



# G7 Inclusion and disability

**Everyone's right to full and effective participation and inclusion in civil, social, economic, cultural and political life in our countries.**

## *The Solfagnano Charter*

### **Introduction**

We, the G7 Ministers for matters relating to persons with disabilities and inclusion, held a meeting in Solfagnano on 15th –16th October 2024, under the chairship of Ms. Alessandra Locatelli, Italian Minister for Disabilities, to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to ensuring that all individuals enjoy equal rights to full, effective and meaningful participation and inclusion in all aspects of social, cultural, educational, economic, civil and political life. The realization of human rights of persons with disabilities is our top priority.

Our meeting builds on the G7 Leaders' Summit held in Borgo Egnazia Italy on 13th -15th June 2024 that tasked us to launch the Solfagnano Charter, where we committed to further integrate rights of persons with disabilities across all political agendas and take concrete actions to ensure universal access and accessibility; promote independent living, support inclusive education, decent employment and decent working conditions; ensure the availability and adaptability of community based

services and advance the use of accessible and inclusive new technologies. We are also committed to fostering the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sports, cultural and recreational activities, as well as in emergency prevention and disaster risk management.

We reiterate our shared belief in the protection, promotion, monitoring and implementation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, based on the existing international legal standards, especially the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), including the key principle of “Nothing About Us, Without Us”, which advocates for a cultural shift in policy-making to ensure the disability community is actively and meaningfully engaged in decision-making processes and that everyone can enjoy their right to fully and effectively participate in civil, social economic, cultural and political life in our countries.

Our commitment is geared towards achieving and sustaining a radical shift of perspective that aims at eliminating the barriers caused by society and puts persons with disabilities at the centre of inclusion policies to maximize autonomy, independence and to develop the talents and skills so that all individuals are empowered and supported in fulfilling their own aspirations and desires. It is also important to recognize the diversity of persons with disabilities and the multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination they might face as we address the multiple barriers to inclusion of persons with disabilities.

We are aware of the critical importance of incorporating the issue of inclusion and the rights of persons with disabilities into our international agendas, including our G7-related initiatives, at the bilateral and multilateral level, in close cooperation with international organizations, with a universal and regional vocation, to drive societal change and

ensure equal rights for persons with disabilities. We commit to fostering the mobilisation of the society as a whole through an inclusive and collaborative approach, appropriate to national contexts, that actively involves persons with disabilities, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), public institutions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, communities and citizens. To support an effective change, through the Solfagnano Charter, we aim to promote a positive perspective among all citizens towards persons with disabilities based on respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

We stress the importance of actively involving, closely consulting with, listening to and acting upon recommendations of persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers and the OPDs and associations, that represent them in decision making processes, in order to increase the effectiveness of our policies and programs and to accelerate social, political and cultural change in our communities.

On the occasion of our ministerial meeting in Solfagnano, which saw for the first time the Ministers of the G7 members come together to address the current challenges of our time related to the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, we identified the following issues as priorities in our efforts to ensure full and effective participation and inclusion in civil, social, economic, cultural and political life for all persons with disabilities:

1. Inclusion as a priority issue in the political agenda of all countries;
2. Access and accessibility;
3. Autonomous and independent life;
4. Enhancement of talents and work inclusion;
5. Promotion of new technologies;
6. Sports, recreational and cultural dimensions of life;

7. Dignity of life and appropriate community-based services;
8. Prevention and management of emergency preparedness and post-emergency management situations, including climate crises, armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.

We welcome the Panel Discussions of 15th October 2024, organised in the framework of the Ministerial Meeting, aimed at promoting fruitful debates with experts from institutions, OPDs and CSOs, associations and academia working for disability inclusion.

We welcome the effective contributions from the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) and their members to the Ministerial Meeting.

In a spirit of shared responsibility, we also warmly welcome the participation of the Ministers of Kenya, South Africa, Tunisia, and Vietnam.

## **Priority 1. Inclusion as a priority issue in the political agenda of all countries**

The social inclusion of persons with disabilities implies exercising, on equal basis with others, the right to full and effective participation in all aspects of life including the civil, social, economic, cultural and political life of our countries; the active involvement in decision-making processes – political, legislative and administrative - of each individual with regard to all dimensions of life: autonomy, training and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, work and quality employment, mobility, access to products, services and infrastructure, sports, cultural and recreational, affective and relational life. In this context, we recognize that persons with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, particularly women, girls and children, and we will take all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities for all. The promotion of a culture of social inclusion and human rights of persons with disabilities, according to the principles, rights and obligations of the UNCRPD, requires that individuals be placed at the centre of policies and interventions with a view to develop the autonomy, independence, talents, skills and empowerment of each person in the entire community, taking into account the many different types and degrees of disability.

Achieving effective inclusion requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving all stakeholders: particularly all levels of government, communities, industry and private sector, academia, society, as well as persons with disabilities, along with OPDs representing them, CSOs and third-sector organizations.

**We promote** the topic inclusion and the respect of rights of persons with disabilities in areas of action of our G7 members and we intend to

proceed with this approach also at the international level, including at the G7, by considering the integration of the topic "inclusion and disability" into relevant upcoming G7 discussions. **We commit** to promoting its discussion in the G20 and in all major relevant international fora, in the conviction that in order to continue to support persons with disabilities in all aspects of their lives and aspirations, inclusion and disability policies must rely on well-defined intervention strategies and standards, that present both an international and national dimension, based on the principles, objectives and spirit of the UNCRPD.

**We recognize** the importance of carrying out information and awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusion aimed at societies as a whole, the private sector and civil society, as well as to fight discrimination and champion persons with disabilities as members of the whole community on an equal basis with others.

**We commit** to take actions to monitor progress on disability inclusion by ensuring the permanent and continuous collaboration and exchange among the representatives of our countries and the European Union, including persons with disabilities and OPDs respectively, such as representatives of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) that was initiated during the preparation of the first G7 on inclusion and disability.

## Priority 2. Access and accessibility

Accessibility, following a universal design approach, together with reasonable accommodation, is required to prevent and remove barriers to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to all aspects of the daily life, including the physical and digital environment, such as public spaces, facilities and services and housing, transportation modalities and information and communication, including new technologies such as websites, apps, and software, and artificial intelligence among others.

**We are committed** to promoting and aligning accessibility policies and reasonable accommodation in all aspects of daily life and this includes: mobility in rural, urban, national and international contexts; employment; housing; education at all levels; healthcare systems; access to public buildings and services, with particular reference to transportation and usability of information and communication technologies, as well as access to goods and services provided by the private sector. We also recognise the importance of making physical and digital spaces accessible for everyone, both in public and private sector. This includes buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities and services, as well as telecommunications, the Web and mobile device-based services, including but not limited to schools, housing, medical facilities, and workplaces. And when we do so, persons with disabilities can contribute to the benefit of society.

Accessibility is a key factor in ensuring the enjoyment of the right to live autonomously and independently and is a precondition for meaningful, effective, productive, inclusive and unhindered participation of persons with disabilities in our society on an equal basis with others.

Accessibility also helps mitigate the threat climate change poses to

persons with disabilities by increasing access to critical infrastructure and information, essential services, and support in the context of extreme weather events, in addition to promoting broader community resilience.

To make our communities more resilient, sustainable and inclusive, **we are committed to working towards** integrating accessibility requirements into all relevant policy frameworks, ensuring that accessibility is not treated as an afterthought but rather as a fundamental component of planning and development across sectors. **We are committed** to promoting accessibility from the earliest stages of design, development and production of products and service infrastructures and we will work to engage with disability stakeholders from the start of the process. We will encourage actions to facilitate transportation between our countries through the adoption of accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.

**We also encourage** the action of public and private, for-profit and non-profit, actors to increase the supply and enjoyment of accessible and inclusive tourism at local, national and international levels. We recognise the particular importance of promoting the development of inclusive and broadened enjoyment of cultural heritage in order to make cultural assets accessible to all persons with disabilities.

To foster the implementation of accessibility regulatory frameworks, **we are committed** to strengthening collaboration with persons with disabilities through their representative organizations to foster greater visibility for accessibility best practices, the dissemination of specific technical expertise and the development of monitoring and evaluation tools necessary for further advancement of accessibility.



### **Priority 3. Autonomous and independent living**

To be able to live an autonomous and independent life in the community on an equal basis with others, according to one's own wishes and skills, means that persons with disabilities are guaranteed social protection and support services according to the complexity of their needs and personal preferences following a person-centred approach. This encompasses ensuring the availability of accessible housing and employment including through reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

We will ensure access to services and support to enable persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights, facilitate inclusion and develop talents and creativity allowing for the realization of their personal life project – namely, an individual life journey – developed in accordance with their desires and expectations for a full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. In particular, we recognize the need for strong integration between health, care and social interventions and we are working to reducing bureaucracy and ensuring better simplification in administrative processes to ensure easier access to support and services.

**We are committed** to the promotion of an inclusive society that ensures the full and effective removal of barriers, the prevention of new obstacles, the adoption and implementation of accessibility policies and reasonable accommodation for access to products, services and infrastructure on an equal basis with others. These are measures to help ensure that persons with disabilities can choose how, where and with whom to live and overcome obstacles and barriers that limit or prevent their full and effective participation in community life.

**We are committed** to fostering the development of new and accessible technological tools as well as assistive technology and the training of new professionals with specific skills as important enablers to support persons with disabilities.

We recognize the importance for persons with disabilities of ensuring the right to access information for all through the promotion, availability and provisions of fully accessible formats and appropriate accessibility solutions.

**We undertake** to promote and/or implement specific initiatives aimed at fostering the creation and/or development of a network of knowledge and collaboration between the various stakeholders and services in the territory/community, as well as at supporting OPDs and CSOs that promote the full and effective inclusion and wellbeing of persons with disabilities as experts for the implementation of independent living projects. **We will work to ensure** that community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

## Priority 4. Enhancement of talents and work inclusion

Labour inclusion contributes positively to the goals of living independently and fully realizing the personal life project not only in terms of economic independence but also with respect to social well-being and quality of life. For persons with disabilities, participation and inclusion in the labour market is a human right. Work is an effective tool to strengthen empowerment and self-determination and promote the talents and autonomy of persons with disabilities. We recognize the role that public, private profit and non-profit organizations, have in providing persons with disabilities with the tools and resources to succeed in the workplace, supporting them within their workplace company, the production context and society.

We underline that work inclusion is about decent employment in an inclusive, open labour market where the talents of persons with disabilities are recognized, nurtured, and valued. This requires an ongoing commitment to understanding and removing the barriers that exist and providing reasonable accommodation while addressing those barriers through comprehensive strategies that involve all stakeholders.

**We are committed** within the framework of active labour market policies to consider, value and guarantee the preferences and aspirations of persons with disabilities including persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. As in most countries, women and other disadvantaged groups with disabilities face particularly severe disadvantages in the labour market, so we gear our policies towards promoting their decent employment and full enjoyment of labour rights, including fair wages, occupational safety and health, access to social protection and career advancement opportunities.

**We are also committed** to promoting organisational and business models for the inclusive employment of persons with disabilities. We acknowledge the expertise and experience of businesses and third-sector organisations, especially those which are disability led, and their role in running inclusive employment practices for persons with disabilities, particularly within the framework of the social economy. **We will support** these organisational models that put persons with disabilities at the centre and aim at the development of each person's talents and skills. **We will take** measures to eliminate discrimination, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation also in the workplace and the use of new accessible and assistive technologies for disability inclusion. To support free access to the labour market it is necessary to foster policies guaranteeing equal access to education for children with disabilities from primary school to higher education. Vocational training programs should also include persons with disabilities in all areas of potential employments and jobs.

Inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities are the foundation and prerequisite for future skills development and employment. We share and underline the importance of increasing operational synergies among OPDs and associations representing the rights of persons with disabilities, public sector, social economy entities and for-profit companies in order to disseminate good practices, innovative approaches, and skills useful to make the work environment inclusive and capable of expressing the potential and developing the talents and abilities of persons with disabilities.

## Priority 5. Promotion of new technologies

New technologies are an important tool to foster inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being for all and specifically, when they are accessible, to improve access and facilitate participation in all aspects of political, social, and economic life as well as sport, recreational activities and health of persons with disabilities.

New technologies based on safe, secure, accessible, inclusive and trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI), including generative AI, can increase labour productivity; improve working conditions and occupational safety and health in the workplace; empower workers and create quality employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. These technologies and AI systems can be positive and determining factors for inclusion provided that they are accessible and that persons, including workers, with disabilities are involved in the design, development and production, deployment and maintenance phases. In order to fully benefit from the opportunities that new technology, including AI offer, we need to continue to reconcile technological development with its potential risks such as the perpetuation or amplification of current inequalities or the risks to the right to privacy and protection of personal data.

**We are committed** to fostering dialogue with business, representative organisations of persons with disabilities, civil society and academic stakeholders in the world of technology and innovation, as well as with those concerned with ethical issues to ensure that safe, secure, and trustworthy systems are developed, deployed and used in an ethical, responsible and non-discriminatory manner and requiring that digital professionals are aware and trained on accessibility.

**We encourage** the productive world of innovation to develop support systems, assistive technologies and tools that can be enabling and rehabilitating, with a view to maximising independence and autonomy of persons with disabilities in all aspects and dimensions of life, such as health, mobility, information, education, work, communication, autonomy, and that they are easy to understand and use by persons with disabilities.

**We are committed** to orienting our countries' policies in such a way as to favour the access of persons with disabilities to inclusive information and communication tools on equal basis with others and to ensure maximum interoperability of different accessible digital systems and assistive technologies.

**We recognize** the need to ensure that persons with disabilities have easy access to technological tools, both in terms of cost and in terms of their availability and obtainability, usability and accessibility, as well as the necessary digital skills.

**We are committed** to promoting knowledge of new technologies and their accessibility in order to foster the widest possible dissemination of these technologies domestically and internationally, including developing and emerging economies and other communities traditionally not exposed to technological development processes.

## **Priority 6. Sports, recreational and cultural dimension of life**

The participation in sport and, more generally, recreational, leisure and cultural activities offers a concrete contribution to enhancing the physical and psychological wellbeing and self-esteem of persons with disabilities over the entire course of life on an equal basis with others, by providing opportunities to develop personal and friendship-based relationships, to cultivate personal interests, realize one's potentials in a context of positive sociability and to experience the talents of each person in contexts that enhance them. We recognize that sport and recreation enhances social cohesion, reduces stigma, and reduces marginalization. Persons with disabilities have the right to follow their preferences, to pursue their hobbies, and to choose the sport, cultural and creative as well as other leisure activities to which they devote themselves, also by using accessible solutions in sports and arts disciplines and cultural and creative professions on an equal basis with others.

**We are committed** to promoting sport and physical activity in their rehabilitative and competitive dimensions at all levels, and we will also work to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities as a daily practice for all by overcoming the infrastructural, financial and cultural barriers that, starting at school, still limit equal access.

Following the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games, we are committed to raising the profile of parasport, thus recognizing the key role sport plays in the life of persons with disabilities and the skills that it involves.

**We are committed** to supporting inclusive and accessible sports, especially for children with disabilities, to spread and strengthen

participation to the fullest possible extent and promote human rights, inclusive thinking and positive attitude as well as new ways of perceiving disability in our societies.



## **Priority 7. Dignity of life and appropriate community-based services**

Guaranteeing dignity and individual autonomy to persons with disabilities means removing the barriers that they face and have to overcome in their daily lives, promoting awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities and breaking down cultural resistance, stereotypes and prejudices that prevent them from participating and contributing to society on an equal basis with others. It also implies protecting persons with disabilities from, eliminating and preventing all forms of violence that affect persons with disabilities, especially children, girls and women, and older persons with disabilities.

Health and wellbeing are not only the absence of illness or violence but are also the result of a full and participatory social and relational life, according to one's own desires, preferences, possibilities, and goals.

**We reaffirm our willingness to encourage** the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purposes of the UNCRPD and we are committed to raising awareness of the rights, talents and skills of persons with disabilities in order to promote a collective assumption of responsibility for eliminating barriers and prejudices that prevent persons with disabilities from living with dignity and fully enjoying human rights.

**We are committed** to making community-based services - starting with health, social, and support services, but not only limited to - accessible through a universal design approach, the removal of barriers and the provision of reasonable accommodations. This will guarantee greater plurality, flexibility and adaptability to the needs of users with disabilities while ensuring its economic sustainability. By fostering an inclusive

environment, we aim to empower individuals and enhance their quality of life.

Health services will guarantee accessible care pathways for persons with disabilities, along with the right to accessible information that empowers them to make an informed choice of care and assistance on an equal basis with others. Additionally, services will also provide personnel specifically trained in equality and awareness, including countering ableism and bias, in order to ensure adequate care and avoid stigma and discrimination. This is why **we endorse** the dissemination of inclusive and specialized healthcare and social care and support models for persons with disabilities, including for disabilities related to rare diseases, in particular through dedicated information tools, operational protocols and training pathways for healthcare and social support and service personnel.

We recognize that dignity, autonomy and self-determination are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. **We are committed** to ensuring that persons with disabilities are empowered to make their own decisions about their lives and the services they receive, with the necessary support to do so when needed.

## **Priority 8. Prevention and management of emergency preparedness and post- emergency management situations, including climate crises, armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.**

The mainstreaming of an inclusive and full participation approach respecting the rights of persons with disabilities includes all dimensions of daily life, including those extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances related to situations of disaster risk or emergency due to natural disasters, climate change, health emergencies or those related to armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.

Given that persons with disabilities face greater climate risks, including increased fatality rates from extreme weather events, we recognize that decision-makers from all orders of government need to take into account the needs and multiple disadvantages of persons with disabilities as they build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

**We recognize** the essential importance of ensuring the consideration of persons with disabilities and their rights and needs at every stage of the design and implementation of emergency prevention, preparedness, response devices and recovery activities.

**We are committed** to working towards ensuring that the multiple risks faced by persons with disabilities are systematically and adequately integrated and addressed in national contingency plans and humanitarian action policies and projects and that specific measures are considered to provide relief during emergency situations through inclusive and disability-specific relief. **We endeavor** to base our work in disaster risk management and humanitarian action on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines, which seeks to effectively identify and respond to the access requirements and rights of persons

with disabilities who are most at risk of being left behind in humanitarian settings. In this context we emphasise the need for inclusive and accessible early warning systems.

**We also recognize** the importance of meaningfully involving persons with disabilities, representative organisations of persons with disabilities and third sector associations to strengthen the capacity of responsible actors to design risk management solutions and implement preparedness response and relief measures that ensure adequate protection and safeguarding of persons with disabilities. **We will promote** and implement initiatives to support self-preparedness and resilience of persons with disabilities and their communities.

**We are committed** to improving the collection and management of data and information related to persons with disabilities and the barriers they face to support the risk assessment phase and the early identification of persons who, in the emergency and post-emergency phases, require specific safety interventions and integrated reasonable accommodation supports while maintaining data security and privacy in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

**We are committed** to consider the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities to build a more inclusive, accessible, sustainable and resilient infrastructure pre and post-crises. More than 50% of all persons with disabilities live in towns and cities, which are disproportionately affected by crises, conflicts and disasters. We stress the importance to (re)build better for all citizens, including persons with disabilities. In this context we welcome the initiative for inclusive cities that will be launched at the Global Disability Summit in Berlin in 2025.

## Conclusions

We strongly reaffirm our commitment to show leadership and ambition, in line with the UNCRPD, and to collaborate, towards its full implementation with all international institutional partners representing persons with disabilities, associations, third- sector organisations, local communities and the private sector that intends to support the recognition of the right of all to full and effective participation in the civil, social, political, economic and cultural life of our countries.

We are determined to articulate the priorities of the "Charter of Solfagnano" in the G7 by translating them into concrete actions.

We stress the importance of international cooperation to advance the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. Disability inclusion is an essential enabler of sustainable development, and we are determined to intensify our action so as to leave no one behind. Thus, we will support commitments for the Global Disability Summit to be held in Berlin on 2 and 3 April 2025.

We are convinced that the priorities discussed today do not exhaust all the issues relating to the daily life of persons with disabilities and we are committed to continuing the discussion during the meetings that will take place over the next G7 presidencies.

Recalling previous G7 commitments, we will continue to encourage discussions of inclusion and disability across the G7 members with respect to each chair country's leadership.

*Solfagnano, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024*