# Global Disability Summit

# 24th July 2018. Official Readout.

# Overview

On 24 July 2018, the UK government co-hosted its first ever Global Disability Summit with the [International Disability Alliance](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/summit) and the [Government of Kenya](http://www.mygov.go.ke/government-diary/labour-and-social-protection-cs-to-open-disability-conference/). The Summit was attended by approximately 1200 delegates from around the world, including the President of Ecuador, the Vice-President of Argentina, five heads of UN agencies and over 40 government Ministers from around the world.  67 countries were represented, along with nearly every multilateral agency and leading figures in the global disability community. The Summit raised global attention and focus on a long-neglected area, mobilised new global and national commitments and showcased good practice, innovation and evidence from around the world.

# What did we achieve?

# The Global Disability Summit resulted in 170 sets of ambitious commitments, and over 320 organisations and governments signed up to the Summit’s [Charter for Change](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-disability-summit-charter-for-change) – an action plan to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Among the most significant pledges made were commitments to pass transformative new laws to protect the rights of people with disabilities, as well as assurances to help those affected by humanitarian crises. There were also commitments to help millions of persons with disabilities access affordable assistive technology. Please see further detail of the commitments made [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/global-disability-summit-commitments).

# Plenary Sessions

# The Summit was opened by Summit co-hosts [UK International Development Secretary](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/penny-mordaunts-opening-speech-at-global-disability-summit); Ana Lucia Arellano, [the Chair of the International Disability Alliance](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/summit) and the Cabinet Secretary for Labour and Social Protection, Amb. Ukur Yatani, [Government of Kenya](http://www.mygov.go.ke/government-diary/labour-and-social-protection-cs-to-open-disability-conference/). They were followed by keynotes speeches from:

* **Lenin Moreno, President of Ecuador** called for [greater responsibility by the international community](https://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/en/presentation-by-the-president-of-ecuador-at-the-disabilities-summit-in-london/) to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and in praise of the social model of disability. After he became vice-president of Ecuador in 2007, he led on a sweeping series of policies that aimed to transform life for people with disabilities in Ecuador. President Moreno explained that his Government is currently promoting “Plan Toda Una Vida”, a plan that protects the rights of all people from conception to the end of life.
* **Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator**  [set out the importance of the 2030 Agenda](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2018/global-disability-summit.html) – and its core pledge to leave no one behind.  The UN committed to do much more and to do it better. He explained that the UN Secretary-General has launched a comprehensive review of how the UN supports the rights of persons with disabilities – covering accessibility, employment, and mainstreaming in development and humanitarian action. The new UN system-wide policy, action plan and accountability framework on disabilities will be ready by early 2019.
* **Kristalina Georgieva, World Bank CEO** [made significant new commitments](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/07/24/world-bank-group-announces-new-commitments-on-disability-inclusion)to accelerate global action for disability-inclusive development. The commitments include ensuring all WB-financed education programmes and projects are disability-inclusive by 2025; ensuring that 75 percent of WB-financed social protection projects are disability-inclusive by 2025; ensuring that all WB-financed digital development projects use universal design and accessibility standards and scaling up disability data collection and use, guided by global standards, such as using the [Washington Group’s Short Set of Questions on Disability](http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/short-set-of-disability-questions/).
* **Madame Haidi, China Disabled Persons’ Federation and Rehabilitation International** asserted that disability is an issue for all humanity, an issue we need to face together. CDPF is an organization for China’s 85 million citizens with disabilities. CDPF has gathered information on over 33 million persons registered with disabilities, and a big data system is being built on this basis to support targeted service. CDPF looks forward to exchanging experiences on assistive technology and Madame Haidi called for setting up a World Disability Organization under the UN to guide and coordinate disability affairs worldwide.

# The Global Disability Summit had four core themes 1. [Dignity and Respect for All](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-disability-summit-dignity-and-respect-for-all-creating-new-norms-tackling-stigma-and-ensuring-non-discrimination); 2. [Inclusive Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-disability-summit-inclusion-in-education); 3. [Routes to Economic Empowerment](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-disability-summit-routes-to-economic-empowerment); 4. [Harnessing Technology and Innovation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-disability-summit-harnessing-technology-and-innovation--2) - each of which was presented in a main plenary session.

**PLENARY 2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – KEY MESSAGES**

* This session discussed how inclusive education means all children learning at the same school, in the same classroom, with the same teacher, and playing in the same classroom. Everyone has the right to a quality education but there is no one size fits all approach for ensuring access to school for all children.
* Key challenges to address are the capacity of teachers, opportunities for people with disabilities to become teachers, accessibility of schools and of learning materials,
* All children need to be able to communicate. It is key to happiness and to being able to lead fulfilling, productive lives. A short clip from the [Silent Child film](https://www.thesilentchildmovie.com/) was shown followed by an interview with the stars of the film: Rachel Shenton and Maisie Sly.
* UNICEF pledged to work with partners to enable an additional 30 million children with disabilities gain an education by 2030.
* DFID’s International Development Secretary announced the new Inclusive Education Initiative which will pool partners’ resources and expertise to support developing countries realise the promise of truly inclusive schooling and teaching where all children can learn.

**PLENARY 1 DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR ALL – KEY MESSAGES**

* The first plenary focused upon the importance of moving from rhetoric to action – ensuring ‘nothing about us, without us’ has genuine meaning. The first panel, chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner of Human Rights, placed the issue of dignity into the context of human rights and power dynamics. This was not a disability summit but a peoples’ summit and she linked the agenda to the universal declaration of human rights.
* Panellists highlighted a range of practical barriers within countries that affect dignity and participation. A key message was the need for policy change as much as programme support. The importance of those with disabilities being in positions of leadership and decision-making is vital as is the importance of technology.
* Finally, the vice-president of Argentina, showcased the progress that her country has made in addressing exclusion – working from national to local level and focusing on specific policy interventions as required.

# Spotlights

**PLENARY 4 HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION – KEY MESSAGES**

* Globally, only one in ten people are getting access to the assistive technology (AT) they need. This session brought together a range of leaders committed to driving a step-change in access to assistive technologies globally.
* DFID’s International Development Secretary outlined her ambition to revolutionize access to AT and launched the [AT Scale](https://atscale2030.org/) global partnership which aims to enable half a billion more people access AT by 2030. She also announced a new programme, AT2030, that will catalyse new technologies and service delivery models, spark 30 new start-ups and mobilise the private sector to help at least three million people access AT.
* The Government of Kenya set out their commitment; establishing an AT Hub to promote research and innovation; developing inclusive training in entrepreneurial and digital skills; and ensuring that people with disabilities are central to decision making.
* In an engaging panel discussion, we heard from leaders in government, the UN, civil society and the private sector on their commitments to support AT access and affordability, involve people with disabilities in design and develop more inclusive, sustainable market based approaches to AT.

**PLENARY 3 ROUTES TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT – KEY MESSAGES**

* This session highlighted the importance of economic empowerment, the removal of barriers, and providing social protection and skills training for people with disabilities.
* One billion people have a disability and businesses should not deny themselves access to such a pool of talent. Unilever, for example, committed to be the number one employer of choice for people with disabilities by 2025.
* Inclusion is the most powerful force on the planet, and if business is not inclusive, society cannot not be either. The market potential is huge ($6 trillion) as is the potential for our communities and our society. Sitting on the fence is tantamount to exclusion.
* ILO’s Global Business and Disability Network provides a framework in which companies, global as well as local and in developing countries, can learn from each other on how to make their employment practices more inclusive of persons with disabilities.
* Creation of opportunities for refugees with disabilities is essential. Drastic measures are needed including better work opportunities, financial and technical resources to start small businesses, capacity building, empowerment training and assistive technology. Tackling stigma is a key first step, and this should all be delivered in partnership with DPOs.

The Summit had eight ‘spotlight’ sessions throughout the day: each focused on a different critical issue. This enabled further discussion and new commitments from attendees.

# Understanding Gender, Disability, Voice and Violence

* Women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience violence (2-4 times more likely than women without disabilities). But violence is preventable, and that there is now a small but growing body of evidence on what works to end such violence;
* The Canadian Development Minister set out how Canada will prioritise women and girls with disabilities in their feminist development policy and support UN Women to deliver their new disability strategy. Women and girls with disabilities are powerful agents for change, key architects and implementers of policy and programmes combatting violence, leaders that must be cultivated, well-resourced within the gender & disability communities & movements.

**We Lead and We Advocate – Leaders among the Disability Movement**

* The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment in India discussed ground-breaking provisions in the Indian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, and other steps being taken to strengthen the inclusion of people with disabilities in India.
* Participants gave inspiring talks on disability and leadership, sharing personal anecdotes from around the world in challenging circumstances, and reflecting on the transformative power of collaboration and connectivity in leadership.
* Simmons and Simmons announced that they are exploring the potential to offer pro bono advice to disabled people’s organisations in the Middle East.

**My Health, My Right – Promoting the Sexual and Reproductive and Health Rights of People with Disabilities**

* Participants discussed how women with disabilities face additional barriers in accessing sexual health services despite a universal right to access health. These barriers include negative perceptions by healthcare workers, inaccessible infrastructure and high costs of specialised services.
* Participants reiterated the importance of women with disabilities having the freedom to determine and control their own health and family planning decisions.  There was an emphasis on people with disabilities being involved in the processes to guide solutions.
* Participants discussed the approaches being taken to promote disability inclusion in sexual health services; for example, increasing the number of sign language interpreters who can provide accurate rights based information; advocacy with Government stakeholders; funding some services to enable free access for people with disabilities.

**From Isolation to Inclusion – Disability Inclusion and Infrastructure**

* Infrastructure is a fundamental physical barrier to social inclusion.
* People with disabilities need to be engaged early on in design stages and continued engagement through implementation, and data needs to inform accessible design.
* Accessible infrastructure does not just mean ramps and braille, we need to consider pan-impairments- including visual, psychosocial.
* Good design of infrastructure often means simply good design for all. It makes sense.

**Ending Invisibility - Disability Data and Inclusive Development**

* This session built awareness of the collection and use of disability data to understand and address the scale, and nature, of challenges faced by persons with disabilities. It served as a vehicle for announcements from a number of organisations.
* The **DFID-LCD** [Disability Data Portal](https://www.disabilitydataportal.com/) **was announced**, and DFID Minister Lord Bates announced that DFID, together with co-hosts the Government of Kenya, and the World Bank, are signing up to the Inclusive Data Charter.
* The **new OECD DAC Disability Marker was announced**. Sweden, Australia, Finland, Canada, Belgium, Italy and UK all committed to use the marker for their reporting.
* The **WHO** re-expressed their support for the Inclusive Data Charter and called for all countries to measure disability in household surveys, using the Short Set of Washington Group questions or the short version of the WHO’s Model Disability Survey.

**From Promise to Practice in Humanitarian Response - Increasing the Voice of People with Disabilities**

* Humanitarian agencies set out how they are trying to do better in responding to the needs of people with disabilities. There is no silver bullet, but the central, fundamental requirement is to include people with disabilities and their organisations in planning for and implementing responses to humanitarian crises.
* If we want to succeed (promise to practice) we need also to challenge our assumptions and push our limits. People with disabilities are not victims they are actors.
* OCHA committed to promote greater inclusion across the humanitarian community, at every level of preparedness and response. This will include the dissemination of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee levels system-wide guidelines for the inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian action, to be finalised by early 2019.

**Leave No One Behind – Diverse Experiences, Common Goals**

* The ‘left behind’ refers to those people whose identity, or affiliation with one or more groups, means they face specific discrimination and lack voice and power. Through personal testimonies, this session took a people-centred approach to explore the diverse and multidimensional lived experiences of people with disabilities across the life course.
* The discussion focused on how discrimination on the basis of disability is compounded by discrimination rooted in other intersecting identities and inequalities – such as gender, age, ethnicity, displacement, conflict, geography, and nationality.
* The speakers explored both their commonalities and differences across the life course, making the case for more inclusive and connected policy and programmatic responses where we reach the furthest behind first.

**Beyond Immediate Needs – Lessons from Syria and the Region**

* This was a productive, and rich discussion, that brought together a wide range of voices into the discussion and covered a lot of ground, including data, stigma and discrimination, accessible transport, impact on the ground and education.
* Speeches and the panel discussion focussed on the need for partnerships – both between different sectors, and countries – to adequately integrate provisions for people with disabilities into the humanitarian response, not only in short term immediate provisions, but across long term initiatives. In the chair’s words, this is the way to turn ‘rhetoric into action’.
* Australia’s Development Minister concluded by announcing £16.4m for inclusive humanitarian initiatives for the needs of persons with disabilities in Syria and the region. This includes specialised programmes specifically tailored for each country in the region.

There were also several closed roundtable discussions:

* the new Global Partnership on assistive technology: [AT Scale](https://atscale2030.org/);
* the UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership on the economic empowerment of people with disabilities in Kenya;
* young people with disabilities,
* Disability Inclusion across the African Region: Africa Disability Protocol: from Ratification to Implementation;
* Global humanitarian leaders.

# Next Steps

Following the Summit, the Department for International Development, alongside the co-hosts, are working to develop an accountability mechanism to support and monitor progress made against the new commitments. An online portal is being created on the [International Disability Alliance website](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/summit) to ensure all commitments are highly visible and accessible, and a key stakeholder group and a partnership forum have been established to design a long-term approach to accountability. Progress against the commitments will be monitored and a one-year on progress report produced to share good practice and lessons learnt.

If you are interested in being a part of this movement, please email globaldisabilitysummit@dfid.gov.uk.