

Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities

18 April 2017

Excellency,

On behalf of the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities we welcome the inclusive and multi-stakeholder organization of the 2017 High-level Political Forum (HLPF). **We would like to take the opportunity to kindly invite you to contribute necessary resources to ensure that the Forum is fully accessible for persons with disabilities keeping in line with the principle of the 2030 Agenda to ensure that no one is left behind. In addition, we are calling for a dedicated paragraph on the full accessibility of the Forum in line with Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the review of resolution A/67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF at the 73rd session of the General Assembly.**

This theme is particularly relevant to persons with disabilities who comprise one of the world's most marginalized, neglected and excluded populations comprising approximately 1 billion people globally. Despite this, there is a significant financial burden to ensure equal participation for persons with disabilities at the HLPF and the Partnership Exchange. We are working with the UN to address accessibility issues, but most of our requests have been denied due to lack of funding. This is why we need support from Member States to provide an example of leadership at the global level on how to create an accessible and inclusive platform for dialogue.

Persons with disabilities attending the HLPF should have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, information and communication, technology and systems and other facilities throughout the United Nations system keeping in line with the CRPD. The CRPD calls for accessibility for persons with disabilities in Articles 2, 3, 4, 9, 21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 34, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No. 2 on Article 9 (2014) states that accessibility is one of the key issues and one common challenge has been the lack of an adequate monitoring mechanism to ensure the practical implementation of accessibility standards and relevant legislation.

The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities propose the following accessibility recommendations for the 2017 HLPF:

- Provide International Sign and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services for deaf and hard of hearing participants for all sessions, but especially for the Ministerial Segment
- Include captions for the HLPF sessions via the UN webcast
- Distribute portable audio translation devices for wheelchair users and sign language interpreters in the gallery for all sessions
- Provide reserve wheelchairs within the UN
- Reserve specific seats for persons with disabilities with ample space to maneuver
- Provide accessible mobile apps used during the HLPF with readable content and functional mobile speech facilities
- Provide facilities with software that can enlarge texts on the screen for persons with low vision

- Distribute HLPF materials in rich text format for persons using screen reader software
- Make Forum and presentation materials accessible using universal design elements and additional formats (e.g., Braille, large print, and easy-to-read for key points)
- Share presentation materials in advance to sign language interpreters and CART providers

We thank you in advance for your consideration of this request and please contact Elizabeth Lockwood (elizabeth.lockwood@cbm.org) to meet and discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Vladimir Cuk



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Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities

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