

## **Press Statement**

### **Disability Inclusion in SDGs and Uganda's Engagement in the SDG Summit**

Kampala, Uganda

Date: September 13, 2023

#### **Background**

- Through the pledge to *Leave No One Behind*, Uganda has committed to fast-track progress for SDGs implementation especially those furthest behind first. People get left behind when they lack the choices and opportunities to participate in and benefit from development progress, when they endure disadvantages or deprivations that limit their choices and opportunities relative to others in society.
- Persons with Disabilities are among the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups worldwide. The SDGs therefore considered Persons with Disabilities specifically within 11 specific targets to solve the under-representation and marginalization in all spheres of development caused by stigma, discrimination, lack of access to adequate services and negative attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities.
- The Voluntary National Review report 2020 identified a number of structural shortcomings for Persons with Disabilities to equally benefit from development and to enjoy equal rights i.e; Inadequate opportunities for meaningful participation; Inadequate funding for social protection; Limited access to health service delivery for Persons with Disabilities; Limited access to quality education; Inadequate disaggregation of data to enable

appropriate identification, focus and prioritization of special interest groups during development programming, planning and service delivery; High unemployment rates of Persons with Disabilities; and Stigma and discrimination

- The above-mentioned barriers generate significant disability related extra costs for Persons with Disabilities and their families which again increase their vulnerabilities. They have also led to inequalities in attaining the SDGs among them. These inequalities affect all Persons with Disabilities but are even heightened for women and girls arising from multiple barriers faced at all ages.
- Uganda has made efforts to ensure that there is disability inclusion through; the legal and policy frameworks, designating a minister of state for disability and Members of Parliament for Persons with Disabilities, creating and operationalising the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Equal Opportunities Commission. The Government of Uganda has worked closely with key stakeholders since the adoption of SDGs to ensure that no one is left behind through three mutually reinforcing “levels” that Uganda: 1) Empower through civic engagement and voice; 2) Enact through integrated, equity-focused SDG policies, interventions, and budgets; and: 3) Examine, through use of disaggregated and people-driven data and information.
- As Government we are committed to; Build capacity of Districts and Lower Councils for Persons with Disabilities to perform their functions stipulated in PWDs Act 2020; Build capacity of Ministries, Departments and Agencies to implement Disability Inclusive Plans; Build capacity of District Leadership to incorporate PWDs in EFMIS; Create awareness to PWDs on the

programs, how to access special grant for Persons with Disabilities, mobilize them into groups and build their capacity to generate marketable enterprises; a non-discrimination framework which prohibits discrimination across all areas of life and ensures that reasonable accommodation is available to persons with disabilities is essential.

- Accessibility that involves addressing and preventing barriers which restrict the participation of persons with disabilities; Support for persons with disabilities (assistive technology and support services) which allows them to benefit from policies and programmes alongside their peers and partially remedies limitations in accessibility; Participation of persons with disabilities ensures that their valuable expertise and experiences shape policy and programmes, to ensure the most effective solutions; Awareness-raising for and about persons with disabilities contributes to combating negative stereotypes and promotes knowledge about, and respect for, their rights and dignity; Coordinate and resource a unified, cross-cutting approach to disability.
- As the SDG Secretariat, we commit; to work through the Data TWG to ensure that disability disaggregated data is available; to ensure that the disability issues are mainstreamed in the National Development frameworks such as the NDP IV. We also commit to creating more awareness about Disability issues so that every individual acts to ensure that they are not left behind. A case of the NPA Disability Inclusive Planning Guidelines.
- Lastly, Uganda will be participating in the UN SDG Summit in September 2023 where world leaders will carry out a comprehensive review of the state of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), respond to the impact of multiple

and interlocking crises facing the world, and provide high-level political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions towards the target year of 2030. As a country, we have come up with an SDG rescue plan through six inclusive commitments that will be presented by the President of Uganda at the UN SDG Summit.

- These commitments were developed through an extensive consultative process that included consultations with various Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, Local Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, and academia. These commitments too are inclusive of Persons with Disabilities.
- To achieve the pledge to *leave no one behind*, we are using a three-pronged approach: To *examine* the disadvantages people face, to *empower* those who are left behind or are at risk of being left behind; and to *enact* inclusive, far-sighted, progressive SDG policies. Our efforts to leave no one behind will be a test of our common vision.

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