

Consulting Persons with Disabilities

Indicator 5



GUIDELINES

Guidelines on Consulting Persons with Disabilities

Indicator 5

The Guidelines were developed by the Disability Team in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in collaboration with members of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) focal point network, the International Disability Alliance and other civil society organizations.

These Guidelines are available in multiple accessible formats on the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy website: www.un.org/disabilitystrategy/resources

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Table of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRPD Committee	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDA	International Disability Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office

Introduction

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), launched by the Secretary-General in June 2019, provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations (UN). Central to the Strategy and its success is the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, which is a core element of the human rights-based approach and a precondition for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and achieving the 2030 Agenda. Article 4.3 of the CRPD requires close consultation with and active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

When persons with disabilities participate in decision-making processes, it provides strong support towards ensuring that policies, strategies, programmes and operations to be more effective in addressing barriers to inclusion and more relevant in supporting their full and equal participation. Persons with disabilities have first-hand experience of the challenges they face and know better what can be done to enhance their rights and wellbeing. In addition, active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations is a key part of shifting attitudes and dismantling stigma.

Both the UNDIS' entity accountability framework and the UNCT accountability scorecard on disability inclusion emphasize in their indicator 5 the importance and the cross-cutting nature of systematically consulting and actively involving persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. Consultation is a means towards achieving meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in key decision-making processes. The Secretary-General's first report on the implementation of the UNDIS (2020) clearly demonstrates that UN entities across the system need to take significant steps to ensure systematic consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.¹

¹ United Nations, Disability inclusion in the United Nations system, Report of the Secretary-General, A/75/314, 17 August 2020. <https://www.un.org/en/disabilitystrategy/sgreport>



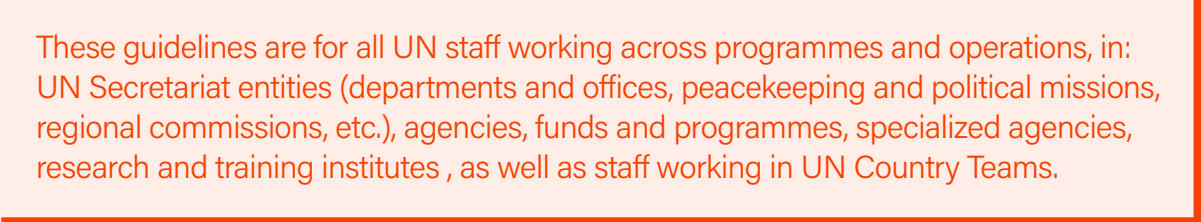
What are the Guidelines about?

The purpose of the Guidelines is to provide guidance on how to consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all disability-specific and general decision-making processes across the UN's work, as mandated in the UNDIS' entity accountability framework and UNCT accountability scorecard, in order to enhance the participation of persons with disabilities to reach programmatic and operational goals and leave no one behind. This document provides guidance on how to make participation of persons with disabilities meaningful.



Who are the Guidelines for?

The Guidelines are intended to assist all UN personnel, whether they are working in human rights, sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, peace and security, or operational functions to consult with and actively involve with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations across programmes and operations – from planning and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



These guidelines are for all UN staff working across programmes and operations, in: UN Secretariat entities (departments and offices, peacekeeping and political missions, regional commissions, etc.), agencies, funds and programmes, specialized agencies, research and training institutes , as well as staff working in UN Country Teams.



How to use the Guidelines?

The Guidelines can be used to support both the planning and implementation of consultations with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. For this purpose, the Guidelines are organized into four sections. Following the introduction, section I provides an overview of who are persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. Section II explains why and when to consult with them, in particular within the context of the implementation of the Strategy. Section III provides guidance on how to practically ensure meaningful consultations. Finally, section IV explores how to build partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). The Guidelines should be used as early as possible in the design process in order to ensure the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their organizations.



How were the Guidelines developed?

The Guidelines have been developed through a consultative process which involved UN entities, inter-agency networks, civil society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities. This is the first version of these guidelines, which will be updated in the future based on experience gained through the Strategy's implementation.

To know more about the Strategy, visit www.un.org/disabilitystrategy



Section 1. Persons with Disabilities and their Representative Organizations

What is disability and who are persons with disabilities?

Disability is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers.² Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.³

Countries may have their own definitions of disability and persons with disabilities, which may leave out certain groups, such as little persons, persons with albinism or persons with psychosocial disabilities. Whichever definition is used at country level, UN entities and UNCTs should be guided by the inclusive definition used in this document.

Understanding the diversity of the population of persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities represent 15% of the global population, approximately one billion people.⁴ They are a diverse, heterogeneous population, with multiple intersecting identities based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, religion, migration status, and socio-economic background. The diversity of the disability community is also manifested in the multiplicity of impairments and support requirements. Persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with deafblindness, persons with multiple disabilities, persons with albinism, little persons, among others, are less likely to be included in cross-disability work and are usually underrepresented in decision-making. Policy-makers often make decisions on behalf of them as if they do not have an opinion nor ability to decide.

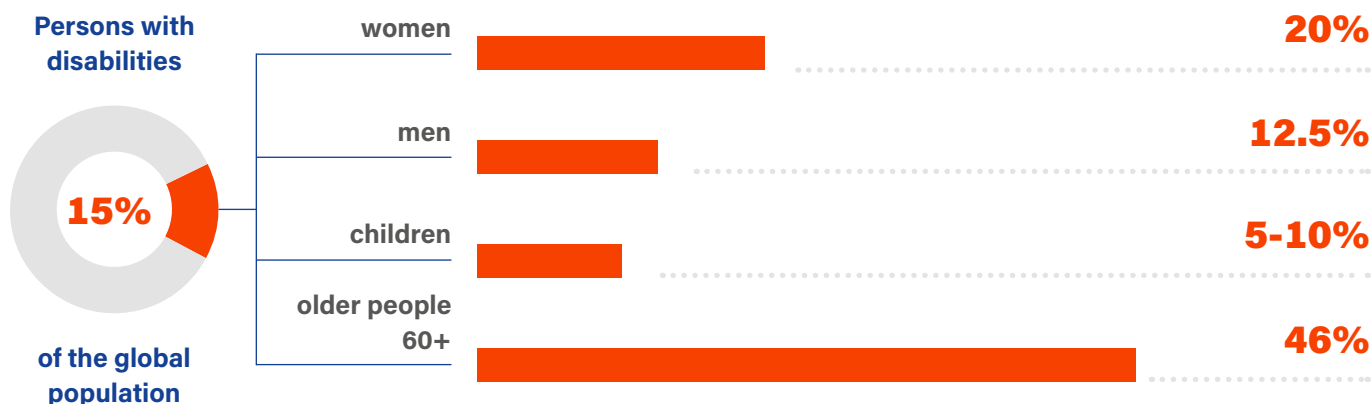
² CRPD, Preamble (e).

³ CRPD, Article 1. The CRPD refers to 'mental' impairment. The CRPD Committee now uses the term 'psychosocial' impairment.

⁴ WHO and World Bank, World Report on Disability (2011).

Figure 1

THE DIVERSITY OF THE POPULATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Women and girls with disabilities are a substantial group within the disability community; one in five women live with a disability globally compared with one in eight men, and there is ample evidence that suggest they experience higher rates of exclusion.⁵ The proportion of children with disabilities ranges between 5% and 10%, while an estimated 46% of older people aged 60 years and over live with a disability.⁶ In humanitarian and conflict areas, the prevalence of persons with disabilities can be higher; for example, in Syria about a quarter of the total population has a disability, but prevalence among internally displaced people rises to 36%.⁷

While all persons with disabilities face discrimination and social exclusion, the interplay of individual identities (such as disability, sex, race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic location, refugee status, ethnicity, class, etc.) and discrimination intersect to produce further inequalities and barriers. For example, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities, as well as indigenous persons with disabilities, experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that lead to extreme poverty, criminalisation and violence. The views of these groups are often not well represented in decision-making processes nor in civil society engagement. Organizations representing different marginalized groups often do not involve persons with disabilities, and may not always be inclusive of their demands. Persons with disabilities confined to institutions and/or denied legal capacity through guardianship systems are also particularly marginalized.

⁵ UN Women, Issue brief: Making the SDGs count for women and girls with disabilities, 2017, available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/6/issue-brief-making-the-sdgs-count-for-women-and-girls-with-disabilities>.

⁶ UNICEF, Children and Young People with Disabilities, Fact Sheet, May 2013; UN DESA, Ageing and Disability.

⁷ Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) Syria, IDP Report Series 2020, Disability Prevalence and Impact.

BOX 1. OPD ENGAGEMENT AT GLOBAL LEVEL

IDA is a network of eight global⁸ and six regional⁹ organizations of persons with disabilities, representing over 1,100 OPDs in 182 countries. Founded in 1999, IDA's unique composition allows it to act and advocate as the representative voice of persons with disabilities in the United Nations system to advance human rights, utilizing the UN CRPD to achieve common goals inclusive of persons with disabilities and a society that values diversity, respects equality and realizes the full potential of persons with disabilities to build a better world for all.

Among others, IDA established and co-chairs the UN Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities on the SDGs, is one of the co-chairs of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Disability Reference Group, one of the civil society representatives in the Policy Board of the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and has developed numerous collaborations with UN entities.

Organizations of persons with disabilities and their role in consultations

Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are non-governmental organizations led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities, who should compose a clear majority of their membership.¹⁰ OPDs play a critical role in representing the viewpoints of persons with disabilities. Article 4.3 of the CRPD calls on States Parties to engage with persons with disabilities through their representative organizations; OPDs accordingly serve as representative organizations and intermediary bodies between policymakers and individuals with disabilities.¹¹

⁸ IDA global members are:
DSI, IFHOH, IFSBH, Inclusion Interational, WBU, WFD, WFDB, WNUSP

⁹ IDA regional members are:
ADF, AOPD, ASEAN DF, EDF, PDF, RIADIS

¹⁰ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, CRPD/C/GC/7, para. 11.

¹¹ International Disability Alliance, Increasingly Consulted but not Yet Participating: IDA Global Survey on Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in Development Programmes and Policies, 2020, available at https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida_global_survey_complete_report_final.pdf

You can find a non-exhaustive list of global organizations of people with disabilities in Annex 3, most of which have members at country level. To know more about the role of OPDs, read the CRPD Committee's **General Comment No. 7 (2018)**

OPDs, like the disability community, are diverse

- 1** → OPDs may have a cross-disability focus representing diverse constituencies or impairment-specific groups (e.g., persons with deafblindness or persons with physical disabilities).
- 2** → OPDs can be organized to represent a particular constituency (e.g., women with disabilities or indigenous persons with disabilities), as well as specific groups within such constituencies (e.g., women with albinism).
- 3** → OPDs include self-advocacy organizations and peer support groups of persons with disabilities, often loosely and/or locally formed.
- 4** → OPDs also include organizations with family members and/or relatives of persons with intellectual disabilities, dementia and/or children with disabilities, when these groups want to be supported by their families as united networks or organizations.
- 5** → OPDs can be local, national, regional or international in scope; and operate as individual organizations, coalitions, or umbrella organizations made up of member organizations representing different disability constituencies.
- 6** → Umbrella OPDs are a good starting point to have access to a broader range of organizations within their membership, but participation of other individuals or OPDs which are not part of their membership or networks is necessary as they may not be representative of all constituencies.

OPDs are distinct from organizations “for” persons with disabilities that provide services or advocate on their behalf. UN entities and UNCTs must consult and create partnerships primarily with OPDs (see “[The role of other interest groups](#)”).

Whether or not an OPD has a legal status or national accreditation in a given country should not be a condition to consult or engage with it.

What to do when there are no organizations of persons with disabilities?

Sometimes there may not be an OPD to consult with in a certain setting or decision level (local, national, regional or international), or existing OPDs may not represent the diversity of persons with disabilities or the populations with whom UN entities and UNCTs are seeking to work with. This is often the case in countries where the disability movement is not yet fully developed, or within emergency and humanitarian contexts (e.g., a newly established refugee camp).

In such cases, UN entities and UNCTs should reach out directly to individuals and groups of persons with disabilities. The identification of such individuals and groups should be carried out through a collaborative process, working closely with national, regional and international OPDs, which may have individual members or contacts at the local level. CSOs, local governments, NHRIs and other relevant stakeholders can also contribute to it.

UN entities and UNCTs should strive to reach out to and support the consultation with and participation of persons with disabilities from marginalized and underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on each context and decision level. The identification of such groups should also be carried out collaboratively, leveraging particularly the expertise of national, regional and global OPDs on how to identify and reach out to under-represented groups.

The absence of OPDs in a certain setting or decision level may be considered as an opportunity to promote and support their development (see [Section 4](#)).

The role of other interest groups

While the primary target for engagement and partnership should be OPDs, there are other interest groups that may be important to engage with as part of the consultation process:

- **UN staff with disabilities or staff with dependents with disabilities:** They should be consulted on issues that directly affect them, particularly on matters involving career advancement, well-being, social benefits, health coverage, and other relevant organizational policies and procedures. Workplace groups, employee support groups, staff organizations, and staff unions that include persons with disabilities, as well as staff with dependents with disabilities, should also be consulted.
- **Organizations working on disability inclusion or service providers:** They can be effective allies as they provide services or advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities. Many work directly with OPDs, so they can be a good way of finding and making connections with OPDs. However, it is important to acknowledge that these organizations are distinct from OPDs and may have conflicting interests – some may prioritize their own interests as private entities or operate under a medical or charity model that undermines the principles and rights enshrined in the CRPD.¹² Consulting with organizations working on disability inclusion or service providers is not consulting with OPDs.

¹² The charity model of disability considers persons with disabilities as passive objects of charity or welfare, while the medical model considers disability as a medical problem that needs to be cured or treated. The CRPD signalled a 'paradigm shift' from these traditional approaches to disability to one based on human rights. See, OHCHR, Awareness-raising under article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, A/HRC/43/27, 2019.

Section 2. Why and When to Consult Persons with Disabilities

Why is it important to consult persons with disabilities and ensure their participation?

- **Participation is a fundamental human rights principle.** Participation is a fundamental principle of democratic societies and a requirement of the human rights-based approach to disability in moving away from charity and medical models. For far too long, persons with disabilities were excluded from consultations and participation and others spoke and acted on their behalf, reinforcing their marginalization. Their exclusion exacerbates barriers to programmes and impacts international development efforts to effectively reach persons with disabilities. When the perspectives of persons with disabilities are systemically excluded in UN decision-making processes, inclusive development efforts will not be effective. Article 4.3 of the CRPD calls for States to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in all decision-making processes concerning them, including CRPD and SDGs implementation.
- **Making the UN responsive to persons with disabilities.** Consultation and participation are rooted in the disability movement's motto, 'nothing about us without us.' Persons with disabilities are best placed to know what is needed to be fully included and the best courses of action to achieve it. Their participation ensures good governance and accountability, as well as greater relevance, efficiency and improved outcomes of interventions for them and their communities. While UN entities and UNCTs have begun to report under the Strategy on consulting persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of strategies and programmes needs to be strengthened.¹³ The experience of disability is not homogenous; therefore all voices need to be heard, particularly those from underrepresented groups.
- **Reaching better decisions for everyone.** Persons with disabilities represent an array of perspectives and experiences offering a unique contribution to decision-making. They can provide quality inputs to the work of UN entities and UNCTs in development, conflict and humanitarian contexts, based on their own experiences. By helping the UN system to make programmes and operations more accessible and inclusive, participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making is not just beneficial for persons with disabilities, but also for everyone.

¹³ International Disability Alliance, **Increasingly Consulted but not Yet Participating: IDA Global Survey on Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in Development Programmes and Policies**, 2020.

When to consult persons with disabilities?

UN entities and UNCTs should systematically consult and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organizations across all programmes and operations, as mandated by the UNDIS. For this, they should apply a “**twin-track approach**” to consultation: consulting persons with disabilities and OPDs about disability-specific issues, as well as mainstream issues which may affect persons with disabilities directly or indirectly.

It is difficult to imagine an area or sector which may not be of interest to the disability community, as persons with disabilities are represented across all population groups. Therefore, it is important to systematically consult with and involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all areas of work, not just on issues related to disability inclusion. Additional efforts should be made to include persons from underrepresented groups in such consultations and engagements.

In relation to the UNDIS itself, consultation should cover all four core areas of the Strategy – leadership, strategic planning and management; inclusiveness; programming; and organizational culture – and its different phases – planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

BOX 2. CONSULTING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBC/PBSO) have ensured that persons with disabilities have full access to PBC deliberations, and their concerns and views have been reflected in substantive materials and briefings and considered at PBC consultations. As a result, several PBC policy frameworks and outcome documents have called for special attention to the disproportionate and adverse impact on persons with disabilities in conflict-affected and crisis settings and the need to ensure their participation in response and recovery efforts to Build Back Better.

At the field level, a Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project in Sierra Leone helped create platforms at district and national levels through which women could be heard. For effective engagement of women with disabilities, the PBF provided targeted support, including medical assistive devices, travel allowances and accessible locations, which allowed women with disabilities to actively participate.

The **IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action** also provide further guidance on how to consult persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts.

Table 1

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO UNDIS

	Core area	Opportunities for consultation – entities and UNCTs
	Leadership, strategic planning and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings with entity or UNCT senior leaders, disability unit, focal point network or UNCT disability coordination mechanism <input type="checkbox"/> Development, review and update of strategic planning documents (strategic plan, CCA or Cooperation Framework) <input type="checkbox"/> Development, monitoring and accountability of disability-specific policy/strategy
	Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation on UNDIS implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Baseline and subsequent assessments on accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Development, monitoring and accountability of accessibility policy, strategy or plan <input type="checkbox"/> Development, monitoring and accountability of reasonable accommodation policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Development, review and update of procurement policies and guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Training on universal design, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation
	Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Development, review and update of guidance note on mainstreaming disability inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings to discuss mainstream and disability-specific programmes/projects <input type="checkbox"/> Development, review and update of evaluation guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Development, review and update of guidance on country programme documents <input type="checkbox"/> Development of joint programmes/initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity building initiatives on disability-inclusive data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency risk and needs assessments, preparedness and response planning processes
	Organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Development, review and update of employment policy/strategy/measures <input type="checkbox"/> Regular meetings with staff unions, staff with disabilities, and staff who have dependents with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Development of strategies or plans on issues related to staff engagement and satisfaction; work-life balance; enabling environment; equality, diversity and inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Development and review of staff surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Development, delivery and monitoring of learning and/or training opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Development of disability-inclusive communications plans and strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of both internal and external general communications

Section 3. Consultation in Practice

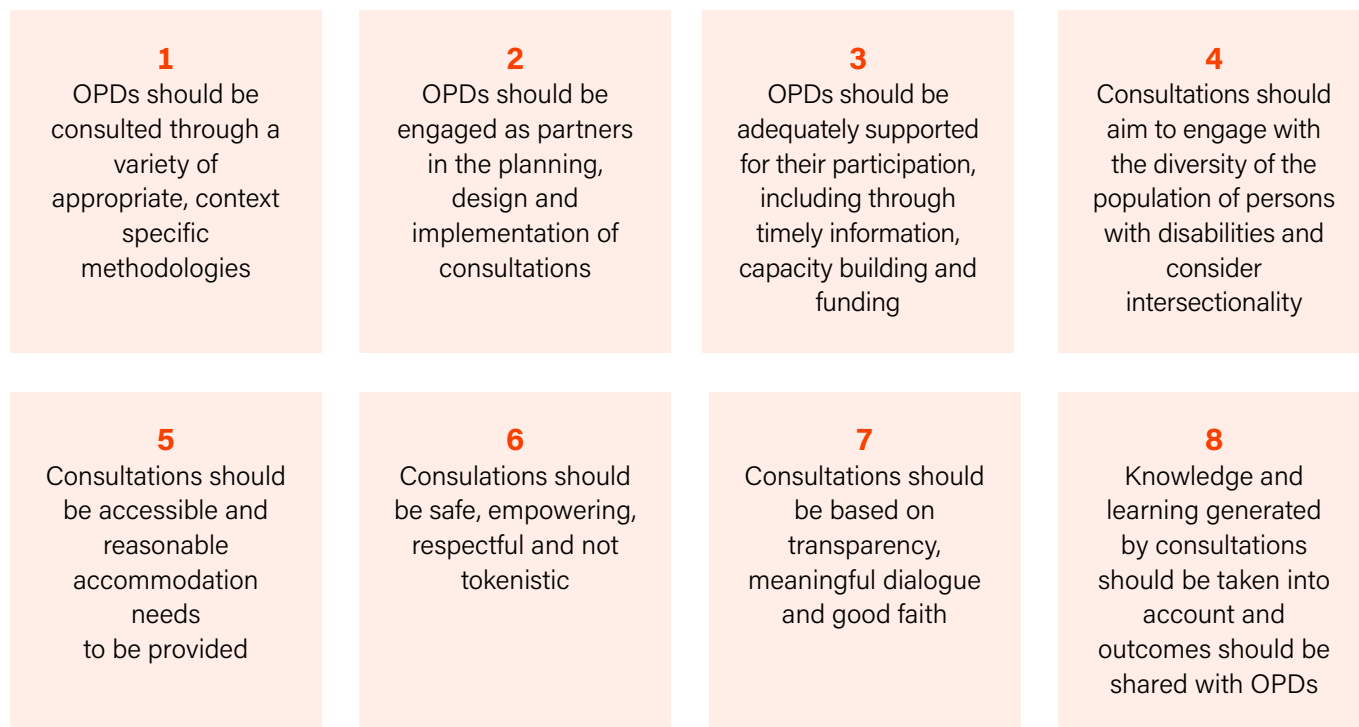
What is a meaningful consultation?

Meaningful consultation is about recognizing that engaging with persons with disabilities and their organizations is a two-way exchange, not just telling them what is being done. It means there is genuine interest in listening to OPDs, discussing their inputs and concerns, and being willing to act upon them. It is about building a dynamic relationship based on partnership and not considering consultation as a one-off event.

Figure 2

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION

Adapted from BEYOND CONSULTATIONS, A tool for meaningfully engaging with women in fragile and conflict-affected states, available at <https://beyondconsultations.org/>



How can OPDs be engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations?

A participatory approach to the planning, design and implementation of consultations can significantly contribute to ensure consultations and engagement are meaningful. There are many ways UN entities and UNCTs can achieve this:

- Implementing OPD-led consultations upon formalized partnerships with UN entities and UNCTs;
- Co-designing and co-organizing consultations between UN entities/ UNCTs and OPDs;
- Consulting and engaging with OPDs throughout the planning of consultations, including on how to make them more accessible and inclusive;
- Collaborating with OPDs to define the objectives, agenda and desired outcomes of consultations; and/or
- Seeking feedback from OPDs on the consultations held, including accessibility, to improve preparation and planning of future consultations.

When consultations are not on disability-specific matters, involving OPDs in the planning, design and implementation of consultations will facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs and help to make decision-making processes more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

UN entities/UNCTs are encouraged to co-organize and pool consultations as OPDs may not have the time nor the resources to meaningfully engage with various consultation processes at the same time.

BOX 3. DO NO HARM

When consultations are not appropriately planned or organized, they can have harmful consequences, leading to unexpected negative effects for participants (e.g., emotional impact, secondary trauma, travel risks, privacy concerns, government reprisals). It is important for consultations to be organized under the principle of “Do No Harm”. This means taking every precaution to ensure participants will not be put at risk or adversely impacted by the consultation (e.g., by maintaining confidentiality and anticipating and managing power dynamics). This also means having capacity to address issues that may arise, for instance access to psychosocial support in case of emotional distress or putting people in touch with resources and support services. Be mindful about language, gender-sensitivity, power dynamics and risks of violence; and inform participants that they should only disclose information that they feel comfortable with.

To know more about disability-inclusive language, read the **UN Disability-Inclusive Communications Guidelines**.

Steps for a successful consultation

When designing and organizing a consultation, it is important to ensure all conditions for a successful consultation are in place. This can be achieved by paying attention to the following elements:

1

Think ahead

Be sure your UN entity or UNCT has the awareness, skills, resources, time, budget and senior management commitment to carry out the consultation. Choose facilitators with adequate awareness and skills to carry out accessible and inclusive consultations.

2

Have clear objectives

Be clear about the objectives of the consultation and define the outcomes expected (e.g., collecting information, brainstorming, validating assumptions, feedback on documents). This will help you to define who you need to consult with and how.

3

Identify who you want to consult

Identifying the relevant OPDs will depend on the level (e.g., international, national, local); context (e.g., conflict or humanitarian settings), purpose (e.g., discussing strategic documents, brainstorming, mapping stakeholders), and subject of the consultation (e.g., gender equality, indigenous issues, climate change). OPD networks and other key stakeholders can be useful to identify relevant OPDs at regional and country levels, and using a range of methods to reach out to them, such as advertising, networking, mail lists, social media, etc.

4

Choose the right methodology

Different objectives and target audience may require different methods, such as open public meetings, workshops or focus groups, online meetings, feedback on documents, or surveys (see [table 2](#)). Combining different methods can help to achieve a meaningful consultation as some people may experience difficulties with some types of consultations; aim for horizontal knowledge sharing and be mindful of power imbalances. Consider preparatory workshops as some OPDs may not be familiar with the work of the UN or technical issues. Share materials ahead of time so people can be prepared.

5

Make consultations accessible for all

Accessibility is a prerequisite for participation. Without physical accessibility or accessible information and communication, many people with disabilities will not be able to participate. Different methods will require different accessibility requirements (see [table 2](#)). Various accessible communication formats may be needed to reach the diversity of the disability community (e.g., sign language, captioning, hearing assistive technology, accessible electronic documents, Braille, large print, plain language and/or easy-to-read). Reduce the need for producing documents in many accessible formats by making the original more accessible (e.g., plain language, accessible electronic version, large print). Examples or stories may also help to make information more accessible. Make sure any accessible formats you produce are available at the same time as the original document. Plan ahead to ensure all processes and documents are fully accessible and factor in the costs of accessibility requirements into your budget.

6 →

Provide reasonable accommodation

Some people with disabilities may require adjustments or accommodations to be able to participate in consultations on an equal basis with others (e.g., transport, support, breaks, facilitators). Even if there is sign language interpretation, some people may need to have their own interpreter because not all Deaf people use the same sign language. They should be provided by the UN entity or UNCT whenever needed, and only denied when they impose a disproportionate or undue burden (e.g., when it is impracticable or prohibitively expensive).¹⁴ Factor in the costs of reasonable accommodation into your budget.

7 →

Make sure to factor extra time

Time is an important variable for both planning and implementation of meaningful consultations. For example, it may take more time to identify representatives from particularly marginalized constituencies. People with different support requirements may also need more time than others to participate. Ensure adequate discussion time and distribute time fairly to allow the intervention of all participants, including persons from underrepresented groups.

8 →

Provide feedback and take action

The viewpoints of OPDs expressed in the consultation should be given due weight and be reflected in the decisions adopted. Provide clear and timely feedback to participants on what has been achieved, resolved and/or decided. Plan how to share the information in formats and spaces that persons with disabilities can access (e.g., self-advocacy organizations, local meetings, or webinars). Information that is only shared on a website can be hard to find.

9 →

Learn from experience

Learning is an important step for the continuous improvement of consultation processes. Ask OPDs for their feedback on how consultations can be improved. Keeping records and statistics on the participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs will help you to assess the diversity and representativeness of consultations.

¹⁴ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination, CRPD/C/GC/6, paras. 23-27.

BOX 4. COMBINING CONSULTATION METHODS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

The **IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action** are the first humanitarian guidelines to be developed with and by persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in association with traditional humanitarian stakeholders.

The IASC Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action led the drafting of these guidelines through a comprehensive global and regional multi-stakeholder consultation process. The Task Team was coordinated through a unique tri-partite co-chairing arrangement which included the International Disability Alliance, ensuring that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations provided leadership and fully participated in the development of the guidelines from the outset. The Task Team membership included representatives from UN entities, humanitarian and development organizations, governments and organizations of persons with disabilities. The extensive consultative process included various in-person and online consultations and workshops, where more than 600 participants and their organizations from different regions took an active part.

Table 2

CHECKLIST OF ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER FOR TYPE OF CONSULTATION

In-person open public meetings

When is it appropriate?	When aiming at giving information and having a discussion and feedback from a broad range of people. It helps to ensure transparency and public accountability. Diverse and good attendance is key for success.
How to plan the consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow the “Steps for a Successful Consultation” described in Section 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure OPDs are engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations. <input type="checkbox"/> Brief venue staff to make sure they are respectful. Awareness training led by persons with disabilities can also be useful.
How to contact participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Disseminate public invitations and communication materials in accessible formats (e.g., plain language, accessible electronic versions). If online registration is required, ensure that it is accessible. <input type="checkbox"/> Proactively contact OPDs directly, even if the consultation is not disability-specific. Send invitations as far in advance as possible so people can make arrangements to attend and prepare properly. <input type="checkbox"/> Consult with international and regional OPDs, as well as CSOs, governments, NHRIs and other relevant stakeholders to identify local OPDs or groups.

How to contact participants?

- Work with OPDs to reach out and support the participation of persons with disabilities from underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on the context.
- Ensure that the objectives of the meeting are clear and explain the role of participants in the consultation in advance. Pre-meetings, webinars or short videos can help.
- Share a map of the venue with clear information about where sessions will take place.

What are the accessibility considerations?

- Select a physically accessible location and venue. Check that the entrance is accessible to wheelchair users and that the meeting room is accessible. Check that toilet facilities, breakout rooms and coffee break areas and tables are accessible. If no venue is fully accessible, make the necessary modifications and accommodations.
- Reserve parking places for wheelchair users near the venue.
- Arrange the meeting room so that it is fully accessible and that everyone can use the microphone or access the podium for speaking.
- Share meeting materials, such as guidance notes, background papers, presentations and videos, as far in advance as possible.
- Ensure information and materials disseminated both prior to and during the meeting available in accessible formats such as accessible electronic versions, Braille, large print, plain language, and/or easy-to-read.
- Ensure the provision of sign language interpretation and live captioning. Persons with deafblindness may need assistance of guides/interpreters.
- Brief facilitators, presenters and interpreters in advance on how to make the process accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- Some people may require quiet rooms to go to recover or take a break.

How to schedule a consultation?

- Time meetings to suit people's schedules, including people who work and those who have family responsibilities.
- Where possible, avoid early morning starts as some persons with disabilities require more time to get ready in the morning and travel to the meeting.
- Consider having regular breaks during consultation sessions (including for support persons/interpreters) and adhere to times, as many people need to plan in advance and coordinate with support persons.
- If the meeting offers refreshments or meals, ensure that they are provided in accessible venues and take into account the dietary requirements of participants.
- If the meeting runs over lunch, consider planning for a longer lunch break.

How to provide reasonable accommodation and support?

- Ask people what their accessibility and reasonable accommodation requirements are in advance, so that they can be provided accordingly.
- Some people may need accessible transport support to be arranged and/or to be compensated for travel expenses due to the lack or limited availability of affordable accessible transport.
- Some people may require support from a personal assistant, facilitator, sign language interpreter, tactile interpreter, or note taker to support them to participate in the consultation. The cost of these services may need to be budgeted.

How to facilitate an inclusive consultation?

- Make time in the beginning of the meeting to explain the applicable “housekeeping rules”, to ensure everyone is familiar with the agenda, accessibility measures and other practical information.
- Use disability-inclusive language (e.g., person-first language) and avoid negative, ableist, ageist or victimizing language.¹⁵
- Use gender-inclusive language and materials and avoid gender stereotypes.
- Avoid jargon, technical language and acronyms to be inclusive of all attendees.
- Address people with disabilities in the same way as you talk to everyone else. Speak directly to a person with disability and not their personal assistant, companion or interpreter.
- Ask people to state their name each time they speak so blind and persons with deafblindness can know who is speaking.
- Ensure pauses in facilitation to allow for interpretation or for persons with intellectual disabilities who may need more time to process information and respond to questions.
- Ask first when offering assistance to a person with disability, wait until your offer is accepted before you help and follow the instructions of the person.
- When presenting slides, describe what is on the slide for blind persons, persons with deafblindness or persons with low vision.
- If the meeting includes a panel discussion or roundtable, strive for gender balance and representation of a diversity of disability constituencies.

¹⁵ See Disability-Inclusive Language Guidelines (2020). At: <https://www.ungeneva.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Disability-Inclusive-Language-Guidelines.pdf>

Useful resources

UN ESCAP, **Disability Inclusive Meetings. An Operational Guide**, 2015.

European Disability Forum, **EDF Guide for Accessible Meetings for All**.

Irish National Disability Authority, **Ask Me – Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities**, 2002.

Down Syndrome **International and Inclusion International, International Guidelines for Inclusive Participation**, 2021.

In-person workshops or focus groups

When is it appropriate?

When aiming at discussing a subject with a well-defined or targeted group of stakeholders. They can also facilitate the participation of persons who are not comfortable in large groups or used to speaking in public. When discussing topics that are difficult, such as gender-based violence, focus groups can create a safe space for people to discuss issues more openly.

While workshops and focus groups allow for conversations and to explore issues in more depth, if the group is too small, some viewpoints may be missing.

How to plan the consultation?

- Follow the “**Steps for a Successful Consultation**” described in Section 3.
- Ensure OPDs are engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations.
- Consider compensation for attendance, depending on the duration and nature of the event.

How to contact participants?

- Consult with international, regional, national and local OPDs, as well as CSOs, governments, NHRIs and other relevant stakeholders to ensure balanced and equitable representation.
- Ensure diversity and gender balance among participants, considering different age groups, disability constituencies and geographic representation.
- Work with OPDs to reach out to and support the participation of persons with disabilities from underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on the context.
- Send invitations in advance and in accessible formats (e.g., plain language, accessible electronic versions). Provide alternatives to online registration in case people cannot access technology (e.g., phone registration).
- Provide clear information about the event in advance that is not too long or complicated. In the case of focus groups, provide the questions that will be discussed to participants in advance so people can prepare properly. Include how the information will be used after the focus group.
- Offer pre-meetings to give people a chance to ask questions and meet people in advance.

What are the accessibility considerations?

- Follow the same accessibility requirements as for open public meetings.
- Since the venue is likely to be smaller, make sure there is enough space to ensure accessibility conditions and the participation of interpreters, guides and other forms of assistance.

How to schedule a consultation?

- If the group is small, consult with participants in advance on when would be the best time to schedule the consultation.
- Consider having regular breaks during consultation sessions and adhere to times, as many people may need to plan in advance.

How to provide reasonable accommodation and support

- Allow people to express what their support requirements are in advance, so accommodations can be provided accordingly.
- Consider transport support and/or per diems.
- Consider food and refreshments to be provided during the meeting for all participants, supporters and interpreters.
- Consider meeting start and end times and frequency and length of breaks.

How to facilitate an inclusive consultation?

- Follow the same guidelines as for open public meetings.
- Consider having a person with disability as a facilitator as it may help to make people comfortable.
- Consider between eight and fifteen participants as an optimum size to allow for effective group participation.
- Consider activities and small group work, as this gives people space to ask questions and share their ideas. Activities involving stories, art or role-plays can be helpful.
- Plan activities to be inclusive of all participants, keeping in mind different ages, impairments and support requirements. For example, if you assign small groups, ensure that sign language interpreters are grouped with the people they are providing interpretation for. If people need to move around the room in order to participate, ensure the floor plan is open and there is ample room for persons with physical disabilities to move around.
- Keep in mind that a small number of people may dominate the meeting if not properly facilitated.
- Separating men and women may be needed on some occasions based on the topic being discussed.
- Pay attention to the role of support persons. Support persons should be respectful and should not take part in the meeting themselves. They may speak if the person they are supporting asks them to clarify a point or explain something. They may also ask speakers to explain things more clearly or to slow down or pause.

Useful resources

IASC, [Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#), 2019.

CBM, [Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit](#), 2017.

Five Council, [An introduction to... Consultation methods](#), 2003.

Down Syndrome [International and Inclusion International, International Guidelines for Inclusive Participation](#), 2021.

Online consultations and meetings

When is it appropriate?

When aiming to engage with or seek feedback from persons with disabilities and OPDs through online platforms. Online consultations and meetings can help to organise consultations with OPDs based in different countries or regions and can provide greater interactivity and engagement if used in conjunction with social media tools. However, it may not be accessible to all persons with disabilities as many face significant barriers in accessing online services – from internet connectivity to access to computers or electricity in remote regions across the world.

How to plan the consultation?

- Follow the “[Steps for a Successful Consultation](#)” described in Section 3.
- Ensure OPDs are engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations.

How to contact participants?

- Disseminate invitations and communication materials in accessible formats (e.g., plain language, accessible electronic versions). If online registration is required, ensure that it is accessible.
- Proactively contact OPDs directly, even if the consultation is not disability specific. Disseminate invitations through disability mailing lists and online groups (e.g., the [IDA CRPD Forum listserv](#)).
- Consult with international and regional OPDs, as well as CSOs, governments, NHRIs and other relevant stakeholders to identify relevant OPDs.
- Reach out to and support the participation of persons with disabilities from underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on the context.

What are the accessibility considerations?

- Identify and select an accessible conferencing platform, including through consulting with OPDs to find out which platform they prefer, and schedule testing ahead of the event to ensure that the accessibility features function appropriately.
- Ensure all meeting and background documents are circulated in advance of the meeting in accessible formats (e.g., accessible electronic versions, Braille, large print, plain language, and/or easy-to-read).
- Ensure sign language interpretation and live captioning. If the consultation is across multiple countries, use International Sign interpreters.
- Ensure language interpretation and translation is also provided to those who require it.
- Check and test that the communication tools are accessible before the consultation.
- Share the real time text transcript after the meeting to all participants.

How to schedule a consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider different time zones when planning an online consultation meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> If the group is small, consult with participants in advance on when would be the best time to schedule the consultation. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider holding two consultations at different times to accommodate time zones.
How to provide reasonable accommodation and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allow people to indicate accommodation requirements for remote participation at registration for the meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that facilitators and users can operate the tools before the meeting. Assign a special online moderator and technical support for the meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide meeting materials, participant names, meeting agenda and any other pertinent information to participants, CART providers, sign language interpreters and language interpreters in advance.
How to facilitate an inclusive consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make time at the beginning of the meeting to make sure everybody is familiar with the available accessibility features and “housekeeping rules”. If you choose to record the meeting, seek participants’ approval ahead of time, and ensure confidentiality is respected. <input type="checkbox"/> Use disability-inclusive language (e.g., person-first language) and avoid negative, ableist or victimizing language. <input type="checkbox"/> Use gender-inclusive language and materials and avoid gender stereotypes. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid jargon and technical language to be inclusive of all attendees. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask people to state their name each time they speak. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide different options to participants to communicate any issues faced during the meeting, e.g., through chat, email, or speaking. <input type="checkbox"/> Use the chat feature with caution, as it can be distracting for some people. If chat comments are allowed, read the comments aloud as part of the meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Share materials such as presentations in advance and always describe what is on the screen. <input type="checkbox"/> Mute participants who are not speaking to reduce background noise.

Useful resources

- European Disability Forum, **Preparing and moderating online meetings.**
- Rooted in Rights, **How to Make Your Virtual Meetings and Events Accessible to the Disability Community.**
- Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, **Accessibility resources.**
- Down Syndrome International and Inclusion International, **International Guidelines for Inclusive Participation, 2021.**
- Disability Rights Fund/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund, **Inclusion 101: The How-To of Inclusive and Accessible Communications, 2020.**

Providing feedback on documents

When is it appropriate?

When aiming to get written inputs and feedback on documents or reports. It is relatively easy to organise, but it requires a strong commitment from participants to review and respond.

Before sharing a document, assess whether it contains sensitive information that can place the UN, its operations, and its personnel at risk. Follow the guidelines of the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on information sensitivity, classification and handling ([ST/ SGB/2007/6](#)).

How to plan the consultation?

- Follow the “[Steps for a Successful Consultation](#)” described in Section 3.
- Ensure OPDs are engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations.
- Consider compensation for the review, depending on the length and complexity of the document.

How to contact participants?

- Consult with relevant stakeholders, including OPDs, government officials, NHRIs, and CSOs to ensure you are including everyone you should be.
- Work with OPDs to reach out to and support the participation of persons with disabilities from underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on the context.
- Consider sending wider invitations to comment on documents through disability mailing lists and online groups (e.g., the [IDA CRPD Forum listserv](#)).

What are the accessibility considerations?

- Ensure documents and materials are provided in accessible formats (e.g., plain language, accessible electronic version).
- Ensure that all images and logos in documents contain alternative text (Alt text) describing the image content.
- Send documents in both accessible PDF files and Microsoft word, as some people may prefer different formats. If using online collaborative tools (e.g., Google Docs), also send a Word version of the document to ensure access to more accessibility features.
- Consider developing plain language and easy-to-read versions of the documents, so people who have difficulty reading and understanding written information can also provide feedback.

How to schedule a consultation?

- State clearly the date by which you will need to receive comments.
- Set realistic deadlines for when people need to provide comments and feedback, keeping in mind the length and complexity of content as well as the need for some organizations to carry out internal consultations, e.g., within membership organizations.

How to provide reasonable accommodation and support?

- Ask people what their accessibility and accommodation requirements are, including the need for extended deadlines.
- Consider allowing participants to provide oral feedback or send audio or video recordings rather than written comments.
- Allow people to reach out with clarification questions throughout the process.

How to facilitate an inclusive consultation?

- Provide an overview of the materials you want reviewed and why you are collecting this feedback so that participants understand the process. Make it clear what the purpose of the document is and how inputs will be incorporated.
- Provide any background information that would be helpful to participants who are not familiar with UN documents and reports.
- State clearly how comments should be made but remain flexible.
- Indicate a contact email and/or phone number to clarify any details and answer queries.
- Check in with participants to provide support and answer queries as needed.

Useful resources

Bridging the Gap, **Inclusive and accessible communication guidelines.**

Change, **How to make information accessible, A guide to producing easy read documents.**

UN Archives and Records Management Section, **Understanding Information Sensitivity.**

Down Syndrome International and Inclusion International, **International Guidelines for Inclusive Participation, 2021.**

Surveys and forms

When is it appropriate?

When looking for gathering the views of a sample of people, such as OPD representatives, persons with disabilities, staff with and without disabilities, and staff with dependants with disabilities. They can be done online, by email or face-to-face, and reach large numbers of people.

How to plan the consultation?

- Follow the “**Steps for a Successful Consultation**” described in Section 3.
- Ensure OPDs are engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations.

How to contact participants?

- Consult with relevant stakeholders, including OPDs, government officials, NHRIs, CSOs and staff unions to ensure you are including everyone you should be.
- Work with OPDs to reach out to and support the participation of persons with disabilities from underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on the context.
- Consider an option to self-identify as staff with disabilities or with dependents with disabilities in general staff surveys and forms.

What are the accessibility considerations?

- Identify and select an accessible platform, including through consulting with OPDs, and ensure all documents are in accessible formats.
- Be mindful of accessibility requirements when using rankings, multiple choices or tables. Avoid tabular formats for responses as they are complex for people using screenreaders.
- Ensure questions, multiple choice answers and text describing tables use clear and simple language so that it is understandable to many people. Sometimes open-ended questions without clear examples are difficult.
- Ensure that all images and logos in surveys and forms contain alternatives text (Alt text) describing the image content.
- Provide a clear structure to the questionnaire so respondents can better understand and navigate the survey.
- Ask both an OPD and the IT department to test the form or survey for accessibility. This will also enable IT specialists to build their knowledge and experience on accessibility. Conduct the test using screen readers or accessibility software that are commonly used in the country.

How to schedule a consultation?

- Indicate the date by which people need to complete the survey or form, setting realistic deadlines. Indicate the estimated time required for filling the survey.
- Indicate the objective of the survey and how the results will be used when inviting people to participate.

How to provide reasonable accommodation and support

- Include an option for people to share their accessibility and accommodation requirements, including the need for extended deadlines.
- Consider allowing participants to provide oral feedback or send audio or video recordings rather than written answers.
- Allow people to reach out with clarification questions throughout the process.

How to facilitate an inclusive consultation?

- Use the **Washington Group Short Set on Functioning** to identify persons with disabilities among a wider population of respondents.
- Include other demographic questions (e.g., sex, age) to ensure that results can be disaggregated.
- State how many questions there are and how to provide answers (for example, if some questions require written responses and some questions are multiple choice).
- Keep questions and sentences short and simple. Surveys should ideally be in plain language, and this should be considered while developing or translating a survey in any language. Use disability-inclusive language and avoid jargon and technical language.
- Allow people to save and return to the survey, especially if it is long.
- Indicate a contact email to clarify any details and answer queries.

Useful resources

University of California, [Guidelines for accessible surveys and forms](#).

SurveyGizmo, [A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating More Accessible Surveys](#).

Consulting children and young people with disabilities

When is it appropriate?	<p>When aiming at collecting the viewpoints of children and young people with disabilities, for example, in relation to any policy or programme which has the potential to impact their lives. Targeted consultations with children and young people with disabilities as well as inclusive opportunities for participation alongside other children can be effective for this.</p>
How to plan the consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the “Steps for a Successful Consultation” described in Section 3.<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure OPDs are engaged in the planning, design and implementation of consultations.
How to contact participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Involve both girls and boys and young people with disabilities with a diverse range of experiences.<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with relevant stakeholders such as OPDs, CSOs, children’s rights organizations, parents’ organizations, schools, government and NHRIs, to identify potential participants.<input type="checkbox"/> Work with OPDs to reach out to and support the participation of children with disabilities from underrepresented groups, which may vary depending on the context.<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure participation is voluntary. In most cases, you will need consent from the child’s caregiver/guardian, in addition to the child’s consent.<input type="checkbox"/> Indicate the objective of the consultation and how the results will be used when inviting people to participate.
What are the accessibility considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the same accessibility requirements as for open public meetings.<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the venue and spaces are child friendly and safe with proper safeguarding procedures in place.
How to schedule a consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Time meetings to not interfere with school schedules or caregivers’ responsibilities.<input type="checkbox"/> If the group is small, consult with them in advance on when would be the best time to schedule the consultation.<input type="checkbox"/> Factor in time to help the children get to know each other and feel comfortable.<input type="checkbox"/> Consider keeping the consultation session shorter and having regular breaks with child-friendly activities and adhere to times as many people need to plan in advance.
How to provide reasonable accommodation and support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ask the child if they require the assistance of a caregiver or support person during the consultation.<input type="checkbox"/> Ask children and their caregivers what their accessibility and accommodation requirements are in advance.

How to facilitate an inclusive consultation?

- Treat children with disabilities in the same way as all children.
- Give clear instructions that explain the purpose of the consultation and how the activities will be carried out at the beginning of the meeting.
- Use a range of age-appropriate approaches and methods flexibly and creatively, ensuring accessibility (e.g., play, drawing, talking mats, pictures).
- Give children plenty of time to both understand what is being talked about and to formulate their responses.
- Recognise that children with different impairments will access information in different ways so planning should be flexible and adaptable to different learning requirements.
- Allow participants to ask questions during the consultation.

Useful resources

UNICEF, **TAKE US SERIOUSLY! Engaging Children with Disabilities** Plan International, **Guidelines for Consulting with Children & Young People with Disabilities.**

Section 4. Beyond Consultation: Building Partnerships

Towards a substantive and regular engagement for UNDIS implementation

The principle of participation goes beyond consultation and requires substantive and regular engagement and collaboration in decision-making. For this reason, UN entities and UNCTs should explore, in close consultation with OPDs, establishing appropriate and transparent mechanisms and procedures for dialogue and partnership with OPDs.¹⁶ This will help to ensure greater participation of OPDs at different stages of the UNDIS implementation cycle, in all areas of operations and programming, and throughout all pillars of the Organization's work. This could be done through formal partnerships, but also through the participation of OPDs in project steering committees and governance bodies.

As with consultation, partnerships should be meaningful. A meaningful partnership is more than just a box-ticking exercise; it demands a joint venture for developing, implementing, monitoring and/or evaluating programmes, projects, or actions. It means acknowledging power imbalances and discussing objectives, opportunities and challenges openly and transparently, in a way that benefits both parties. More information about UN operations and programming is needed so that OPDs can be more familiar and better engage with UN entities and UNCTs.

Establishing partnerships with OPDs

When establishing partnerships with OPDs, UN entities and UNCTs should pay attention to the following elements:

- 1 Nature of partnership.** Entities may enter informal partnerships with OPDs, for example, by developing a regular ongoing working relationship; or making formal agreements, for example by establishing compacts or memoranda of understanding that commit both parties to allocate resources to achieve agreed objectives (see [Annex 4](#)).

¹⁶ UNIDIS' entity accountability framework, Indicator 5.c.iii; and UNCT Accountability Scorecard on Disability Inclusion, Indicator 5.c.iv.

- 2 Level.** Partnerships may be organised at local, national, regional or international level, depending on the level of the strategy, programme or operation.
- 3 Scope.** Partnerships may be limited to certain areas (e.g., strategic planning, capacity building, data collection or accessibility) or be more comprehensive (e.g., by creating joint programming between the parties).
- 4 Representation.** As with consultation, partnerships with OPDs should take into account the diversity of the population of persons with disabilities, where relevant. UN entities and UNCTs can encourage umbrella and cross-disability OPDs to be more diverse and representative, e.g., by prioritizing engagement with OPDs that are diverse and working with underrepresented groups.
- 5 Flexibility.** UN entities and UNCTs need some degree of flexibility to accommodate the breadth of challenges that OPDs may face to enter an informal or formal partnership. For example, some organizations may not be registered, be under-staffed or underfunded, or require a fiscal sponsor to receive funds.

Partnerships should not come at the expense of consultation and engagement with other OPDs, including more marginalized or informal groups.

Supporting the disability community

Regardless of the configuration of the partnerships, it is essential that UN entities and UNCTs continue to support the creation, organizational development and long-term sustainability of OPDs. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- through direct funding;
- capacity building and training, as well as organizational development;
- brokering relationships with the government and the UN,
- partnerships and joint projects between OPDs and UN entities and UNCTs;
- greater involvement of OPDs in UN decision-making mechanisms;
- joint awareness-raising activities; and
- inclusive and participatory approaches.

There is also a need for more accessible information about the UN and their work so that OPDs can be more familiar and better engage in UN decision-making mechanisms.

BOX 5. CASE EXAMPLES ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

In December 2020, a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was concluded between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) on mutual capacity-building and engagement to enhance inclusion and participation of forcibly displaced persons with disabilities.** The MoU establishes a strategic and operational partnership between UNHCR and IDA to strengthen cooperation between OPDs and UNHCR at global and country levels, enhance visibility and respect for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, refugees returning home (returnees), internally displaced and stateless persons with disabilities and commits to carrying out all activities in accordance with the principles and accountability mechanisms provided in the CRPD and UNDIS. The MoU calls for collaboration across joint capacity building efforts, humanitarian action frameworks and processes (including the Global Compact on Refugees), advocacy for political commitments in line with the CRPD and in the implementation of UNHCR's commitments under UNDIS, including by promoting the meaningful participation of IDA and its member organizations across all UNDIS pillars. The MoU is accompanied by a Results and Monitoring Framework with examples of joint activities and expected results.

In December 2020, **Principles of Engagement were signed between the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) and the United Nations in the Pacific to strengthen their strategic partnership on disability-inclusive development in the Pacific.** Recognising the principles of the CRPD and other relevant international treaties, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Incheon Strategy and the UNDIS as the foundations of the Principles of Engagement, the parties commit to join efforts to exchange expertise to actively promote and uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and their families through meaningful cooperation between OPDs and the UN in the Pacific, toward enhanced visibility and respect for the rights of persons with disabilities in the promotion of a disability-inclusive and sustainable development of Pacific Island countries.

Glossary

Accessibility

Accessibility is a precondition for the inclusion of persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. Without access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication, including ICTs, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, persons with disabilities would not have equal opportunities for participation in their respective societies.

Disability inclusion

The term 'disability inclusion' refers to the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights into the work of the United Nations, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the CRPD. This requires the development and implementation of a consistent and systematic approach to disability inclusion in all areas of operations and programming, internally and externally.

Intersectionality

Persons with disabilities are not a homogenous group and due consideration should be given to intersectionality— the intersection of disability together with other factors, for example gender, age, or ethnicity, which may heighten discrimination and increase the barriers to full participation and meaningful inclusion in society.

Reasonable accommodation

In the context of disability inclusion, 'reasonable accommodation' is a necessary and appropriate modification or adjustment, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, that enables persons with disabilities to exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. It is relevant to all contexts and may or may not have cost implications.


Twin-track approach

Adoption of a twin-track approach is a core element of any strategy that seeks to mainstream disability inclusion successfully. The approach combines (1) the inclusion of persons with disabilities in an entity or UNCT's general work, for example in policies, programmes, communications, etc; with (2) targeted interventions specifically for persons with disabilities.

Universal design

'Universal design' means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation, reconfiguration or specialized design.

UNDIS entity accountability framework with annotation on which consultation is most appropriate for each indicator

Core area	Indicator	Opportunities for consultation	Suggested methods
 <p>Leadership, strategic planning and management</p>	Leadership	Making disability inclusion more visible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Meetings with senior leaders
		Assessments and reviews of the performance of senior leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — OPD and/or staff surveys — Focus groups
		Review of accountability mechanisms for senior leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Feedback on documents — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings
	Strategic planning	Development, review and update of strategic planning documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
		Development of system to track resource allocation to disability inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops or focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Disability-specific policy/strategy	Development, review and update of disability-specific policy/strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
		Monitoring and evaluation of disability-specific policy/strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops or focus groups — Online consultation meetings
		Development of action plans for implementing the policy/ strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Institutional set up	Establishment and functioning of disability unit/focal point network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Regular meetings with disability unit/focal point network — Online consultation meetings



Inclusiveness

Consultation with persons with disabilities	Implementation, monitoring and accountability of guidelines for consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Consultation on UNDIS implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings
Accessibility	Development and review of baseline assessment on accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys
	Development and review of accessibility policy, strategy or plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Monitoring, accountability and evaluation of accessibility policy, strategy or plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Meetings with accessibility focal points — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings
Accessibility of conferences and events	Baseline assessment and periodic review of accessibility and accommodations for conferences and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys
	Development and review of policies and guidelines on accessibility of conference services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
Reasonable accommodation	Development of reasonable accommodation policy/strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Monitoring and accountability of reasonable accommodation policy/strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys
	Assessment of the quality of the reasonable accommodation provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys



Programming

Procurement

Development, review and update of procurement policies and documents

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- Feedback on documents
- Meeting with procurement officers

Assessment of the accessibility of procurement procedures

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD and/or staff surveys
- Meeting with procurement officers

Training of procurement officers on universal design, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation

- Feedback on content and materials
- Online consultation meeting
- Invitation to OPDs to deliver training

Programmes and projects

Development, review and update of guidance note on mainstreaming disability inclusion

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- Feedback on documents

Implementation of mainstream and disability-specific programmes/projects

- Meetings to discuss programmes/projects
- Focus groups
- OPD surveys

Evaluation

Development, review and update of evaluation guidelines

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD and/or staff surveys
- Feedback on documents

Evaluation processes and meta-reviews

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD and/or staff surveys
- Meeting with evaluation teams

Country programme documents

Development, review and update of guidance on country programme documents

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- Feedback on documents

Identifying and addressing barriers faced by persons with disabilities

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD surveys

Documenting and sharing good practices on disability inclusion

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD surveys



Organizational culture

Joint initiatives

Development of joint programme/ initiatives

- Meetings with OPDs
- Focus groups
- OPD surveys
- Feedback on documents
- Partnerships

Inter-agency coordination mechanisms

- Meetings with OPDs
- Focus groups

Employment

Development, review and update of employment policy, strategy, or measures

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD and/or staff surveys
- Feedback on documents

Outreach measures to attract candidates with disabilities

- Meetings with OPDs
- Online consultation meetings

Measures to support staff with disabilities and staff who have dependents with disabilities

- Meetings with staff with disabilities and staff who have dependents with disabilities
- Meetings with staff unions
- Staff surveys
- Feedback on documents

Development and review of staff surveys

- Meetings with staff with disabilities and staff who have dependents with disabilities
- Feedback on documents

Capacity development for staff

Development and delivery of learning and/or training opportunities on disability inclusion

- Feedback on content and materials
- Online consultation meeting
- Invitation to OPDs to deliver training

Making online and face-to-face learning activities accessible

- Feedback on content and materials
- Meetings with staff with disabilities and staff who have dependents with disabilities

Monitoring of learning and/or training opportunities on disability inclusion

- Focus groups
- OPD and/or staff surveys

Communication


Development, review and update of communication guidelines

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- Feedback on documents

Evaluation of both internal and external general communications

- Online consultation meetings
- Focus groups
- OPD and/or staff surveys

UNCT Accountability Scorecard on Disability Inclusion with annotation on which consultation is most appropriate for each indicator

Core area	Indicator	Opportunities for consultation	Suggested methods
 <p>Leadership, strategic planning and management</p>	Leadership	Making disability inclusion more visible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meetings with UNCT leadership – Regular meetings and engagement with UN coordination mechanism
		UNRCO/UNCT joint work plan and performance appraisal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – OPD and/or staff surveys – Focus groups
	Strategic planning	Development, review and update of Common Country Analysis (CCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Open public meetings – Workshops – Online consultation meetings – Feedback on documents
		Analysis of the situation of persons with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Workshops or focus groups – Online consultation meetings – Feedback on documents – OPD and/or staff surveys
	Cooperation framework	Development, review and update of Cooperation Framework and its joint workplans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Open public meetings – Workshops – Online consultation meetings – Feedback on documents
		Monitoring and evaluation of Cooperation Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Workshops or focus groups – Online consultation meetings
	UNCT Set-up and Coordination	Establishment and functioning of disability inclusion mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meetings with UNCT coordination mechanism – Online consultation meetings – Invitations to OPDs to be part of an existing UN coordination mechanism (such as the Joint National/UN Steering Committee)



Inclusiveness

Consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities	Consultation on UNDIS implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings
	Partnership with OPDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD surveys
Accessibility of UN premises and accommodation	Development and review of baseline assessment on accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Open public meetings — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys
	Development and review of accessibility plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Monitoring, accountability and evaluation of accessibility plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Meetings with accessibility focal points — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings
	Assessment of provision of reasonable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys
	Assessment of provision of reasonable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys
Inclusive procurement of goods and services	Development, review and update of UNCT procurement guidelines and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents — Meetings with UNCT Operations Management Team
	Periodic review of UN authorized external venues, including accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD and/or staff surveys



Programming

Joint programmes	Implementation of joint programmes/projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Meetings to discuss programmes/projects — Workshops and focus groups
	Monitoring and reporting of disability-inclusive joint programmes/projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Meetings to discuss programmes/projects — Focus groups — OPD surveys
Data	Mapping of disability-related available data and data gaps in national statistical sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — OPD surveys — Feedback on documents
	Supporting government efforts on data on persons with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings
	Capacity building initiatives for national statistical offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Feedback on content and materials — Online consultation meeting — Invitation to OPDs to deliver training — Workshops and focus groups
Monitoring and evaluation	Cooperation Framework annual report and other monitoring and evaluation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents
	Training to monitoring and evaluation group on data/indicators to measure disability inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Feedback on content and materials — Online consultation meeting — Invitation to OPDs to deliver training
Humanitarian	Assessment of disability inclusion in humanitarian needs assessments, preparedness and response plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Meetings with the Humanitarian Country Team/UNCT — Focus groups — OPD surveys
	Development, review and update of emergency preparedness and response plan or Humanitarian Response Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Workshops and focus groups — Online consultation meetings — Feedback on documents — Participation of OPDs in humanitarian coordination mechanisms



Organizational culture

Employment

Development, review and update of employment policy, strategy, or measures

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- OPD and/or staff surveys
- Feedback on documents

Outreach measures to attract candidates with disabilities

- Meetings with OPDs
- Online consultation meetings

Review of the disability status of UN employees and consultants

- Meetings with staff with disabilities and staff who have dependents with disabilities
- Meetings with staff unions
- Staff surveys
- Feedback on documents

Capacity development for staff

Development of learning and/or training resources on disability inclusion

- Feedback on content and materials
- Online consultation meeting
- Invitation to OPDs to deliver training

Development and delivery of inter-agency training on disability inclusion

- Feedback on content and materials
- Online consultation meeting
- Invitation to OPDs to deliver training
- Meetings with staff with disabilities and staff who have dependents with disabilities

Communication

Mainstreaming disability inclusion in UNCT advocacy and communications

- Workshops and focus groups
- Online consultation meetings
- Feedback on documents
- Meetings with inter-agency Communication Group

Communications campaign on disability inclusion

- Workshops and focus groups
- Feedback on documents

Annex 3

List of global and regional networks of organizations of persons with disabilities per type (non exhaustive)

International networks of organizations of persons with disabilities

- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)
- Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network (IPWDGN)
- Dementia Alliance International (DAI)
- Down Syndrome International (DSI)
- Inclusion International (II)
- International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH)
- International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IFSBH)
- Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI)
- World Blind Union (WBU)
- World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)
- World Federation of The Deafblind (WFDB)
- World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP)

Regional networks of organizations of persons with disabilities

- African Disability Forum (ADF)
- Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD)
- ASEAN Disability Forum (ASEAN DF)
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS)
- Latin American Network of Psychosocial Diversity (Redesfera Latinoamericana de la Diversidad Psicosocial)
- Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)

Many global organizations have their own regional chapters.

Templates for establishing partnerships with OPDs

Memorandum of Understanding between UN entity and OPD

Memorandum of Understanding between [insert the name of the entity] and [insert the name of the OPD]

Preamble

- 1 This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter “MoU”) represents an enhanced commitment to the strategic partnership on the rights of persons with disabilities between [insert the name of the entity] and [insert the name of the OPD], hereinafter collectively referred to as “the Parties” and individually as “a Party”. It has been developed in recognition of the respective mandates, responsibilities, strategic objectives and mission statements, as well as the history/possibilities of collaboration between the two organizations.
- 2 The Parties together commit to work together to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of the human rights of all persons with disabilities, and to promote their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others, through partnership in [strategic planning, project implementation, technical support, capacity building, human rights monitoring, humanitarian coordination, advocacy, etc.].
- 3 This MoU applies to the most substantive areas of the Parties’ collaboration and outlines current and future priority areas for cooperation where the respective and complementary tools, capacities and expertise of the two organizations can be optimized and assistance towards persons with disabilities improved. As such, it constitutes the basis for the establishment of a strategic and operational partnership between the two organizations.

Principles of Partnership

- 4 The Parties recognize rights-based, age, gender and diversity as well as community-based approaches as central to their collaboration.

- 5 The Parties recognize the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter CRPD) and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) as the basis of their collaboration and commit to carrying out all their activities in accordance with the principles and accountability mechanisms provided therein.
- 6 The Parties commit to carrying out all their activities with the highest ethical and professional standards, both within their respective organizations and externally, in conformity with the humanitarian nature of their work. Both Parties have a policy of zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and agree to collaborate in prevention, protection from, and response to SEA.

Purpose and Scope

- 7 The purpose of the MoU is to institutionalize the partnership and cooperation between the parties.
- 8 The Parties commit to join efforts and exchange expertise to actively promote the rights of persons with disabilities through a partnership to strengthen the capacity and cooperation between organizations of persons with disabilities and [insert the name of the entity] headquarters bureaus and country offices. The expected outcome of this collaboration will be enhanced visibility and respect for the rights of persons of with disabilities across [strategic planning, project implementation, technical support, capacity building, human rights monitoring, advocacy, etc.] efforts undertaken by both Parties.
- 9 The Parties commit to further strengthening the strategic relationship between them, at the global, regional and national levels, and agree to collaborate in the following areas: [strategic planning, project implementation, technical support, capacity building, human rights monitoring, humanitarian coordination, advocacy, information sharing, United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, etc.]. Joint projects within each area may cover the following:
 - a Mutual capacity building. The Parties will collaborate in joint capacity building efforts to strengthen their human and technical capacity towards the effective mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities across existing policies, programmes and working practices. For this purpose, the Parties will collaborate to provide access to technical guidance and resources and facilitate cross-learning and networking opportunities between [insert the name of the OPD] members and [insert the name of the entity] staff.
 - b Advocacy and CRPD monitoring. The Parties will collaborate to advocate for political commitments to be in line with the CRPD and ensure the effective enforcement and accountability of those commitments.
 - c Advocacy and SDG implementation. The Parties will collaborate to advocate for political commitments to ensure the inclusion of persons

with disabilities in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the CRPD.

- d** Humanitarian Coordination. The Parties will collaborate to influence humanitarian action frameworks and processes, including mechanisms and agendas related to refugees and internally displaced persons, to advance the rights of persons of concern with disabilities.
- e** United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. [insert the name of the OPD] will collaborate with [insert the name of the entity] in the implementation of the entity's commitments under the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, including by promoting the meaningful participation of [insert the name of the OPD] and its member organizations across all pillars of the Strategy.

Modalities of cooperation

- 10** This MoU sets out a general framework for cooperation between the Parties and does not commit either Party to provide funds for the other Party for any project or activity. Any joint projects or other activities that involve the commitment of funds or other resources shall be the subject of separate written agreements, which shall address, inter alia, the financial arrangements, liability, dispute settlement, data protection and intellectual property rights related to the activities.
- 11** The parties are committed to ensure that all events and meetings, including information and communications related to the implementation of this MoU are fully accessible for persons with disabilities.
- 12** Upon entering into force, the Parties will disseminate this MoU to their respective offices and field operations and will take steps to prepare for the implementation within the first six months of the collaboration, including through providing field operations with appropriate guidance.
- 13** The Parties will mobilize technical leadership on the rights of persons with disabilities and will strengthen the networking capacity between [insert the name of the entity] regional and country offices, regional and national organizations of persons with disabilities and, potentially, [insert the name of the entity] partners.
- 14** The Parties will jointly identify [insert number] pilot countries where this MoU will be implemented and closely monitored. The identification of these pilot countries will be decided between both Parties based on agreed criteria, including previous collaborations on disability inclusion and the existence of concrete opportunities that could support to build and strengthen a collaborative spirit between both Parties. The selection of these areas will be made during the first year of the collaboration in consultation with the relevant stakeholders within both Parties, including regional and national members and offices.
- 15** The Parties designate one senior lead who takes responsibility for the overall vision, strategic direction and delivery of this partnership; for [insert the name of the OPD and representative] and for [insert the name of the

entity and representative]. They also designate functional leads to take responsibility for delivering different components of this partnership in their respective areas as required.

- 16** The Parties agree to meet at least once a year to report on the implementation of activities under the MoU and any pertaining action plans, review and assess the progress of such implementation when necessary and propose any revisions and amendments.

General provisions

- 17** This MoU shall enter into force on the date of its signature by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties and shall remain in force for the period of three years and 6 months, including a preparatory stage for an initial period of 6 months. It may be terminated by either Party by providing the other with 30 days' prior written notice and can be modified in writing at any time by mutual consent of the Parties.
- 18** Each Party shall keep confidential any documents, material or other information (including personal data) communicated to it as confidential by the other Party ("Confidential Information"). The receiving Party shall not disclose any such Confidential Information to a third-party without the prior written consent of the disclosing Party nor use any such Confidential Information for any purpose other than the implementation of this MoU. The Parties commit to abiding by the personal data protection and privacy principles of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination or by other instruments that meet equal or higher standards and will ensure the confidentiality of personal data.
- 19** The Parties will use their best efforts to settle amicably any disputes or controversy arising out of this MoU. Any such dispute or controversy which is not settled amicably may be referred by a party to arbitration in accordance with the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules then obtaining. The Parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such dispute or controversy.
- 20** Nothing in or relating to this MoU shall be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs and /or of [insert the name of the entity] (as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations).

Principles of Engagement between [insert the name of the entity] and

Principles of Engagement between UNCT and OPD

[insert the name of the OPD]

- 1** [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD], are committed to further strengthen their strategic partnership in line with the Principles of Engagement as equal partners, collaborations and contributors to disability-inclusive development.
- 2** Both parties recognize the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other relevant international treaties and conventions as the foundation of the Principles of Engagement, along with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS).
- 3** Collaboration between [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] builds upon mutual respect and recognition of respective leadership roles expertise, lived experiences of persons with disabilities and their organizations, and active membership in relevant global, regional and country development.
- 4** [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] recognizes and strengthen the support required to facilitate [insert the name of the OPD]'s engagements and advocacy in [insert the relevant country or region]; and future engagements and joint advocacy as per the priorities and the requirements of persons with disabilities to protect, promote and realize their rights, including to active protection as human rights defenders.
- 5** [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] commit to join efforts and exchange expertise and knowledge to actively promote and uphold the rights of persons with disabilities through a partnership to strengthen the capacity and meaningful cooperation between organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and the UN in [insert the relevant country or region].
- 6** [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] recognize preconditions to inclusion (accessibility, assistive devices, support services, social protection, community-based inclusive development, and non-discrimination), human rights-based, age, gender and diversity approaches, as well as community-based approaches, as central to their collaboration.
- 7** Code of conduct: [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] commit to carrying out all their activities with the highest ethical and professional standards, both within their respective organizations and externally, in conformity with the nature of their work. Both [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] have a policy of zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and agree to collaborate in prevention, protection from, and response to SEA. In addition, both [insert the name of the UNCT] and [insert the name of the OPD] have zero tolerance to violence against women and children, noting the disproportionate rates of violence and discrimination towards girls and women with disabilities.
- 8** The expected outcome of this collaboration will be enhanced visibility and respect for the rights of persons with disabilities by carrying out all independent, collective and joint initiatives or the promotion of a disability-inclusive and sustainable development of [insert the relevant country or region] in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's pledge to leave no one behind.

Additional resources

UN documents

IASC, **Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**, 2019

UN Archives and Records Management Section, **Understanding Information Sensitivity**

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, **General comment No. 7** on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, 2018

UN **Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace**, 2020

UN Country Team Accountability Scorecard on Disability Inclusion

UN **Disability Inclusion Strategy**, 2019.

UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Technical Notes

UN **Disability-Inclusive Communications Guidelines**, 2021

UN ESCAP, **Disability Inclusive Meetings. An Operational Guide**, 2015

UN **Gender-Inclusive Language Guidelines**

UN **Guidance Note on Protection and Promotion of Civic Space**, 2020

UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, The right of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making, **A/HRC/31/62**, 2016

UNICEF, **TAKE US SERIOUSLY! Engaging Children with Disabilities in Decisions Affecting their Lives**, 2013

Other documents

Bridging the Gap, **Inclusive and accessible communication guidelines**

CBM, **Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit**, 2017

Change, **How to make information accessible, A guide to producing easy read documents**

Down Syndrome International and Inclusion International, **International Guidelines for Inclusive Participation**, 2021

Disability Rights Fund/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund, **Grants Directory**

Disability Rights Fund/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund, **Inclusion 101: The How-To of Inclusive and Accessible Communications**, 2020

European Disability Forum, **EDF Guide for Accessible Meetings for All**

European Disability Forum, **Preparing and moderating online meetings**

Five Council, **An introduction to... Consultation methods**, 2003

HelpAge International, **Older people in community development. The role of older people's associations (OPAs) in enhancing local development**, 2009

International Disability Alliance, **Increasingly Consulted but not Yet Participating: IDA Global Survey on Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in Development Programmes and Policies**, 2020

Irish National Disability Authority, **Ask Me - Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities**, 2002

Plan International, **Guidelines for Consulting with Children & Young People with Disabilities**

Rooted in Rights, **How to Make Your Virtual Meetings and Events Accessible to the Disability Community**

Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, **Accessibility resources**

UK Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) network, Women for Women International, Amnesty International UK, Saferworld and Womankind Worldwide, **BEYOND CONSULTATIONS, A tool for meaningfully engaging with women in fragile and conflict-affected state**

University of California, **Guidelines for accessible surveys and forms**

SurveyGizmo, **A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating More Accessible Surveys**

World Blind Union and CBM Global Disability Inclusion, **Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action.**



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