



Federal Government Commissioner  
for Matters relating to  
Persons with Disabilities



# GLOBAL INCLUSION SUMMIT 2022

**Building an inclusive world together**

**Chairs' Summary**

Berlin, 2 September 2022

*Chairs' Summary by Jürgen Dusel, Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities and by the G7 Member States' representatives of the interests of persons with disabilities.*

## **1. Introduction**

We, the G7 advocates and representatives for matters relating to persons with disabilities of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the European Union, met today in Berlin. India and Indonesia participated as guest countries.

The G7 countries agreed on concrete measures and steps to be taken together to bolster the empowerment and participation in society of persons with disabilities in relation to mitigating the global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, digital transformation and the green transition. The European Union provides support through its Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

Reiterating the G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Ukraine, we condemn the Russian Federation's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people. We are deeply concerned about the far-reaching economic, health, social, food security, human rights and political consequences of Russia's war of aggression both regionally and globally. The G7 advocates and representatives for matters relating to persons with disabilities are also deeply concerned about the impact over the conditions of persons with disabilities and ask for special attention to the welcome of refugees with disabilities and their children and families.

Worldwide, there are more than one billion persons with disabilities. That is around 15 % of the world's population. Sustainable and comprehensive statistical and research data is crucial to inform the design of policy aiming to identify and address barriers faced by persons with disabilities in exercising their rights. Quality data, as well as long-term research, are essential for effective monitoring of progress in the implementation of obligations set by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The G7 advocates and representatives for matters relating to persons with disabilities recognize that the global COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted weaknesses in health systems and care, including for persons with disabilities. The pandemic also accelerated digital transformation, in an unprecedented fashion, with both positive and negative impacts for persons with disabilities. In addition, persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

To meet these challenges, significant adjustments in all areas of life for persons with disabilities are necessary. The green transition and digital transformation will only be successful if done in a disability-inclusive approach in the spirit of “Nothing without Us”, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities principles of equality, anti-discrimination, participation and inclusion and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure no one is left behind. The G7 advocates and representatives therefore emphasize the need for increased efforts to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Agreement.

They also reaffirm their commitment to the rules-based multilateral system and to sustainable development based on international human rights obligations and commitments, including those under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We look forward to continuing our cooperation on issues of equal participation of persons with disabilities in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **2. Providing health care for persons with disabilities during pandemics**

The G7 advocates and representatives for matters relating to persons with disabilities are aware that during pandemics persons with disabilities are uniquely affected. The measures to protect public health during the pandemic resulted in further inequity toward members of this group. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted and exacerbated existing disadvantages faced by persons with disabilities in terms of health care and access to adequate social protection. It also had a major impact on other areas of the participation of persons with disabilities within society. Overall, persons with disabilities were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, also because of a higher risk of working in low-paid, informal and precarious jobs.

We are committed to working on promoting efforts to protect persons with disabilities, not only efforts to promote public health in times of global health crises, but also raising awareness of the challenges faced by members of this heterogeneous and diverse group facing a higher risk of unmet health needs and exclusion.

The G7 advocates and representatives recognize the importance of ensuring persons with disabilities and their representatives are involved in all crisis teams and pandemic-related committees to work to ensure that their concerns are taken into account from the outset.

They will continue to work towards the elimination of all barriers for persons with disabilities to equal access to health care and inclusive job opportunities at the national level as quickly as possible with a view to achieving universal health coverage. Financial, architectural, communicative and digital barriers all reinforce existing inequalities, especially in pandemic situations.

We will make every effort to encourage the implementation of national action to achieve the highest attainable standards of health for persons with disabilities. The G7 advocates and representatives welcome the WHO's initiative to develop a new European Framework for action to achieve the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities (2022–2030), thus also supporting the European Union Health Union with a view to persons with disabilities as set out in the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

### **3. Digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The use of new digital technologies is transforming many areas of our lives, including the way we learn, work, move around, communicate and obtain information. Digital applications utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) play a special role in supporting people with complex tasks such as perception and interaction. AI can help advance accessibility as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with the objective to achieve inclusive equality.

The G7 advocates and representatives are aware that the use of AI raises ethical and legal questions. Biases in data sets can lead to the reproduction of prejudice, marginalisation and exclusion. They agree that there is a need to examine and question the underlying standards of "normal" and "ability" that are reproduced and reinforced in the design and implementation of AI systems.

Conversely, the responsible use of data can greatly accelerate the development of life changing interventions for vulnerable populations. There is a growing recognition that by developing responsible tools and practices for innovation in this sector, the benefits of these technologies can be seized, whilst mitigating the risks.

We will work to ensure that decisive action is taken to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination as a result of AI systems. It is also important to the G7 advocates and representatives that sensitive data be handled with care. Use of AI technologies and automated decision-making systems should be fair and transparent. For that, standards for

trustworthy and responsible AI should be developed. The G7 advocates and representatives recognize that AI must be used responsibly and in a way that is centred around people, in accordance with their rights.

One central insight over the course of digital transformation so far is that accessibility must be taken into account and implemented from the outset so that digital applications actually lead to more participation in society. The G7 advocates and representatives are therefore committed to working towards expanding and strengthening the participation in society and the labour market of persons with disabilities in order to benefit from an inclusive digital transformation. The concept of universal design is also to be applied consistently.

Persons with disabilities often also need access to digital applications and AI-based assistance systems. These technologies should be accessible and affordable. The G7 advocates and representatives are committed to seeing digital literacy and access to relevant skills and training supported so that persons with disabilities are encouraged and empowered to engage with AI-based applications, to learn how they work, and to use them in an informed and self-determined way. This comprises provision of staff training in making digital tools and AI inclusive for all. It is also important to have accessible complaints mechanisms established for persons with disabilities experiencing disadvantages due to AI-based technologies and automated decision-making systems.

The G7 advocates and representatives want to actively influence the course of digital transformation for the benefit of all people. People can only benefit from new technologies if the technologies empower people, and if people can equitably access and use them. For these reasons, it is necessary to support universal design as a standard way to project public and private services and infrastructures.

#### **4. Participation in climate action and climate adaptation measures**

Persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to participate in taking action to address climate change at all levels, including through working in the green economy. The preamble of the Paris Agreement states that parties should respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities, when taking action to address climate change. We recognize the need for protection and safety of persons with disabilities in the event of natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies and situations of armed conflict such as the current war in Ukraine in line with Article

11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including awareness raising and training programmes. The G7 advocates and representatives of matters relating to persons with disabilities join together in advocating for the successful protection of persons with disabilities through their active participation and consultation of their representative organizations, including financial resources, for disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

They are committed to promoting the involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations at an early stage in legislative processes, programmes and projects. For example, persons with disabilities should be included in the design of new online platforms, such as apps and websites to control solar panels or other smart home applications, as well as infrastructure like active travel plans and charging stations for electric vehicles. These should all be accessible to persons with disabilities and this is best achieved through their active engagement and participation in their development.

Persons with disabilities tend to have less access to education, health services, employment and vocational training opportunities, water, sanitation and adequate housing, and disproportionately experience poverty. They are thus particularly affected by the consequences of climate change. In the Paris Agreement, the parties are called upon to formulate adaptation plans to promote the implementation of adaptation actions. The G7 advocates and representatives confirm that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations should also be involved in these processes. For example, it is important to ensure there are adequate measures to offset the increased cost of energy from transitions to a green economy, such as from carbon pricing. At the same time, policies for a green transition create new job opportunities, including for persons with disabilities.

Considering that sustainable development only makes sense if it is fully inclusive and equitable, the G7 advocates and representatives are also committed to ensuring that the perspectives of persons with disabilities are always taken into account when building or rebuilding climate-resilient infrastructure. In particular, following floods and storms, there is often debate about how and where to rebuild critical infrastructure, such as hospitals, nursing homes, facilities that are relevant for persons with disabilities and schools. The perspective of persons with disabilities is essential to this issue. This also applies to the creation of additional green spaces for heat protection and the expansion of inclusive and accessible local and long-distance public transportation.