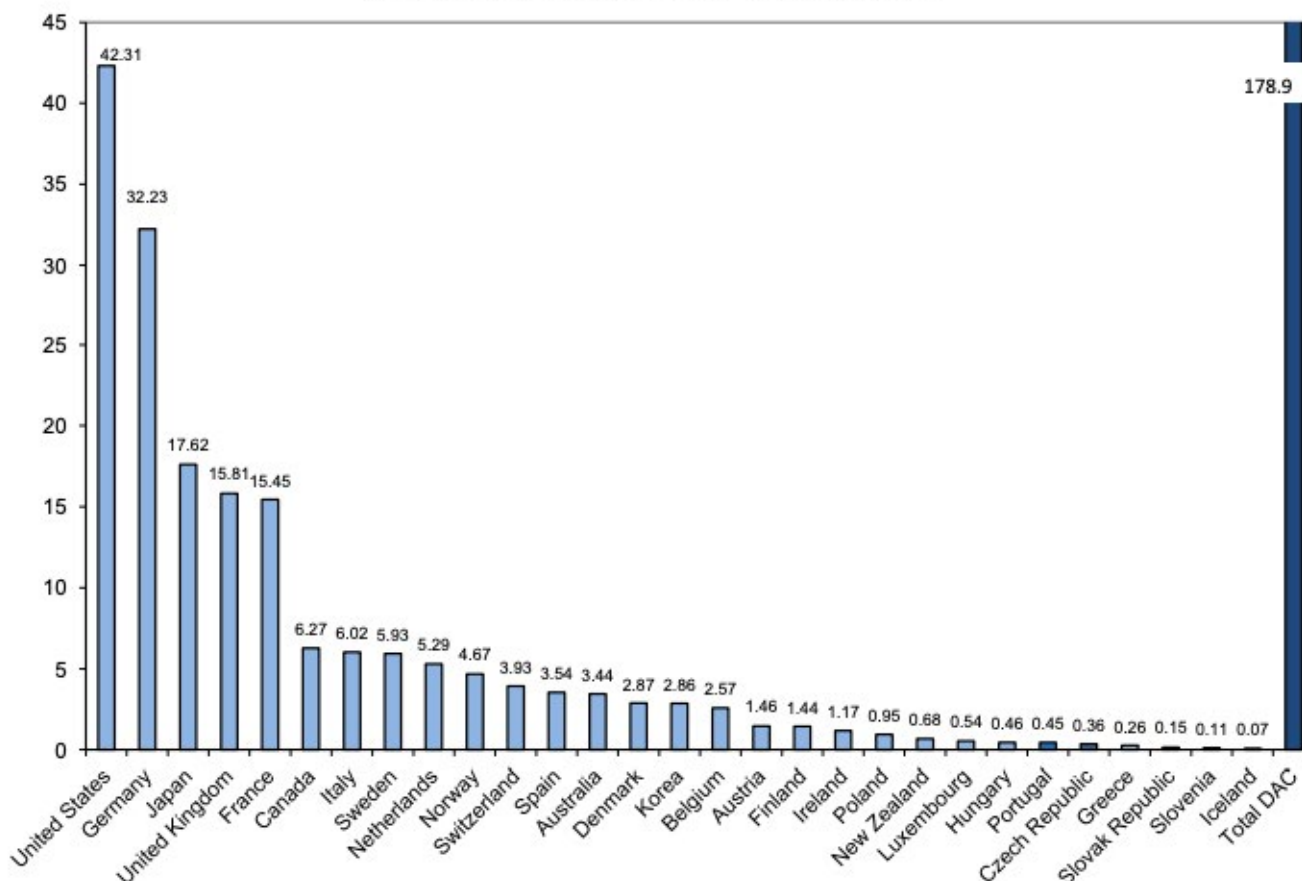
There were some important commitments made to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate action plans and disability inclusion strategies to combat attitudinal barriers and to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The stakeholders who made such commitments should be commended. Nonetheless, only the upcoming years will it be clear if these action plans and disability inclusion strategies will come to fruition. In other words, a lot can transpire from the time when the commitment is made to the time when the commitment is implemented in the real world.



# THE BIG ISSUE AND THE DISTURBING FACTS: “Most is without us”

USD billion

ODA in 2021 on a grant equivalent basis- amounts



Source: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/ODA-2021-summary.pdf>

**The real big issue in international development and humanitarian assistance is the annual flow of funding that is not disability inclusive. Although still well below the agreed UN target of 0,7% of the countries’ average GNI, the global development funding stream is approaching 2000 billion USD annually. One could expect that the most marginalized groups would have their fair share.**

The aim of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is that all societies are fully inclusive. The expectations to international development and humanitarian assistance are consequently that all interventions are fully inclusive – that there should be no interventions or programs without us, i.e. without

[the influence and participation from] persons with disabilities.

**However, the reality is almost the opposite:**

International development assistance seems almost totally devoid of persons with disabilities and DPOs. Most interventions, programs and projects appear to be planned and implemented without reflections of the CRPD or other relevant human rights conventions. In other words, most takes place without us.

Against this backdrop one overarching commitment from the GDS becomes especially valuable and relevant: The commitment to tracking inclusion. Many of the OECD-DAC countries have started using the voluntary

disability policy marker, with all its agreed shortcomings. This is a first step towards instruments and measures which can hold duty-bearers to account, and it needs to be further developed.

Some of the countries and multilaterals, like Finland, Switzerland, Norway, and UNICEF, have started more detailed and qualified work to track – or document – inclusion, as demonstrated in the chapter about the Fafo report. Unfortunately, the GDS delivered very little on this commitment; only five – 5 – of the more than 1400 commitments addressed the tracking of inclusion. Under the CRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals, development partners are duty-bound to make their ODA disability inclusive<sup>10</sup>. Both governments and civil society have a major challenge in getting a well-functioning tracking system in place and creating a common understanding of the goals, targets, and use of the system.

## The OECD-DAC Policy Marker

Development co-operation activities are classified as being inclusive of persons with disabilities (scores Principal or Significant) if:

- They have a deliberate objective on ensuring that persons with disabilities are included, and able to share the benefits, on an equal basis to persons without disabilities.

OR • If they contribute to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and promote respect for their inherent dignity in line with Art. 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

OR • If they support the ratification, implementation and/or monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

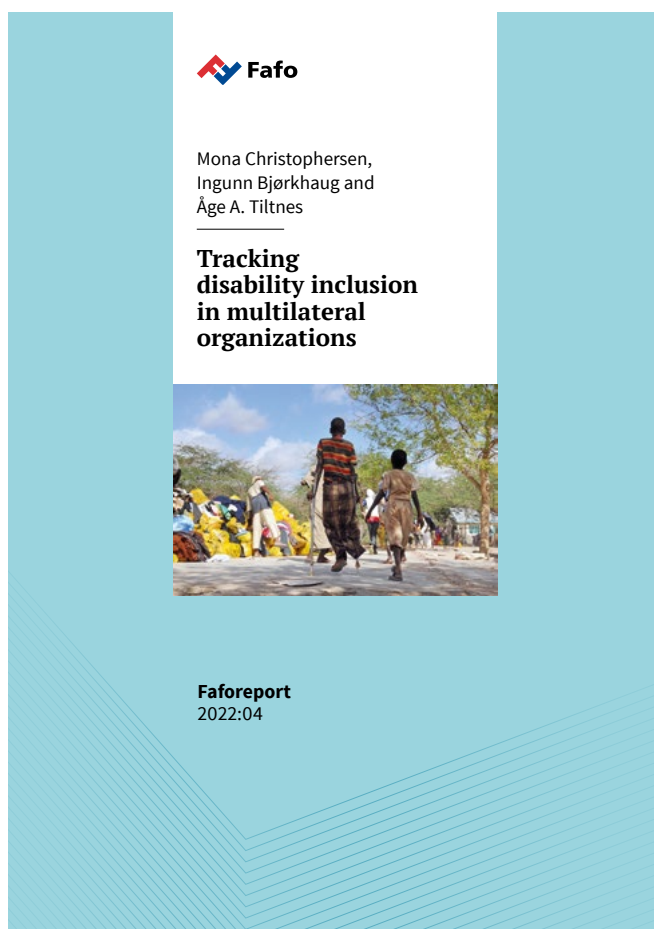
A development co-operation activity should be marked as principal if disability inclusion is the main objective of the activity and fundamental to its design and expected results. The activity would not have been undertaken without this disability inclusion perspective.

A development co-operation activity should be marked as significant if disability inclusion is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the activity.

<sup>10</sup> All members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee, except the United States

*“The tracking of efforts so far suggests that only a marginal share of development funds is today tagged or in other ways registered as disability inclusive.”*

## TRACKING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS: A tool for change



Is it possible to document whether multilateral organizations include persons with disabilities in their activities? This is the question that the new report “Tracking disability inclusion in multilateral organizations” seeks to answer through examining the situation in the programs and activities of the World Bank, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The report is published by the Norwegian social science research foundation Fafo.<sup>11</sup>

The report asks if recent policies, guidelines, and accountability frameworks specify the activities contributing to disability inclusion, with a focus on inclusive education, and to what extent and how inclusion is monitored and tracked. The report identifies some challenges to such efforts in all three organizations. These organizations were selected for the Fafo study because they have diverse mandates and could thus bring different perspectives to a discussion on the efforts to track and monitor disability inclusion.

The report is an answer to the challenge of “Letting the facts rule”: If we are to reach the common goals of equal rights and inclusion, we need to know where we are. If we intend to commit to inclusion, we must know what we know – and don’t know. Unfortunately, the

<sup>11</sup> The report is written by written by Mona Christophersen, Ingunn Bjørkhaug and Åge A. Tiltnes and can be read here: [https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60fea532c3e33e5c5701d99a/621f35f5753580011152d4ea\\_Fafo-rapporten.pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60fea532c3e33e5c5701d99a/621f35f5753580011152d4ea_Fafo-rapporten.pdf)

facts are not very inspiring, as they paint a rather bleak picture: Genuine inclusion of persons with disabilities is seemingly extremely low, the issue gets hardly any attention, and it does not seem like a topic anyone wants to expose.

The commitments from the Global Disability Summit 2022 reflect this picture: Almost none of the 1400 commitments were about tracking inclusion. The only explanation is that there is very little to track, down to 0,5% of the total development aid in the period 2014-2018 was tracked to include persons with disabilities. More about this below.

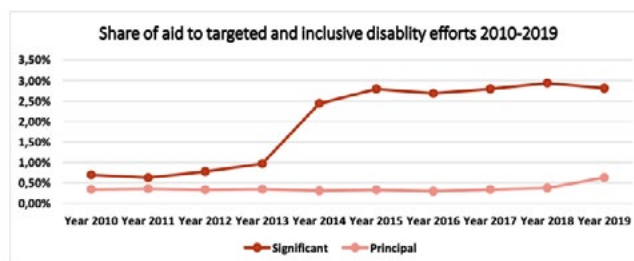
The Fafo report was commissioned by the Atlas Alliance and was part of the Atlas Alliance's contribution to the Global Disability Summit in Oslo in February 2022.

### The background: The challenging facts

The need to raise the question of tracking inclusion stems from the reality of “non-inclusion or not knowing”: It is very difficult to establish how much of the 180 billion USD spent on development aid and humanitarian assistance annually is planned and/or reported as inclusive. And it is a sad surprise that **only 10 (7 from donors/multilaterals) of the more than 1400 GDS-commitments given by the different stakeholders support the overarching commitment of tracking inclusion.** This reflects the fact that **less than 0,5% of funding to global aid was found to be inclusive in a recent study** (Walton 2020 quoted in the Fafo report<sup>12</sup>):

- Aid projects (number of projects) targeting persons with disabilities made up less than 2% of all international aid between 2014 and 2018
- Aid projects targeting disability inclusion totalled USD 3.2 billion between 2014 and 2018, representing less than 0.5% of all international aid.
- Aid to disability-inclusive projects was just under USD 1 billion in 2018. This was equivalent to less than USD 1 per person with disabilities in developing economies.
- Even the five most disability-inclusion focused donors target just 3% of their aid to this purpose.

The Norwegian situation illustrates this point. Targeted (principal) development aid has increased from 0,4% in 2010 to 0,7 % in 2019, and the mainstreamed (significant) aid is now around 3%<sup>13</sup>.



We need to ask: Why isn't all aid reported as inclusive (significant)? Why is 97% allowed to be unclear about inclusion – or directly exclusive of persons with disabilities? And why is less than 1% of the humanitarian assistance being reported as inclusive?

*“... only limited information exists on whether funding intended for disabled persons and inclusive programming is in fact spent in line with intentions.”*

The numbers in the new report show a similar picture for UNICEF: Only 3,7% of their expenditure in 2020 was reported as disability inclusive.

Fafo also made a report for the Atlas Alliance in 2017, ‘Tracking inclusion in Norwegian development support to global education’ (Jennings, 2017). Some of the main concerns highlighted in the report were “the broad, vague, and non-binding efforts toward disability inclusion in education development programs, rendering accountability difficult”. The report also found that disability inclusion was not significantly mainstreamed

<sup>12</sup> <https://devinit.org/resources/disability-inclusive-oda-aid-data-donors-channels-recipients/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.norad.no/om-bistand/publikasjon/2021/mapping-of-norwegian-efforts-to-include-persons-with-disabilities-in-development-assistance-2010-2019/>

into the global development agenda, and that there was a scarcity of data required to assess disability inclusion.

Several years on, is there evidence that disability inclusion policies in humanitarian and development assistance have improved? Is the implementation of these policies materializing? Do they reach persons with and without disabilities equally?

### **The 2022 Fafo report on tracking inclusion: Progress in inclusion?**

The Fafo report investigates the developments in efforts to monitor the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the programmes and activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank in the years between the first (2018) and the second (2022) Global Disability Summits. The report is primarily based on information from, and experiences shared by, the staff of these three organizations. It asks if and how the recent policies, guidelines, and accountability frameworks of UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank have led to an improvement in the monitoring of the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

### **Conclusions from the Fafo report**

The following is some of the main conclusions and recommendations in the 2022 report. The selection is done by the Atlas Alliance:

**Efforts to track disability inclusion have progressed since the first Global Disability Summit in London in 2018 (GDS18). New policies and frameworks have been followed up by the continued development of management and monitoring systems, which also allows tracking efforts to improve the rights, opportunities, and conditions of persons with disabilities. Key actors working with and for persons with disabilities have responded to calls for such changes. There is now a need to ensure that these systems are refined and exploited in ways that maximize transparency on how funds intended to benefit disabled persons are spent. [...]**

The tracking of efforts so far suggests that only a marginal share of development funds is today tagged or in other ways registered as disability inclusive. Our investigation indicated that only limited information exists on whether funding intended for disabled persons and inclusive programming is in fact spent in line with intentions. In that way, there appears to be a gap between

the good intentions expressed at the HQs and the reality on the ground.

A remaining challenge for all organizations is to document what funding has led to increased participation, and for how many, who, and with what benefits for those included because of the programs. [...]

*“A remaining challenge for all organizations is to document what funding has led to increased participation, and for how many, who, and with what benefits for those included because of the programs.”*

A striking find is that staff are insufficiently trained on how to identify and document disability inclusion:

Local knowledge appears to have been underexplored in the development and implementation of programs for and monitoring of disability inclusion. The perhaps starkest expression of this was that amidst all the good intentions of inclusion, the feedback from a national DPO O, which reported rarely being consulted by the multilateral organizations. When asked if the organization had been given an opportunity to use its right to influence decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities (CRPD Article 4), the DPO leader told us that they had only once been invited to meet with UNICEF. On that occasion, they were *informed* about the organization's activities and plans, and the representative added: 'For the last two organizations, we are not informed at all of their activities in [our country]. So, you can imagine that, for your other questions, we really don't have an answer.

The report continues:

By signing the Charter for Change at the Global Disability Summit in 2018, all the multinational organizations interviewed in this report committed to: ‘Promote the leadership and diverse representation of all persons with disabilities to be front and center of change; as leaders, partners and advocates.’ This includes the active involvement and close consultation of persons with disabilities of all ages. Walking that talk takes further commitment.”

“Good accountability mechanisms help development actors keep their eyes on the ball in their everyday activities and encounters. To further improve on developing meaningful tracking of funding and commitments intended to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, clearly the involvement of the organizations of disabled persons must be—to use a much-repeated concept in this report—*mainstreamed* at an entirely different level than they are today. [...]

“We were pleased to learn that UNICEF has both the training of staff and the establishment of local focal points as key policy issues in their new strategic plan and are hopeful these steps will improve the use and hence output quality of their comprehensive monitoring system, inSight. UNICEF has developed a comprehensive approach to monitoring and tracking disability inclusion, which has the potential for further development. Their broad approach can inspire other multilateral organizations that receive and make use of humanitarian and development funding. It might not be necessary for all organizations to develop the same tracking tools, but other organizations should take inspiration from this effort. The important thing is to develop tools that can help guide and improve performance on the types of disability inclusion that matter to disabled persons, and the ability to demonstrate their efforts and achievements to donors through reliable data.

### Selected recommendations from the report

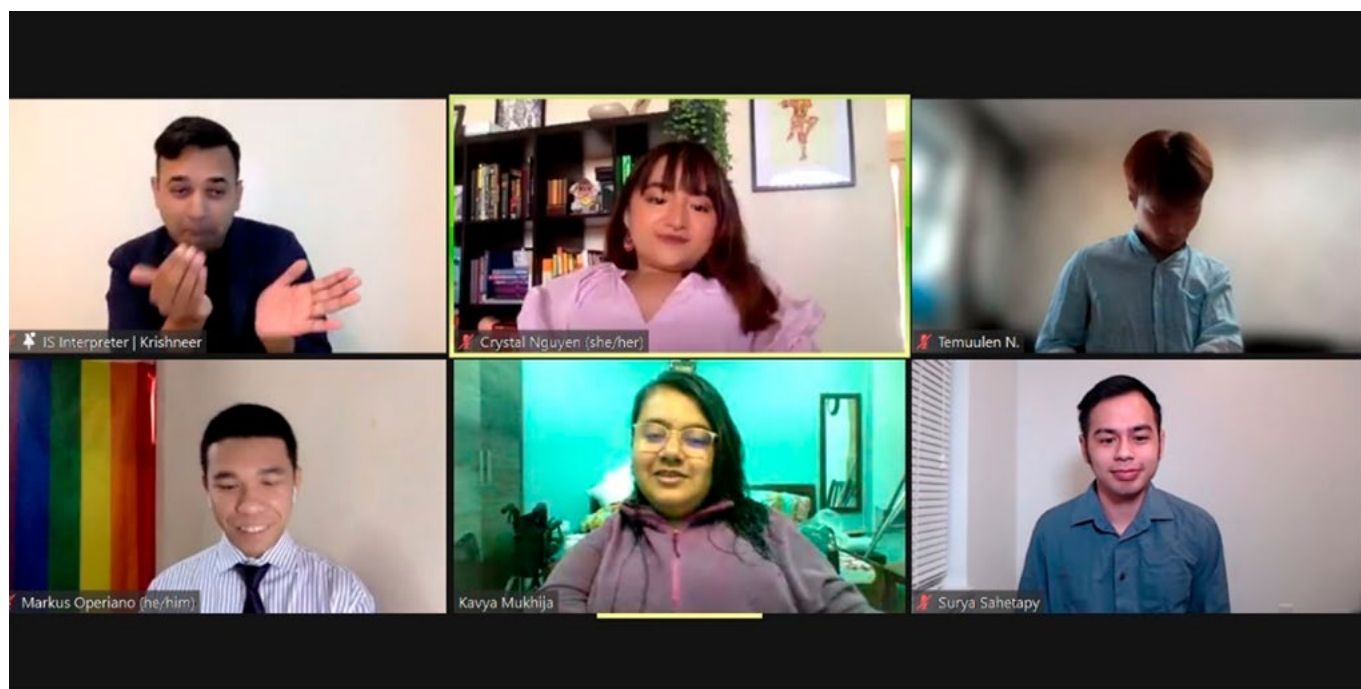
- Disability inclusion is a normative standard and indicates the direction for all future action from the multilateral organizations included in the present study. The organizations need to document that they are moving in that direction.
- What is not counted and measured is less likely to be done. The multilateral organizations should be held accountable for their concrete commitments made to the disability agenda. The tools to monitor and track such efforts should be tailored to reveal successes as well as failures.
- The non-involvement, rare, or random involvement of DPOs in the planning and monitoring of investments in the disability agenda is in breach of the commitments made by the multilateral organizations, and must end. DPOs must, in ways that are meaningful to them, be invited to influence and even guide the national activities on disability inclusion and ensure that tracking helps document improvements in the areas that are most important to them.
- Improved bottom-up information flows should help inform the staff responsible for data analysis.
- Staff overall need more training on their own organization’s strategies on disability inclusion and monitoring.
- Disabled persons differ, and certain groups tend to fall behind. To comply with Article 8 in the Charter for Change, i.e., to put those furthest behind first, there must be an enhanced focus on monitoring and documenting the improved inclusion of persons with intellectual and neurodevelopmental impairments, who are systematically neglected even in disability-inclusive programming. [...]

The full report is found here:

[https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60fea532c3e33e5c-5701d99a/621f35f5753580011152d4ea\\_Fafo-rap-porten.pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60fea532c3e33e5c-5701d99a/621f35f5753580011152d4ea_Fafo-rap-porten.pdf)



# Commitments concerning youth with disabilities, GDS 2022



The GDS Youth 2022 was held digitally, allowing for youth with disabilities around the globe to take part.

## GDS Youth 2022 – global engagement of youth with disabilities

The GDS Youth was hosted by IDA, the Atlas Alliance, Youth Mental Health Norway and UNICEF, and was part of the wider Global Disability Summit 2022. [The GDS Youth](#) was an unforgettable 21-hour virtual journey through the time zones, packed with youth-led panel debates about topics decided by youth with disabilities themselves, representing their respective geographical regions.

The summit consisted of five regional sessions, a Youth charter presentation part, an opening and a closing. Each regional session was organised by youth with disabilities from the relevant region and entailed panel discussions on themes chosen by the youth in the regional committees, as well as different cultural contributions. More than 3000 people attended

the Youth summit digitally, and the opening and closing ceremonies included government and donor representatives speaking about their commitment to youth with disabilities. Yet very few commitments targeting youth with disabilities were submitted in the GDS Commitments portal.

### Summary of facts

A mere 99 of the 1412 commitments include the word “youth” or “young”. This means 7 % of the total commitments. 25 of these are given by national governments, 59 by civil society organisations (including DPOs and foundations), 14 by multilaterals and 1 by others. 31 of the 99 commitments mentioning youth also concern children. However, it is important to keep in mind the different needs of children and adolescents.

Preparatory to the GDS, a Menu of Commitments was developed for the participating governments and other actors to choose or draw inspiration from. Of

the 63 commitments suggested in this menu, only nine explicitly mention youth. Two of these are in the thematic area “Meaningful Engagement of OPDs”, two are in “Inclusive Education”, one in “Inclusive Health” and

four are in “Situations of Conflict and Crisis”. “Inclusive Livelihoods”, which is an extremely important area for youth, does not have any youth specific commitments in the menu.

The following governments explicitly committed to supporting youth with disabilities in one way or the other:

Donor country giving youth commitments	Characteristics of content
<b>Sweden</b>	Commitments are reports of ongoing support to disability related development work, mostly channelled through IDA. Thematic areas: “Meaningful engagement of OPDs”, “Inclusive Health” and “Inclusive Livelihoods and Social Protection”
<b>Denmark</b>	Through DPOD and existing strategic partnerships Denmark will strengthen local leadership, including transfer of funds, ownership and decision-making power to local partners. Thematic area: “Meaningful engagement of OPDs”
<b>Belgium</b>	One very vague youth related commitment, relating to the thematic area “Inclusive Education”.
<b>US</b>	Quite specific commitments, to be achieved by 2026, however not measurable. Thematic area: “Inclusive education”.
<b>UK</b>	One vague commitment on “actively including youth disability activists in wider education engagement...” Thematic area: “Inclusive education”
<b>Australia</b>	Committed to working with regional DPOs in the Pacific and UNFPA on SHR services and capacity building of local organisations regarding disability inclusion. Trainings on disability inclusive service provision. Not very specific. Thematic area: “Inclusive health”.

Multilaterals gave 14 commitments regarding young people – six of which were given by UNICEF and three by UN Women. UNICEF delivered a total of 25 commitments, and of the six that mention youth, only one mentions youth alone without pairing youth with children.

### Reflections

The commitments from governments to youth with disabilities are very few, only 1,7 %. Only six donor countries included youth in their commitments. Somalia, Uganda and Rwanda gave the most concrete and implementable commitments. In a summit concerning international development it is surprising that these countries, who are recipients of aid, are the ones with the clearest agendas. Venezuela and Sierra Leone also targeted youth or young people specifically.

The fact that only 7 % of the commitments from governments and other actors mention youth, is a mismatch with the situation on the African continent where the median age of the overall population is 19 years. That the vast majority of commitments targeting youth are from civil society, which is entirely reliant on donor countries and multilaterals to implement their agenda, is alarming.

A possible contributing factor to the apparent neglect of youth is that young people had their own GDS mechanism – the youth summit “GDS Youth” – which was not clearly enough defined in advance. Given that there was a separate youth summit, some may have thought that there would be a separate menu of commitments, commitments portal, or a way of committing by attending the GDS Youth. Since this was not the case and the discussion regarding commitments for youth had not been finalised by the time the overall menu of commitments was written, youth were largely left out of the wording in the general menu of commitments.

Instead, a call to action, “The Youth Charter”, was developed based on answers from 1000 youth with disabilities to a survey released shortly before the Youth Summit. The quick feedback and high response rate showed that the level of expectations from youth was high. However, the Charter was unclear on accountability and how to show support, ratify or sign it. Issues like how to maximise impact of the event, how

to follow up effectively, and how to hold stakeholders to account, were not given enough focus in the planning of GDS Youth 2022.

### **Recommendations**

- Specific commitments on youth with disabilities should be proposed by the co-hosts as part of the menu of commitments for GDS 2025. Practically, this means that someone from the GDS Youth co-host committee should be in the working groups for developing overall commitments ensuring that the concerns of youth are covered and explicitly mentioned in the overall commitments.
- The decision-making body for the GDS Youth 2022, the committee of co-hosts, was made up of four organisations. To ensure wider participation as well as firmer representation and legitimacy, the co-hosts could organize sub-committees of youth with disabilities in 2025. These sub-committees could provide advice and input to the decision-making body, thus making young voices heard.
- There is sufficient time available now to anchor the GDS Youth more properly with disabled youth globally, to inform donors, and to prepare for a real game changing GDS Youth in 2025. Information campaigns and promotion should start already in 2023, allowing for better understanding of the concept and purpose of the GDS and the GDS Youth.

# Reflections, challenges and recommendations

The Atlas Alliance worked closely with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IDA in the preparations for the Global Disability Summit.

We had the opportunity to give advice and share the views and opinions of our partners in Norway and in the Global South. We experienced a cooperation where we were listened to and respected. However, at the same time we were not in a responsible position like the other co-hosts, we were not at the table when decisions were made. The final texts and processes were defined and decided by the co-hosts.

In the following we give our comments to and analysis of what we see as some of the most crucial issues on the agenda. These are issues on which we had some influence, but which we think could have been treated differently – and which need to be addressed to make an even better GDS in 2025. All considerations and recommendations are the responsibility of the Atlas Alliance alone.

The broader participation in the GDS 2022 and the increased number of commitments are solid and positive indicators of increased value and potential outcomes. We support such an interpretation and agree that the importance of the GDS is growing. But there is still a long way to go: We must focus on the content and quality – not the quantity – of the commitments and the expectations for their implementation. There is also a need for a clearer focus of what the GDS is and could be, and how DPOs and NGOs at country level can be engaged, in order for the GDS to become a much needed gamechanger for inclusive development, demonstrating the slogan “Nothing without us”.

The following are our main recommendations of further development of the GDS:

## **Quantity or quality?**

The commitments range from quite SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound – to rather the opposite. Quite a few commitments refer to ongoing activities and processes, they are results of previous commitments rather than new ones. Switzerland and Sweden might be seen as occupying opposite ends of the scale (see table in Appendix 1).

So what are the requirements for the commitments given? And how are they qualified and accepted? One can understand that the co-hosts at the first GDS were open to practically all types of “commitments”. But at the second GDS, building on the experiences from the first, one would expect the commitments to be analysed and qualified to a larger extent – even that some would be rejected or given a chance to be reformulated.

If the GDS is to have impact and be respected by the stakeholders, the quality and content of the commitments must be very high on the agenda for the next summit. Quality should be the guiding principle, even if it leads to fewer commitments.

## **Discrimination and stigma**

Attitudinal barriers are a major cause of concern for persons with disabilities globally and reducing and eliminating attitudinal barriers is an important goal. Even so, out of more than 1.400 commitments, only a handful given by the OECD-DAC countries targeted these barriers. In other words, important stakeholders of the Global Disability Summit are not walking the talk when it comes to realizing the goal of lowering attitudinal barriers and promoting disability inclusion.

Here too, quality is often wanting. Some of the commitments are vague, the stakeholders seemingly obfuscating their responsibilities by employing ambiguous and aspirational language, avoiding concrete and actionable commitment.

Only one stakeholder, i.e. UNICEF, explicitly mentions the term ableism. Attitudinal barriers such as racism have previously been encountered by other minority groups.

The stakeholders committing to the Global Disability Summit could explicitly state the need and means to combat ableism in all its forms. Some important commitments were made to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate action plans and disability inclusion strategies intended to combat attitudinal barriers and promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Nonetheless, only in the upcoming years will it be clear whether these plans and strategies actually come to fruition.

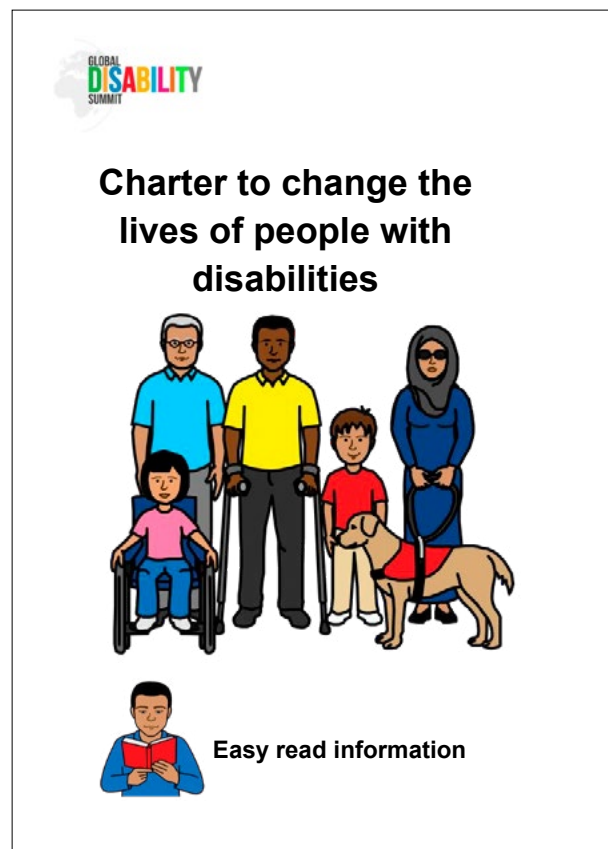
### **“Meaningful engagement of DPOs” – or DPOs in the lead?**

The issue of meaningful engagement, let alone placing DPOs in the lead, is not yet a priority for the stakeholders, especially not for global donors or national governments.

The new slogan “Nothing without us” must prescribe more than just “meaningful engagement and participation”. DPOs must be in the lead setting the development agenda and managing projects and programmes, or as a minimum aiming at getting to the local ownership. We as DPOs – like all other marginalized groups – need to own and define our own agenda and issues, developing and owning our own projects and programmes, as opposed to just being given an opportunity to meaningfully engage. Rights-based approaches are about being subjects in our own situations and solutions, not just objects of somebody

else’s solutions and plans. “DPOs in the lead” needs to be the next step in “meaningful participation”.

For the next GDS in 2025 we recommend that the co-hosts define local ownership and DPOs in the lead as a priority commitment under the headline of “Strengthening the disability movement”.



### **Focus on inclusive development and disability in development.**

There seems to be a widespread (mis-)understanding that the GDS is a “COSP light”, covering most of the articles in the CRPD and dealing with issues relevant to all stakeholders, not just disability in development and humanitarian assistance. It is the responsibility

of every government to ensure that the rights of their citizens are met, and it is commendable that to a large extent countries in the global south have given concrete and measurable commitments. However, our analysis shows that too many of the commitments from donor countries focus on national implementation.

From the co-hosts' side, the goals of the GDS 2022 were more focused on international development and humanitarian assistance than the previous summit. Nevertheless, important OECD-DAC countries gave very few or no relevant commitments. The most important country in this context is Germany – the next co-host and the second largest donor country – which, alongside France, the Netherlands and Austria, did not give any commitments.

There should be clear references to disability in development in invitations, information, and the commitments portal, as well as in the way commitments are accepted and qualified. The OECD-DAC countries should give commitments that can guide their international development and humanitarian assistance, building on articles 11 and 32 of the CRPD.

### **“The big fish” and expenditure tracking**

The GDS should be about tracking inclusion and addressing “the big fish”, i.e. the big funders and the big actors. The OECD-DAC donors spend more than 1.8 billion USD per year on development and humanitarian assistance, much of which is channelled through multilateral organisations. Inclusion is not high on the agenda and the level of funding that can be traced both to targeted and mainstreamed disability development is extremely low. Or to put it the other way around: Looking at the traceable figures, disability exclusion seems to be the dominant trend in all development and humanitarian assistance.

The focus needs to be on how the major donors work, how their funding is used, and what commitments they are willing to give to promote and secure rights-based and inclusive development for all. Tracking inclusion in the funding given by large donors and through multilateral organisations should be among the major issues on the new GDS agenda.

Placing tracking inclusion on the agenda will increase donors' interest in using the OECD-DAC policy marker and in developing it further. Furthermore, stakeholders who have developed other and better tools – as has UNICEF – will have an arena in which to showcase their work.

### **Strategy: Mobilizing at the national and global levels**

Major changes need to take place at both global and national levels. Donors, global and multilateral actors, DPOs and grassroots movements alike must all commit to participate and to promote inclusive development. National DPOs must own their own agenda of change and appreciate how they can use the GDS as one of several opportunities to promote their most pressing issues, depending on their national context where the donors spend their funding and support the governments.

It seems clear that national and local DPOs only to a limited extent understood the nature of the GDS. Many of them did not grasp the opportunity to influence the governments and multilaterals present in their countries. The IDA had consultations in some countries, and the Atlas Alliance informed and mobilized through available channels. Still, engagement was low. We are now in the process of analysing the reasons for this.

We need a more strategic and effective way of mobilizing globally and regionally/nationally. To engage and have impact on the global actors and the multilaterals, the task of mobilising must be prioritized, coordinated, and include the active involvement of IDA members, i.e. the global DPOs.

Simultaneously, national DPOs need to engage and mobilize through their regional and global networks. Global engagement needs to be underpinned by a strong national involvement which understands and respects the different positions and ways of working, secures ownership at all levels, and forms the basis for specific, prioritized, and targeted outcomes and commitments. This way, global advocacy and broad solutions can be based on and supported by national movements and advocacy initiatives.



For the next GDS we recommend developing a strategy for mobilising DPOs and CSOs, encouraging national and regional organisations to develop and prioritize their policy issues, to advocate at the national level, and to channel their engagement into the global advocacy work.

### **The Youth Summit**

Specific commitments on youth with disabilities are needed. This should be proposed by the co-hosts as part of the menu of commitments for GDS 2025. In practice, this means that the GDS Youth co-hosts committee should be represented in the working groups developing overall commitments. This will ensure that the concerns of young persons are covered and explicitly mentioned in the overall commitments.

For the GDS Youth 2022, decisions in the GDS Youth co-hosts committee were made by four organisations. Engaging more sub-committees of youth with disabilities could ensure wider participation and firmer representation in 2025.

There is sufficient time to increase the involvement of disabled youth in the next GDS Youth Summit and prepare for a real game changing GDS Youth in 2025. Information campaigns and promotion should start already in 2023, allowing for better understanding of the concept and purpose of the GDS and GDS Youth.

## APPENDIX 1

# Table of commitments

**Countries: The Nordic countries, Switzerland and EU**

### How to read the table:

Under each country the proposed commitment from the co-hosts' menu is listed first and marked in green. Then, if the country edited the commitment before delivering it at the summit, the new text is in the row directly below.

Country	Commitments
<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>A total of 7 commitments</b>
<b>Overarching Commitment:</b>	<b>Disaggregate data by disability, gender and age in data collection and statistics.</b>
<b>Commitment text by the country</b>	Work to ensure that data and statistics in relevant areas are disaggregated using markers for persons with disabilities and help to generate the knowledge needed to achieve results in identified priority areas.
<b>Overarching Commitment</b>	<b>Commit to tracking expenditure and efforts for inclusion in national accounting and development cooperation.</b>
	Make it a requirement for development partners to increase reporting on and tracking of efforts to promote inclusion
<b>Meaningful Engagement</b>	<b>Mainstream OPD engagement across funding.</b>
	Promote the involvement and participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations in development cooperation. Continue to cooperate with organisations of persons with disabilities.
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	<b>Ensure that Norwegian funding for education is used to promote more inclusive education.</b>
<b>Inclusive health</b>	<b>Strengthen inclusive health systems that provide access to general health care and specialised services and programmes related to disability specific health requirements.</b>
	Promote equal access to health, care and welfare services, including sexual and reproductive health services.
<b>Conflict/ crisis, including climate change</b>	<b>Include persons with disabilities in climate action.</b>
	Include the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts.

Country	Commitments
<b>Inclusive livelihoods and social protection</b>	<b>Provide support to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors.</b>
	Work to increase labour market participation for persons with disabilities and ensure that efforts to promote decent work also address the needs of persons with disabilities

SWEDEN	A total of 14 commitments
<b>Overarching Commitment</b>	<b>Disaggregate data by disability, gender and age in data collection and statistics.</b>
	Implementation of the OECD DAC policy markers on gender equality and disability.
<b>Overarching Commitment</b>	<b>Promote accessible information and access to democratic processes and elections, and promote inclusion and diversity in political representation.</b>
	<p>Sida provides core support to The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). IFES works toward fostering partnerships among OPDs, civil society and governments. IFES strives to remove barriers which prohibit full participation of persons with disabilities as voters and candidates.</p> <p>When barriers are removed, voters with disabilities are afforded their full rights as citizens. IFES implements disability programmes in every region of the world and has an internal Knowledge Management Initiative Working Group on Disability Access and Inclusion to help grow the research, tools and technical expertise offered to partners.</p>
<b>Meaningful Engagement</b>	<b>Support partnerships with other social movements</b>
	<p>Sida provides support to the Swedish membership based organisation MyRight (through the organisation ForumCiv). MyRight works to ensure fulfillment of human rights of persons with disabilities globally, and that persons with disabilities can live independently, free from poverty, and in inclusive societies...</p> <p>(The rest of the Swedish commitments have been taken out since they only report on ongoing activities: "Sida provides support...")</p>

<b>Country</b>	<b>Commitments</b>
<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>A total of 4 commitments</b>
<b>Overarching commitment</b>	<b>Support multi-stakeholder coordination and efforts to strengthen the knowledge-base on achieving community-based support in different contexts.</b>
	Denmark will join the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) to support multi-stakeholder coordination and to strengthen the knowledgebase across the Danish MFA and in Danish development cooperation.
<b>Meaningful Engagement</b>	<b>Promote underrepresented groups and address intersectionality.</b>
	Denmark will work to provide a voice for people with disabilities as outlined in the strategy for development cooperation, the World We Share. Denmark will place a special focus on strengthening local leadership, including transfer of funds, ownership, and decision-making power to local partners through the close partnership with the Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD) and through the strategic partnerships with 18 Danish CSOs.  The strategic partnerships from 2022-2025 have a strong, increased focus on strengthening local leadership, with a special emphasis on participation for youth, girls and women, and groups in marginalised and vulnerable contexts.
<b>Meaningful Engagement</b>	<b>Support partnerships with other social movements.</b>
	Denmark will support coalition building between OPDs and mainstream organisations to promote leadership of persons with disabilities by facilitating a strategic dialogue between Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD) and CSOs that have a strategic partnership agreement with the MFA.
<b>Situations of Conflict and crisis, including a focus on climate change</b>	<b>Protect persons with disabilities from violence, exploitation and abuse</b>
	Denmark will work to combat gender-based violence in crises. As the global lead of Call to Action on Protection Against Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies 2021-2022, Denmark is committed to advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities in efforts against gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts.

Country	Commitments
<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>A total of 5 commitments</b>
<b>Overarching commitment</b>	<b>Support efforts to align existing legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), using the participatory approach of law reforms as required by the CRPD.</b>
	Finland renews its long-term commitment to the implementation of the CRPD and inclusive development Agenda 2030. Finland will provide and advocate for support to the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD).
<b>Overarching commitments</b>	<b>Reduce discrimination and stigmatisation by promoting attitudinal change in communities and across all development cooperation and addressing intersectionalities.</b>
	Finland will champion disability inclusive and gender transformative policies, strategies and programmes as well as accountability mechanisms in its policy influencing in the EU and with bilateral and multilateral partners. Promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, including the rights of women and girls with disabilities, is a long-standing priority in Finland's human rights-based foreign and security policy, human rights-based development policy as well as in humanitarian assistance.
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	<b>Strengthen education systems so that they are inclusive of all.</b>
	Finland will promote the right to education for persons with disabilities by supporting systemic transformation towards inclusive education systems in cooperation with partner countries and through international partnerships
<b>Situations of Conflict and crisis, including a focus on climate change</b>	<b>Make humanitarian action inclusive of persons with disabilities throughout the humanitarian programme cycle.</b>
	Disability inclusive humanitarian action is a priority in Finland's humanitarian policy. Finland will strengthen disability inclusive disaster risk reduction through improved representation and participation of organization of persons with disabilities, including organizations of women with disabilities
<b>Situations of Conflict and crisis, including a focus on climate change</b>	<b>Include persons with disabilities in the peace continuum.</b>
	Finland will promote rights and meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in every stage of the peace processes and peacebuilding. This means improving accessibility and including the views and needs as well as active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations all the way from conflict prevention to conflict resolution and in building sustainable peace.

Country	Commitments
<b>EUROPEAN UNION</b>	<b>A total of 6 commitments, classified as multilateral donor</b>
<b>Overarching commitment</b>	Support efforts to align existing legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), using the participatory approach of law reforms as required by the CRPD.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU will increasingly raise the rights of persons with disabilities in dialogues with its partner countries, support the implementation of UNCRPD and foster its ratification globally.</li> <li>• The Commission will continue to uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities and support their social inclusion in the framework of the EU's enlargement and neighbourhood policies. Through the policy and political dialogues with partner countries, the Commission will support reforms of public policies to make these more inclusive of persons with disabilities;</li> <li>• The Commission intend to make available EUR 5 million dedicated financial support to UN Partnership on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) from the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument thematic programme - Global Challenges;</li> </ul>
<b>Overarching commitments</b>	<b>Commit to tracking expenditure and efforts for inclusion in national accounting and development cooperation.</b>
	<p>The Commission will track disability inclusive investments for a targeted monitoring of EU funding by systematically using the OECD Development Assistance Committee Disability Marker.</p> <p>((The EU aims to a steady increase of the proportion of new international partnership actions that are disability inclusive, measured by OECD Development Assistance Committee disability marker))</p>
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU will strengthen inclusive education systems through its education sector programmes in its international partnership countries;</li> <li>• The Commission commits to support inclusive education in situations of crisis (i.e. conflict, disaster, epidemics, etc.);</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusive health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU will contribute to strengthen inclusive health systems (that enable access to both general health care and specialised services) including public health workforce capacities on disability inclusive service delivery through bilateral health programs in international partnership countries;</li> <li>• The EU will add inclusive health, CRPD principles and combatting discrimination as an integral part of its policy dialogue on Universal Health Coverage and Primary Health Care;</li> <li>• The EU will promote inclusive health care models and support integrated management of non-communicable diseases (NCD), disability and rehabilitation in primary health care as a key component of the multi-country Universal Health Coverage Partnership programme implemented by WHO;</li> </ul>



Country	Commitments
<b>Situations of Conflict and crisis, including a focus on climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commission commits to take into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities to ensure their full participation in humanitarian action, including in emergency preparedness activities. It also commits to support capacity building of its humanitarian partners on disability inclusion;</li> <li>• The Commission commits to collect data on beneficiaries of humanitarian action disaggregated by disability, and to report on disability inclusive humanitarian action with the OECD disability marker;</li> <li>• The Commission commits to continue raising awareness around the principles of non-discrimination and inclusiveness including the specific needs of persons with disabilities, in prevention, preparedness and response operations in the context of civil protection and commits to support Member States exchange of best practices in the area;</li> <li>• The Commission commits to take into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities to ensure their participation in the civil protection response, including in emergency prevention and preparedness activities, such as civil protection exercises.</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusive livelihoods and social protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU will further strengthen national social protection system building including persons with disabilities in its new generation of international partnership programmes in view of universal social protection for all;</li> <li>• The EU will encourage the formulation in its international partnership of best practice in standardisation of social protection schemes, including persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• The EU continues to organise regular structured dialogues during the annual UNCRPD Conference of State Parties, and in the context of other existing multilateral fora, and enhance cooperation with a focus on accessibility and employment.</li> </ul>

<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	<b>A total of 1 commitment</b>
<b>Overarching commitments</b>	<b>Reduce discrimination and stigmatisation by promoting attitudinal change in communities and across all development cooperation, and addressing intersectionalities.</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Switzerland develops an action plan 2022-2024 for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Switzerland's international cooperation.</li> <li>2. Switzerland successfully implements the 2022-2024 Action Plan.</li> <li>3. Switzerland commits to increased consultation and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and systems and in international cooperation.</li> </ol>



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