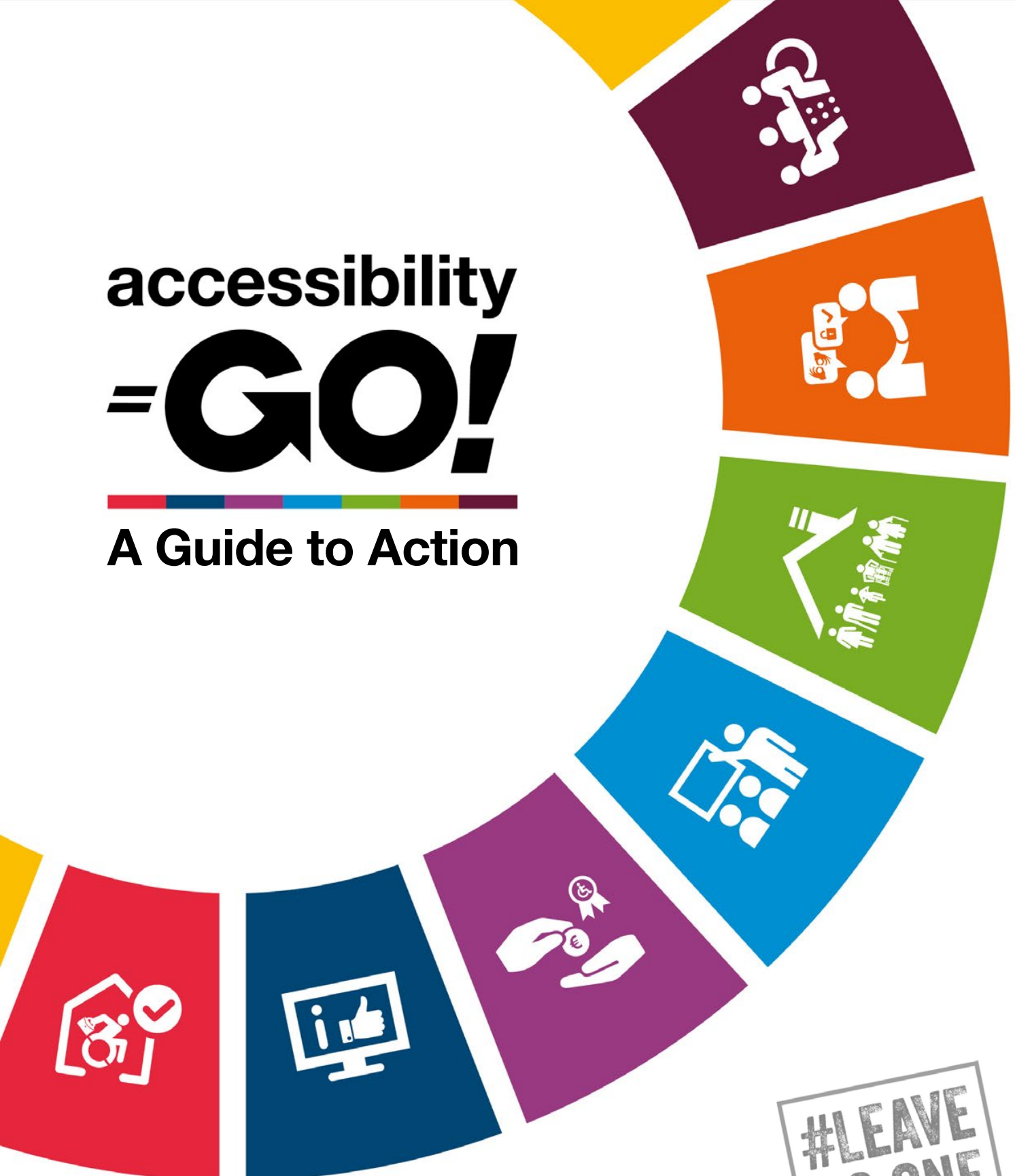# accessibility =GO!

A Guide to Action

#LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Delivering on 7 accessibility commitments

The World Blind Union (WBU)

The World Blind Union is the sole voice speaking on behalf of an estimated 253 million blind and partially sighted persons worldwide. Our members consist of organizations of and for blind and partially sighted persons in over 190 countries. We have over 250 member organizations.

Our work is driven by our vision of a world in which we, as blind and partially sighted persons, can participate fully in any aspect of life we choose. We advocate for equal opportunities, protection and promotion of fundamental human rights of all blind and partially sighted persons, to ensure that our voice is heard.

For more information visit WBU's Website
World Blind Union Head Office
1929 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4G3E8

CBM Global Disability Inclusion

CBM Global works alongside people with disabilities in the world's poorest places to fight poverty and exclusion and transform lives. Drawing on over 100 years' experience, we work with the most marginalised in society to break the cycle of poverty and disability and build inclusive communities where everyone can enjoy their human rights and fulfil their full potential.

We invest in long-term, authentic partnership with the Disability Movement and multiply our impact by delivering a combination of inclusive community-based programmes, advocacy for national and global policy change, and inclusion advice to other organisations.

For more information visit CBM Global's Website
CBM Global Disability Inclusion
Dr.-Werner-Freyberg-Str. 7,
69514 Laudenbach, Germany

accessibility = GO!

A Guide to Action: Delivering on 7 accessibility commitments

Acknowledgements

Contents

Structure of the guide

This guide includes:
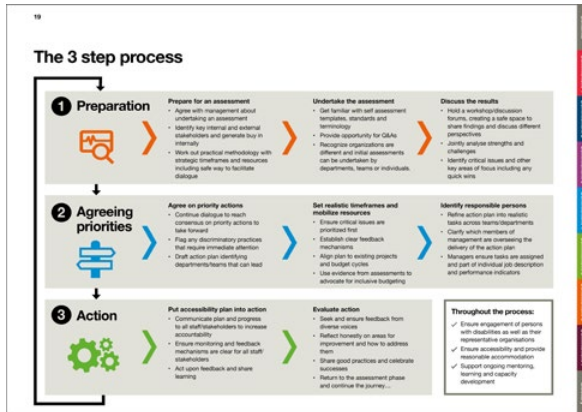
A 3-step process for guidance on how to deliver your accessibility commitments using an approach that is underpinned by the principles outlined above. It offers key considerations from preparing and undertaking an assessment, to putting your accessibility plan into action and evaluating it.
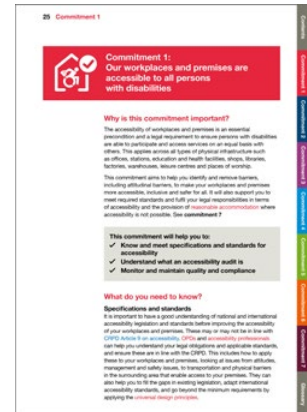
Information about 7 accessibility commitments that have been structured into the following sections:

- **Why is this commitment important?** clarifies the purpose of each accessibility commitment

- **What do you need to know?** provides key considerations, tips and knowledge that will help you understand what each commitment entails

- **What does meeting this commitment look like?** gives you clear and simple indicators to measure your progress

- **Self-assessment template** includes questions and a marking scheme to help you undertake an assessment of each commitment

- **References and useful resources** include relevant and useful tools, standards, guidelines, publications, organisations and networks. These include hyperlinks, where available, to these resources online

Tip Boxes and reminders ⚠ are included throughout the commitments to highlight key points to consider.

TIP

6 advocacy briefs have been spread between the commitment sections to help you make the case within your organisation, and to others, on why accessibility needs to be a critical consideration. These briefs provide you with data and compelling arguments to advocate for improved accessibility.

A glossary of key terms and definitions at the back of the guide provides a common understanding of the terminology used in this guide. The glossary can also be a useful resource when adapting content to different contexts which should be done with the support of local OPDs, especially if translating into other languages.

Navigation aids

The PDF guide includes some navigation aids including:

- Useful terms have been highlighted in red and underlined with a dotted line and hyperlinked to the glossary so you can quickly learn more if you need to.

- You can navigate back from the glossary, by using the page-numbered back buttons e.g. **Back to:** P46

- Hyperlinks to external sites are highlighted in blue and underlined to give access to wider information.

- You can navigate back to your last reading point by clicking on the grey back arrows so you do not lose your place in the document.

- If you rely on visual navigation, you can navigate between the sections of the guide by clicking on the **hyperlinked tool bar** down the right-hand side.

| Commitment 1 | Commitment 2 | Commitment 3 | Commitment 4 | Commitment 5 | Commitment 6 | Commitment 7 | Glossary |

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
4AQ	Accessibility, Availability, Acceptability, Affordability & Quality
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDA	International Disability Alliance
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISOs	International Organization for Standardization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (also known as DPO)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLIs	Sign Language Interpreters
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (formerly UNISDR)
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UN HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Definitions

The following definitions are based on the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Article 2](#), except for the definition on Accessibility, which is based on [CRPD Article 9.](#) They are drawn from the CRPD and underpin this guide while the glossary section at the end of the guide is co-created by the authors to make terms easier to understand.

Accessibility means taking appropriate measures to ensure access to persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, among other things:

a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;

b. Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

Communication includes languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology.

Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms

Universal design means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

Please note: The term 'persons with disabilities' is used throughout the guide in compliance with the language of the CRPD.

Foreword

It is time for change

Today, we have an opportunity to shape a better life for everyone. It is time for all stakeholders: central governments regional and local governments, businesses, not-for-profits, Academia, UN agencies, donors and civil society organisations alike to play their role in ensuring that accessibility is not an afterthought, but a central driver to promote equality for all. Accessibility is a fundamental right, it saves lives, enables participation and is a pre-requisite to make inclusion and resilience possible within all communities, schools and workplaces.

Since 2006, with the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), we have witnessed many achievements towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities. However, unexpected, and widespread events, like the Covid-19 pandemic, reminds us that much more remains to be done to address persistent accessibility barriers that feed inequality and the exclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons across the globe.

Now is the time to act so that, in the coming 10 years we can meet the global commitment to leave no-one behind in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Today, 1 billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability. Many of which face systemic, environmental discrimination and barriers that restrict them from participating in society on an equal basis with others. By 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in cities, of these over 2 billion will be persons with disabilities and older persons.

The urgency is to act now, to find accessible, greener solutions that can create safe inclusive places. The answer to this critical challenge begins with a willingness to change and a few collective steps forward. Organisations around the world must decide how to adapt their structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of all and promote accessibility in their communities.

I am therefore thrilled to introduce the *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action* as a practical resource to make change happen – supporting your organisation to take action. We have no more excuses to justify why persons with disabilities and marginalised groups are systemically left behind. Our recognition as equal members of society will bring prosperity to all within a world that is respectful, safe and celebrates human diversity.

I congratulate this WBU's call to action!

Prof. Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes
Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility
Twitter: @Disability_SE

Joint statement from WBU & CBM Global Disability Inclusion

Being part of the change

The World Blind Union, representing the estimated 253 million people who are blind and partially sighted worldwide and a founding member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA), and **CBM Global Disability Inclusion**, an international federation and member of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), have come together as partners to develop this *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action*.

Our organisations share a mutual commitment to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, ensuring and promoting accessibility based on the principles of universal design in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We believe that the direction organisations take to make their systems, practices and programmes accessible for and inclusive of persons with disabilities will be the determinant of how we live up to the promises of an inclusive world for all.

With 10 years to realise the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), we recognise that accessibility is foundational to build a more inclusive equitable world where no-one is left behind. Recent examples of global crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, reminds us that much remains be done to address persisting and emerging accessibility barriers which sustain inequalities and exclusion of persons with disabilities. It has shone a light on the need for inclusive and accessible infrastructure as one of the most critical challenges of the 21st century.

With this *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action*, we want to inspire our members, staff and partners at all levels to join efforts and engage with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to lead for change and model accessibility practices across all areas of work, with a special focus on those most marginalised. We acknowledge the diversity of organisations who are working to improve accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities across the globe. We recognise that good accessibility requires both long-term planning and investments towards universal design, as well as adopting immediate measures to ensure equality and non-discrimination.

We firmly believe this *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action* can support meaningful partnerships between Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and our mainstream partners at all levels and in all sectors. With this *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action*, we want organisations across the world to practice and model the highest level of accountability to persons with disabilities and ensure that accessibility standards set down by the CRPD are met.

Together as partners, WBU and CBM Global Disability Inclusion call upon every organisation to join us in promoting accessibility as a basic right and pre-condition for all persons with disabilities to actively contribute to every aspect of the social, cultural, economic and political lives of their communities.

Jose Viera
Chief Executive Officer
World Blind Union

David Bainbridge
Executive Director
CBM Global Disability Inclusion

The business case for accessibility

Delivering the 7 accessibility commitments in this guide will help you to:

Meet legal obligations

✔ Comply with domestic and international law
✔ Avoid expensive litigation
✔ Promote transparency and accountability

Increase resilience

✔ Provide safer environments
✔ Be better prepared for crisis and reduce negative impact of disasters
✔ Build Back Better and reduce inequalities

Be economical

✔ Save money by including accessibility from the start
✔ Improve productivity and innovation through greater diversity of skills and expertise
✔ Increase your customer base

Create more inclusive cities and communities

✔ Support independence, autonomy, and mobility for everyone
✔ Promote equality and access to public spaces and services
✔ Increase the social, political, economic, and cultural participation of all

Be environmentally friendly

✔ Reduce your carbon footprint and resource consumption
✔ Improve equitable access to green spaces
✔ Increase access to local resources and markets

Promote wellbeing and do no harm

✔ Reduce isolation and segregation
✔ Provide healthy environments that improve quality of life for all
✔ Increase public engagement and reduce risk of misuse of public funds

Purpose of this Guide

Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action aims to provide practical support on how to deliver a whole-of-organisation approach towards accessibility. It describes how to progressively achieve 7 core accessibility commitments across built environments, information and communications, procurement of goods and services, training and capacity development, programmes, meetings and events, recruitment and human resource (HR) management.

This guide is not a blueprint. Rather, it offers pathways to progressively realise accessibility in various contexts and organisations; recognising that users of the guide will come from different starting points. Organisations, individual teams and departments may want to use this guide to support their work in a variety of ways, including:

- **Advocacy:** to promote reasonable accommodation, accessibility and universal design by informing and influencing change within organisations and communities including legislation, policies, budget programmes and practices.

- **Capacity development:** to support development of skills and knowledge on inclusion and accessibility where staff and practitioners learn what accessibility means and gain confidence on how to deliver it.

- **Accountability:** to support an organisational culture of action and transparency where accessibility is everyone's responsibility regardless of their function, be it operations, finance, programmes, communications, fundraising or HR

- **Participation:** to support the creation of an environment where everyone can meaningfully participate in decision making processes, and where organisations gain the benefit of the diverse points of view that will make them healthier and more successful environments.

This guide promotes equality for all persons with disabilities

When people think of accessibility, they tend to consider the needs of people with more visible disabilities and obvious support requirements, such as people who are blind, people who are Deaf, or people with a physical disability. Accessibility requirements for people with psycho-social disabilities or intellectual disabilities, on the other hand, often go unnoticed.

In this guide, when we use the term 'persons with disabilities', we want you to think of all people, especially those people with disabilities who are so often overlooked. So here are just some of the people you need to think about… people with albinism, people with autism, people with cerebral palsy, people who are Deafblind, people with Downs Syndrome, people who are hard of hearing, people with leprosy, people who have low vision, people with psycho-social disabilities, people of short stature, people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, people who have had life changing injuries and scars from burns…

We could go on, but our message here is remember to think of the rich diversity of persons with disabilities when working on accessibility.

Who is this Guide for?

Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action is a resource designed to be used by a wide range of organisations including small community-based organisations, local municipalities, businesses, multi-lateral corporations, social enterprises, non-governmental organisations, or UN agencies, among others. It is designed as a resource that can be adapted for use by teams and departments to respond to diverse organisational needs, realities, and contexts. This could include humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, city management and development, or service delivery.

Accessibility is everyone's business and requires a broad engagement of staff and departments within your organisation. Below is a description of who has a responsibility under each commitment.

Commitment 1
Our workplaces and premises are accessible to all persons with disabilities

Who is responsible?
Staff who have administrative and logistical responsibilities, particularly those in charge of overseeing HR, budgets, tenders and legal contracting as well as maintenance and safety of offices and premises.

Commitment 2
Our information and communications, including systems and technologies, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

Who is responsible?
Staff responsible for ICT and communications particularly those who are in charge of managing websites, digital content, marketing and procurement of ICT products. Everyone in an organisation is generating content or engaging in some form of communication, so all staff are responsible for meeting this commitment.

Commitment 3
Our procurement of goods, services and facilities include consideration of accessibility criteria and standards

Who is responsible?
Staff who have finance, operational and procurement responsibilities, especially those who are responsible for overseeing budgets, tenders and legal contracting – regardless of the department be it finance, administration, operations, services and products, programmes, marketing, HR, fundraising, research and development.

Commitment 4

Capacity development, knowledge management and learning systems are designed and supported to be inclusive and accessible so that all can equally contribute and benefit

Who is responsible?

Staff who are in charge of overseeing and implementing capacity development in the organisation, including ensuring that there are appropriate budgets as well as learning and mentoring mechanisms in place. This guidance is also relevant for any person who is responsible for managing staff and ensuring that colleagues have the knowledge and support to move accessibility forward.

Commitment 5

Our programmes and services are non-discriminatory and accessible to all persons with disabilities in their communities regardless of age, gender, faith, ethnicity or any other identity characteristic

Who is responsible?

All staff working in local government, private sector, civil society, community development or humanitarian contexts who are involved in programme planning, design, delivery and evaluation. This commitment is also relevant for finance and operations staff supporting programmes and responsible for budgeting and financial management. Equally for staff involved in advocacy, communications, marketing, research and knowledge management who support and rely on programme data.

Commitment 6

Our meetings and events, online and in person, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

Who is responsible?

Staff responsible for, or involved in organising internal and external meetings, presentations, webinars, and other events. Planning a meeting or event usually requires cross-departmental cooperation, be it finance, logistics, administration, security, communications or marketing, so it is important that all teams are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities under this commitment.

Commitment 7

Our workplaces promote an inclusive and accessible environment that supports all staff to thrive, with provision of reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities where needed

Who is responsible?

Staff from all departments, who have line management responsibilities or are involved in supporting staff development. This ranges from recruiting, mentoring and peer support, to more specific responsibilities for ensuring work-based health and safety of staff, contractors, consultants, and volunteers. This commitment can help all staff better understand their rights, roles and responsibilities in contributing towards building inclusive work cultures where everyone belongs.

How to use this Guide?

This guide provides a 3-step process for delivering on 7 accessibility commitments within your organisation. Useful resources have also been included or referenced in the guide, to support you on your journey toward greater accessibility. How you use this guide is up to you, but your approach should be underpinned by the following principles:

Align with human rights principles and approaches

The general principles of the CRPD Article 3 underpin the 7 commitments and must guide your approach in promoting accessibility and the principles of universal design. The CRPD Article 5 on equality and non-discrimination frames and drives the content of this Guide. This requires you to promote equality and ensure that you do not discriminate, including on the basis of disability. Therefore, in the absence of accessibility you have a duty to provide reasonable accommodation.

Engage with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations as experts in their own right

This is important in the context of universal design, which emphasises learning from people's experiences. It is therefore critical to use and adapt this guide in partnership with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) who can support you through the process. CRPD General Comment 7 provides you with guidance on the full and effective participation of all persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.

Leave no one behind: provide specific measures to ensure the equal participation of all

Accessibility is about inclusion. By committing to accessibility, you are also committing to the inclusion of all people. This includes those who have less voice or power and are marginalised. For this to happen, you will need to ensure that specific measures are in place throughout your efforts for under-represented groups to be able to access and participate equally.

Contextualise for your situation

Working to improve accessibility requires you to consider the realities of your context. This means you may need to adapt this guidance to suit your local environment, particularly if you are working in low resource settings, fragile states, or humanitarian situations. When doing so, make sure that you involve OPDs and accessibility professionals, so that you are able to meet the highest attainable standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some frequently asked questions about accessibility that may help you get started.

Should our organisation be working on all 7 commitments at once?

The 7 commitments are interconnected and should be considered together. Realising accessibility across all areas of your work requires continued reflection and an ability to monitor and demonstrate continuous progress towards achieving accessibility. Ideally, organisations should undertake an assessment across all 7 commitments at one time. This will help you gauge your strengths, where you require more action, and allow you to move forward with an action plan that can be reviewed each year. If you do not have the resources, time or possibilities to undertake an organisational assessment across all 7 commitments at one time, it may be more strategic to choose an incremental approach, starting with specific commitments relevant to different departments and building on this.

Are the self-assessment templates the same as an accessibility audit?

This guide is not a formal test, audit or marking scheme to accredit an organisation. This guide is a tool to help organisations begin their accessibility work. This guide encourages you to regularly review and improve your accessibility over time. The self-assessment templates provided in this guide are tools to support a whole-of-organisation approach and

interactive dialogue that will help you assess your organisation across the 7 commitments. Accessibility audits are professional evaluations conducted to measure compliance of specific areas or aspects of your work, like buildings, websites, facilities, services, and systems against applicable standards. Undertaking accessibility audits is only one of multiple actions that your organisation can take to improve accessibility. The need for accessibility audits can be determined based on results and priorities identified during the 3-step process.

How do I connect with OPDs and accessibility professionals?

Addressing accessibility within your organisation will require technical expertise and advice that you may not have in-house. OPDs and accessibility professionals are available at global, regional, national and local levels throughout networks and communities of practice. It is important that you map out the technical expertise available in your area, country or region and that you reach out to diverse groups of people with disabilities, especially those who are less represented. A good source is to call upon the IDA-IDDC Bridge CRPD SDGs initiative which has developed a strong cadre of OPD expertise in disability-inclusive development across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Europe. Another good source of support is the International Association of Accessibility Professionals, which has a range of certified experts on accessibility of digital and built environments, situated across the globe.

The 3-step process

This guide provides a 3-step process to support you to work towards delivering the 7 accessibility commitments. This phased approach will help you strategically focus your priorities and implement higher standards of accessibility over time. This 3-step process can be used by any organisation regardless of size or type, to facilitate reflective and informed decision-making. The process is intended to promote dialogue and buy-in across the organisation, especially ensuring that diverse voices are heard.

Each step can be adapted according to the context of your organisation. However, there are essential requirements throughout the process that should be met to guarantee a participatory and inclusive approach. These are:

- **Ensure the engagement of persons with disabilities and OPDs**
  The expertise and engagement of persons with disabilities is a prerequisite to achieving successful, comprehensive and sustainable accessibility actions. For that, you must reach out to persons with disabilities and their representative organisations which may entail mapping out which OPDs are working nationally or locally in your area and what type of expertise, advice or service they provide. One good practice would be to contract OPDs or accessibility professionals to provide support to your organisation as you engage in the process.

- **Ensure access to decision making processes and provide reasonable accommodation as needed and requested:** This is essential for equal and meaningful participation of diverse people with disabilities in the process and making sure all voices are heard. While working towards accessibility, it will be necessary to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodations when requested – for more information on reasonable accommodations see **Commitment 7**.

- **Support ongoing mentorship, learning and capacity development**
  Accessibility is a learning journey. This means it is important to share knowledge and experiences to help us meet our accessibility goals. Supporting mentorship and learning within your organisation will develop your capacity to identify best solutions and innovation. See **Commitment 4** for more information on capacity development, knowledge management and learning systems.

> **The expertise and engagement of persons with disabilities is a prerequisite to achieving successful, comprehensive and sustainable accessibility actions.**

The 3 step process

1 Preparation

Prepare for an assessment
- Agree with management about undertaking an assessment
- Identify key internal and external stakeholders and generate buy in internally
- Work out practical methodology with strategic timeframes and resources including safe way to facilitate dialogue

Undertake the assessment
- Get familiar with self assessment templates, standards and terminology
- Provide opportunity for Q&As
- Recognize organizations are different and initial assessments can be undertaken by departments, teams or individuals.

Discuss the results
- Hold a workshop/discussion forums, creating a safe space to share findings and discuss different perspectives
- Jointly analyse strengths and challenges
- Identify critical issues and other key areas of focus including any quick wins

2 Agreeing priorities

Agree on priority actions
- Continue dialogue to reach consensus on priority actions to take forward
- Flag any discriminatory practices that require immediate attention
- Draft action plan identifying departments/teams that can lead

Set realistic timeframes and mobilize resources
- Ensure critical issues are prioritized first
- Establish clear feedback mechanisms
- Align plan to existing projects and budget cycles
- Use evidence from assessments to advocate for inclusive budgeting

Identify responsible persons
- Refine action plan into realistic tasks across teams/departments
- Clarify which members of management are overseeing the delivery of the action plan
- Managers ensure tasks are assigned and part of individual job description and performance indicators

3 Action

Put accessibility plan into action
- Communicate plan and progress to all staff/stakeholders to increase accountability
- Ensure monitoring and feedback mechanisms are clear for all staff/stakeholders
- Act upon feedback and share learning

Evaluate action
- Seek and ensure feedback from diverse voices
- Reflect honestly on areas for improvement and how to address them
- Share good practices and celebrate successes
- Return to the assessment phase and continue the journey…

Throughout the process:
- ✔ Ensure engagement of persons with disabilities as well as their representative organisations
- ✔ Ensure accessibility and provide reasonable accommodation
- ✔ Support ongoing mentoring, learning and capacity development

Step 1 Preparation

The 3-step process starts with preparation and planning: an analysis of where you are at in terms of strengths and challenges of accessibility within your organisation. Perhaps you have already done an accessibility audit of your building(s) or website(s); perhaps you are new to the topic. It is important to have managerial support at this first step in the process as you work to make changes in your organisation. This assessment involves identifying key internal and external stakeholders such as staff within your organisation, and external OPDs and accessibility professionals. It is important to have staff buy-in to ensure that the assessment is within organisational timeframes and resources and promotes a safe dialogue so that everyone feels comfortable contributing to the process.

All organisations are different. Initial self-assessments may be conducted by departments, teams, or individuals. Information can be gathered in a variety of ways such as hard copy or online surveys, observations, interviews. There are no right or wrong answers, and everyone will have different experiences and perspectives. No matter what method you are choosing, you need to make sure that people participating in the assessment are familiar with the 7 accessibility commitments, the self-assessment templates, as well as the standards and terminology used in this guide. Before starting the assessment, it is helpful to provide an opportunity for questions and discussion to troubleshoot and clarify issues as needed.

It is useful to discuss the results of your accessibility assessment with key stakeholders in order to jointly analyse strengths and challenges as well as identify critical issues and other key areas of focus. It is also useful to identify some potential quick wins (i.e., things you can easily change to improve accessibility immediately). Creating a safe space to share findings and discuss different perspectives – such as a workshop or holding discussion forums – can help you get the most out of your assessment. After gaining an understanding of your organisation's accessibility strengths and challenges, the dialogue continues by setting the direction for the organisation and developing your action plan.

The 3-step process starts with preparation and planning: an analysis of where you are at in terms of strengths and challenges of accessibility within your organisation.

Step 2 Agreeing priorities

Now that you have a better understanding of your strengths and areas that need to be improved, you will be able to move to the second step of reaching consensus on priority actions to take forward. Priorities will vary depending on the context and mandate of your organisation, legal obligations and availability of resources. The goal is not about addressing all accessibility issues at once, but to develop a strategic action plan over time. This plan should consider your most efficient use of both financial and human resources.

Discriminatory practices should always be at the top of your priority list for immediate action. For example, if your organisation does not have a system for assessing 'reasonable accommodation' for staff with disabilities, or if the workplace emergency procedures and evacuation plan is not accessible, or an office represents an immediate risk for safety of staff with disabilities, these would be critical issues that should be addressed first.

Getting advice from OPDs and accessibility professionals will help you to plan ahead and understand the costs and resources needed for specific actions. Next, consider prioritising changes that can be easily and quickly implemented without requiring considerable resources to facilitate, but would noticeably improve accessibility.

Having an accessibility action plan can support organisations to coordinate actions and review their progress over time. This plan should be modified according to changes within your organisation. It should include realistic timeframes, mobilisation of resources, identify persons responsible and establish clear feedback mechanisms. This includes aligning the plan to existing projects and budget cycles. Evidence from the assessment should be used to develop an appropriate budget that allocates funding for accessibility. Results from the assessment will provide you with objective evidence to influence decisions about the use of resources, including allocating funds to support diversity and inclusion within the organisation. Key to the success of any accessibility plan is ensuring that you include monitoring and basic maintenance costs to ensure short- and long-term sustainable change.

An accessibility action plan should be integrated with organisational workflows and departmental plans. This means that the plan will be an integral part of the day-to-day business operations of your organisation. This also means that your plan should be unique to your organisation's activities, processes and goals.

Now that you have a better understanding of your strengths and areas that need to be improved, you will be able to move to the second step of reaching consensus on priority actions to take forward.

Step 3 Action

You've worked hard to build a relevant, collaborative action plan – so now it's time to make it happen. At this stage, not only is the organisation equipped with a plan of specific actions to remove barriers and improve accessibility progressively over a stated period of time, this plan will be an essential tool to increase organisational accountability. To do this, it is critical to ensure that the plan and its progress is communicated to all staff and stakeholders within or outside the organisation.

Remember that no matter how well-planned an action plan is, there will always be aspects that may have been overlooked. Implementing and adopting some changes may end up being much easier than anticipated, while others may wind up being much harder and taking more time. Real success happens when you can easily monitor your plan's progress and be alerted to when you need to change course or make additional measures or changes. Open and accessible feedback mechanisms will help you to pick up quickly on issues that may not be working so well (including maintenance issues). Good feedback mechanisms will also help you to pick up on successes which are equally important to document and share. Key to success is in proactively seeking feedback by reaching out to under-represented stakeholders and quieter members of staff in the monitoring process.

Management and other key decision makers should be actively engaged in the monitoring process to effect organisational change processes. These may include changes to organisational policies or procedures. It is important to document and share good practices. You may also want to document and share your learnings with other organisations. This will support peer learning and support new members of staff to understand why and how things have developed.

Last, but not least, celebrate successes by recognising and validating staff, volunteers, contractors or consultants when they successfully champion and/or adopt changes. Each achievement, no matter how small, will inspire more positive change and help to improve accessibility within your organisation.

⊘ Accessibility takes time and requires a shift in culture

Culture within an organisation does not change overnight and steps for change need to be owned by all staff, but particularly modelled by leadership and management. Throughout the journey, make sure to allocate sufficient time to reflect and have meaningful staff dialogue. The process is as important as the outcome; it is not an exercise that happens only once, but one that requires regular review. It is important to consider the 3-step process as a flexible cycle which can be adapted and repeated overtime. This continuous process will help you to sustain good practices, reflect on successes, identify barriers and meet your accessibility commitments.

When using this Guide, remember that:

Accessibility starts with you

You are the difference. Accessibility starts with each one of us in our daily practice. We are all responsible. Whether you are working in local government, the private sector or not for profit; whether you are working in finance, communications, operations, programmes or service delivery; we all have a role to play.

Accessibility takes time

Accessibility is progressive. It cannot be addressed in one day or in one attempt. We live in constantly changing environments, with changing populations with different needs and aspirations. Accessibility is a continuous process of reflection and a commitment to improve.

Accessibility is holistic

Accessibility involves 7 commitments that are inter-dependent. If you want to progress with accessibility, it takes a commitment to look holistically at your organisation and your work and it requires a commitment to build capacity of all.

Commitment 1

Our workplaces and premises are accessible to all persons with disabilities

**Commitment 1:
Our workplaces and premises
are accessible to all persons
with disabilities**

Why is this commitment important?

The accessibility of workplaces and premises is an essential precondition and a legal requirement to ensure persons with disabilities are able to participate and access services on an equal basis with others. This applies across all types of physical infrastructure such as offices, stations, education and health facilities, shops, libraries, factories, warehouses, leisure centres and places of worship.

This commitment aims to help you identify and remove barriers, including attitudinal barriers, to make your workplaces and premises more accessible, inclusive and safer for all. It will also support you to meet required standards and fulfil your legal responsibilities in terms of accessibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation where accessibility is not possible. See **commitment 7**

This commitment will help you to:
- ✔ **Know and meet specifications and standards for accessibility**
- ✔ **Understand what an accessibility audit is**
- ✔ **Monitor and maintain quality and compliance**

What do you need to know?

Specifications and standards

It is important to have a good understanding of national and international accessibility legislation and standards before improving the accessibility of your workplaces and premises. These may or may not be in line with CRPD Article 9 on accessibility. OPDs and accessibility professionals can help you understand your legal obligations and applicable standards, and ensure these are in line with the CRPD. This includes how to apply these to your workplaces and premises, looking at issues from attitudes, management and safety issues, to transportation and physical barriers in the surrounding area that enable access to your premises. They can also help you to fill the gaps in existing legislation, adapt international accessibility standards, and go beyond the minimum requirements by applying the universal design principles.

Context is important and your responsibilities as an organisation and employer vary depending on the legislation and standards applicable to your region, country, province or city. Some organisations may work in an environment where adequate legislation, codes and regulations are in place, including for safety in the event of emergencies, while others work in contexts with very limited standards and regulations to draw upon. Similarly, organisations with large offices and premises may be renting in cities with better access to transportation and services compared to those working in remote areas, with less favourable conditions. Barriers can become more severe due to poor design and planning of cities and human settlements. This is especially true in low- and middle-income countries which places a greater responsibility on development and humanitarian actors to take up issues of accessibility, particularly in urban slums and with increasing displacement of communities due to environmental, economic and political insecurity.

Where there are no adequate standards in place, international accessibility standards and other relevant guidelines are useful tools that can help to address requirements for buildings and premises, provide recommendations and help to work towards developing up national standards. Using international standards as a reference can also help define specifications for the goods and services being procured. See **commitment 3**

> (!) **Remember to aim for the highest standards of accessibility possible from what is available locally. This will help to promote environmental sustainability, ensure easier maintenance and support local economies.**

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) has published more than 30 technical standards that specifically target accessibility across several areas. These include standards on the built environment, transportation, information and communication, graphic symbols and safety signs, as well as accessible tourism. For instance, the ISO Standard 21542 on Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment defines how the built environment should be designed, constructed and managed to enable people to approach, enter, use, exit and evacuate a building independently, in an equitable and dignified manner, and to the greatest extent possible. This standard is critical regarding the accessibility of buildings and has been adopted as the national standard in many countries including Kenya, Spain, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Malaysia, Czech Republic, Italy, Ecuador, Denmark.

Universal design of workplaces

The principles of universal design can be applied in any workplace. This means designing for human diversity and accommodating various individual needs. Universal design is achieved through a wide range of measures and supports. For example:

- **Promoting different forms of transportation:** cycling to work and providing workplaces with bicycle storage, accessible showers, changing rooms, lockers, kitchen and snack areas, green and quiet spaces.
- **Designing workplaces with simple layouts:** having consistent signage and tactile indicators, neutral colours, good lighting, low noise and easy to use lever handles instead of door knobs.
- **Incorporating smart building technologies:** accessible systems and mobile apps that employees can use to determine their preferred lighting levels, temperature control and window blinds, to better personalise their workspace.
- **Offering multiple visual and audio systems:** multi-sensory alarms for navigating and evacuating the building and large-print instructions for procedures, especially operating emergency and safety equipment.
- **Investing in adjustable chairs and desks**, with filing and storage spaces in easy range of reach for all employees, and ergonomic keyboard and computer supports.

A universally designed workplace reduces, but does not eliminate, the need for reasonable accommodation. It will optimise resources to include as many staff as possible but as an employer it will still be necessary to look at individual staff requests to ensure their needs are met with appropriate adaptations of the workplace. This is a legal obligation as an employer. See **commitment 7**

Accessibility auditing

Making your offices and premises accessible will require identifying and eliminating obstacles and barriers and undertaking changes. These changes may range from small, quick changes to more significant change that may require more time and investment.

An accessibility audit can help determine how well a particular building or environment performs at a point in time and will give recommendations on what needs to change. An accessibility audit is not only about investigating architectural or structural barriers that may

result from the design elements of a building, it is also about examining institutional and attitudinal barriers that may prevent people from accessing or using a facility.

Ideally, the decision to undertake an accessibility audit of your office building should be based on the findings and priorities you identified during the broader organisational assessment and accessibility action plan (see 3 Step Process). When planning for and undertaking an accessibility audit, it is important to consider the following:

Scope of an accessibility audit: Access issues and barriers must be examined in a logical sequence and considered for all types of disabilities. It requires identifying barriers that different people may experience such as:
*   Getting to and from the location
*   Entering and moving around the premises, including use of lifts and stairways
*   In accessing and using services, facilities and any other equipment
*   Evacuating the building and having a safe meeting point

Technical expertise: Undertaking an accessibility audit requires expertise and contracting technical support from OPDs and accessibility professionals who can help you with:
*   Defining an appropriate methodology, including how to do the accessibility audit, who to involve, when and how
*   Reviewing relevant legislation and applicable standards
*   Developing appropriate tools, such as checklists and questionnaires that are in accessible formats
*   Identifying barriers, reporting findings and prioritising recommendations including cost estimates for changes that need to be made
*   Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the audit recommendations

Budget: Allocating an appropriate budget for the successful delivery of an accessibility audit from beginning to end should:
*   Include sufficient funds for technical support based on a cost estimate from OPDs and accessibility professionals
*   Keep in mind that the budget for implementing accessibility modifications will depend on the recommendations made in the accessibility audit report and may require longer term planning
*   Include maintenance costs as part of your budgeting for the audit and post audit follow up

Prior to getting started with accessibility audits and changes, make sure you:

✔ Know what accessibility legislation, regulations and standards apply to you

✔ Seek legal advice to help you ensure compliance requirements in your workplace are met

✔ Reach out to and engage with OPDs and accessibility professionals to help with doing accessibility audits

✔ Are familiar with the building contracts and owner/lease agreements. These may affect how, when and at what cost accessibility changes can be made

✔ Ensure you have resources for accessibility compliance throughout the process from initial specifications to tender and procurement

✔ Ensure that accessibility changes do no harm to the environment or the surrounding community. Aim for the best standards of accessibility with locally available resources to support local economies and environmental sustainability

✔ Contract certified construction or building professionals. Ensure that OPDs and accessibility experts work with them to ensure quality

TIP

Monitoring and maintaining quality and compliance

There are many things to keep in mind when implementing accessibility modifications. For example, contractors may not be familiar with some of the recommendations from the audits and may not be able to ensure quality from design to implementation. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that OPDs and accessibility professionals oversee the quality of the work being undertaken by the contractors. Good communication will help troubleshoot any issues that arise and ensure more efficient use of time and resources.

A key point to remember is that no matter how good a workplace's accessibility is, it will fail if an appropriate maintenance budget is not allocated or built into contracts. Ensuring that appropriate monitoring and maintenance costs are addressed at the early stages of the planning process helps to guarantee that projects are fully accessible and usable throughout their lifespan. Examples of maintenance costs include the replacement of tactile indicators, high contrast painting, regular tests of emergency alarms and early warning systems, and updating information into accessible formats.

Good monitoring includes:
• Following-up and evaluating accessibility modifications to ensure that the desired outcome has been reached and that it works for everyone – OPDs and accessibility professionals can help to facilitate this

- Having policies and procedures in place that are kept up-to-date to ensure accessibility standards are met
- Regularly inspecting your workplace and premises to ensure that standards are being maintained and that there are no new obstacles or barriers
- Effective feedback mechanisms in accessible formats, where people feel safe to raise concerns
- Having staff with responsibility for ensuring all complaints and queries are responded to in an appropriate and timely manner

(!) Remember: All staff, including those with disabilities, should be prepared and know how to safely evacuate a building in the event of an emergency. For that, it is important that you conduct regular drills, ensuring that emergency procedures and individual emergency plans work efficiently. This will allow your workplace and staff to gain the knowledge, learning and confidence to support meaningful, inclusive and resilient practices that leave no one behind in times of emergencies.

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- Entering, using and evacuating the workplace is safe and easy for all staff, families, and visitors, including all persons with disabilities
- Persons with disabilities are actively involved in all stages of the auditing process, including monitoring and follow up of recommendations, with appropriate compensation for their time and efforts
- Staff and management are confident in how to effectively implement and monitor accessibility in their workplace and are aware of relevant legislation and standards
- Management take responsibility to ensure that workplaces and premises are fully compliant with legal obligations and standards
- Staff and management are confident and regularly trained on inclusive workplace safety, evacuation and emergency procedures and techniques
- Workplaces implement accessibility actions and solutions that promote universal design principles such as providing different types of workplaces for different kinds of work, styles and preferences
- Workplaces maintain and improve the quality of accessibility features based on accessible and user-friendly feedback mechanisms

<div style="border:1px solid red">

Commitment 1:
Our workplaces and premises are accessible to all persons with disabilities

</div>

Accessible Workplaces and Premises Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Specifications and standards	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Are staff knowledgeable and confident on national and international accessibility standards and requirements for buildings and premises?		
2. Are workplaces and their locations chosen based on an accessibility audit which has been supported by persons with disabilities?		
3. Do your rental contracts for offices and premises allow you to make accessibility modifications?		
4. Are accessibility standards maintained and updated over time based on feedback from diverse staff and users?		
5. Do you have an allocated budget for regularly undertaking accessibility audits and maintaining accessibility features?		

Accessibility auditing	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
6. Have OPDs and accessibility professionals been consulted before doing accessibility audits or changes?		
7. Are accessibility audits undertaken to identify barriers, recommendations and actions to improve accessibility and safety in the workplace?		

Accessibility auditing	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
8. Do audit teams made up of OPDs and accessibility professionals use accessible and participatory approaches that look at all disability requirements?		
9. Do the audit teams consult a wide range of users (e.g. staff, visitors, clients), including a diverse range of persons with disabilities?		
10. Are the audit findings and recommend-ations shared with partners and OPDs in local languages and accessible formats for feedback and validation prior to finalisation?		
11. Are the findings and recommendations of audits consistently shared with staff and partners to inform future programmes and strategies?		

Monitoring and maintaining quality and compliance	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
12. Do senior management ensure compliance with legislation, standards and procedures for accessibility in the workplace, including taking responsibility to re-locate if needed?		
13. Where accessibility is not possible, does the organisation take responsibility to provide reasonable accommodation for all staff, interns and volunteers with disabilities when requested?		
14. Are all workplace settings and layouts regularly reviewed to ensure the safety requirements for all members of staff and users with disabilities are met?		
15. Are there accessible evacuation procedures and systems in place, including alarm systems, equipment, and individual emergency plans for persons with disabilities?		
16. Do contingency plans include funds to support accessibility and reasonable accommodation in the event of an emergency?		
17. Is feedback gathered from a diverse range of staff, visitors and customers to ensure ongoing accessibility of workplaces and premises?		
18. Do senior managers review and act upon complaints received on accessibility of workplaces and premises?		

References and useful resources

Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach: provides guidance on how to design, build, and manage buildings and spaces to be accessed and used by everyone. The Building for Everyone series is available to download for free in accessible PDF format.

Evacuation of People with Disability and Emergent Limitations: Considerations for Safer Buildings and Efficient Evacuations, 2nd Edition: is a technical resource from The Accessible Exit Sign Project. It shares ideas for inclusive and accessible evacuation including templates for personal and group emergency evacuation plans.

Guidelines for access auditing of the built environment (NDA Ireland): provides best practice advice on how to carry out an access audit. The guidelines are important for anyone who deals with the construction and use of buildings.

International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP): their mission is to define, promote, and improve the accessibility profession globally. It does this through networking, education, and certification. Their programmes help create accessible products, content, and services. It shares information with its members about accessibility standards and laws around the world. Members get access to updated accessibility training.

International Organization for Standardization: is an independent, non-governmental international organisation with a membership of 165 national standards bodies. Experts from all over the world work together to develop and publish International Standards. For example, ISO Standard 21542 on Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment.

National Federation of Disabled People – Nepal (NFDN): is an organisation of persons with disabilities who has developed useful resources on accessibility including examples of accessibility audit practices and accessibility audit checklist.

UNESCAP Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in accessibility in Asia and the Pacific: outlines the tools and approaches for successful investment in accessibility. It provides recommendations to governments across key areas of focus to ensure that societies are built to be sustainable and inclusive. It contains a comprehensive list of ISO standards on accessibility.

Meet legal obligations

Accessibility is the right thing to do. Non-compliance with accessibility regulations and standards will cost you as an organisation, and costs us as a society. Ignorance is not a valid defence and failure to comply with regulations can damage your organisation's reputation and result in expensive lawsuits and settlements. Therefore, be sure to know your legal obligations.

Accessibility is a legal requirement

This Convention requires state governments to ensure accessibility standards are legally mandated and that all organisations comply with them. **According to the UN, the majority of countries in most regions of the world have national accessibility standards or guidelines in place** (UNDESA – 2019). This includes:

Over 180 countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes accessibility as one of its core principles

- 95% of Europe
- 73% of Asia
- 71% of Oceania
- 64% of the Americas
- 48% of Africa

Be proactive, accessibility lawsuits are on the rise!

Legal cases regarding accessibility are increasing as more countries adopt national laws and policies on accessibility. There is a growing demand from persons with disabilities to claim their right to access services on an equal basis with others, without discrimination.

Many organisations are unaware of accessibility issues until they receive legal action against them. The costs of defending such lawsuits can be crushing, both financially and reputationally.

Lawsuits are filed on a wide range of accessibility issues including employment, discrimination, equality of access to recreation facilities, public spaces, services (including health), education, transport, as well as information, communication and technologies.

Commitment 2

Our information and communications, including systems and technologies, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

**Commitment 2:
Our information and communications, including systems and technologies, are accessible to all persons with disabilities**

Why is this commitment important?

In today's world, digital technology has revolutionised the way we work, access services, share information and connect socially. Therefore, digital access – including accessible information and communications – is critical to ensure full and effective participation. This includes ensuring that digital content, technologies and systems are user friendly, respect privacy and are safe to use.

This commitment aims to support organisations to improve the accessibility of their information and communications systems and ensure they are meeting legal standards on digital accessibility, in line with CRPD Article 21 on freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information. Equally, it will support organisations to effectively reach and engage with a much wider and diverse audience.

> **This commitment will help you to:**
>
> ✔ **Develop accessible digital content**
> ✔ **Understand the different means of communication**
> ✔ **Monitor and maintain quality and compliance**

What do you need to know?

Content development

When working on web content development, it is important for organisations to know about relevant and existing accessibility standards. Access to technical expertise can be critical as few organisations have the in-house support needed to consistently develop and review accessible content in line with applicable standards. Working with OPDs and accessibility professionals can help ensure compliance by using their knowledge and expertise to assess your website and online content through an accessibility audit.

Undertaking an audit of your website and online content will help you measure your website's level of accessibility in a systematic way against

a specific set of criteria. Carrying out an accessibility audit also presents a good opportunity to increase the capacity and technical skills of your ICT staff through specialised training from external consultants including OPDs and accessibility professionals. The following three existing standards best define what online accessibility looks like:

- **Standard EN 301 549:** This European standard outlines the functional performance requirements that are expected of ICT equipment regardless of the physical, cognitive, or sensory abilities of the user. The full text on the Accessible IT Procurement Toolkit Standard EN 301 549 can be found on their website.

- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):** This international standard for website accessibility specifies testable 'success criteria' for three compliance levels and objectively states whether a given website is accessible to a recognised level. This ranges from A for basic-level accessibility to AAA for the highest level of accessibility. The accessibility guidelines for online content can be found on the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) website.

- **Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act:** This American legislation provides standards and guidance divided into six main categories, on accessible technology. See the US Access Board website for more information on these categories:

  - Software applications and operating systems
  - Web-based intranet and internet information and applications
  - Telecommunications products
  - Video and multimedia products
  - Self-contained, closed products (e.g. printers, photocopiers, information kiosks)
  - Desktop and portable computers

Here are some useful tips for when developing accessible content:

- **Start with good design** building accessibility requirements into the procurement process from the beginning. This is cost effective and avoids expensive design mistakes. Good design simply makes sense and benefits everyone. Get in touch with OPDs and accessibility professionals that can help you with procurement, design and assessment of accessibility. See **commitment 3**

- **Listen to persons with disabilities** as they have clear expectations about their needs and preferences and know what does and doesn't work. Check in with users on a regular basis to ensure that accessibility is maintained over time. Engaging with persons with disabilities to support you develop content will help you to identify and avoid issues that are not necessarily covered by a standard.

- **Get the languages and images correct**. Appropriate language, terminology and images, that demonstrate respect and dignity, go hand-in-hand with a genuine change in attitudes and practice. Through your communications, you have an opportunity to be inclusive, challenge assumptions and avoid stereotypes. Use person-first language (i.e. person with albinism) to ensure terminology is affirmative and respectful and is also in line with CRPD usage. An important factor in considering what kind of language to use is to find out what local OPDs advise.

- **Most online accessibility problems are easy and cheap to fix**. Get into the habit of using free online accessibility assessment tools, built-in accessibility checkers, asking persons with disabilities directly, and carrying out usability tests with a diverse group of participants to understand what the problems are and how to fix them.

- **Follow simple best practice guidance** by using larger fonts and left-aligned text which are easier to read. Avoid busy layouts and dense text that are difficult to read. Use simple language that is clearly structured to make documents and online content easier to understand and navigate. Don't forget to include descriptive alternative text for all images and graphics.

To support you with all of the above practice please see CBM Digital Accessibility Toolkit

Online safety

All users have a right to a secure and safe online experience where their privacy and data is protected. Persons with disabilities and older people can be at a higher risk of fraud, abuse and exploitation when using websites and social media. It is critical that your organisation's safeguarding assessments and procedures also address safety of digital content and data protection. When using social media, reviewing and updating your website, and investing in new technology, always make sure safety and accessibility are considered together. Safety measures should not compromise accessibility and likewise, accessibility features should not compromise safety.

Means of communication

Communication is diverse and includes, 'languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology.'
(CRPD Article 2).

It is your responsibility as an employer to ensure that all staff with disabilities can access and choose their means, format and mode of communication. Keep in mind that:

- **Accessibility needs and preferences are diverse**. Some people, including people with learning difficulties, may need Easy Read documents to understand complex information, while people who are blind and partially sighted may require Braille or large print formats. Alternative formats (or alt format) can also mean converting from one type of file format, such as PDF, to another format, such as Word or HTML. People will differ on their preferences and the easiest way to learn what a person requires is to ask them directly.

- **Budgets should be available to provide staff with accessible means of communication**. This includes individual requests such as a person who is deafblind requesting tactile sign language interpretation at a meeting. This also includes requests for appropriate assistive technologies as many persons with disabilities will only be able to access information and communicate by using accessible IT products, software and technology (e.g. screen reader software, amplified telephone equipment).

- **Awareness of assistive technologies is a central responsibility for people producing digital resources**. Equally important is to provide training in the use of assistive technologies both for people producing accessible content and for the users who require it.

Removing barriers to communication is essential to ensure everyone has access to the same information at the same time. For example, less than 10 percent of published books worldwide are available in accessible formats in spite of the Marrakesh Treaty being in place since 2013. This treaty helps to remove copyright restrictions to ensure that printed content is available in alternative formats, including in humanitarian contexts. This is equally important for government, private sector and civil society organisations as access to information is essential to uphold universal rights to health, education, employment, political participation and social inclusion.

> ⊘ **Remember: Accessibility of social media**
>
> Social media is changing how people interact with one another and access information. It is also changing how businesses and governments share information and deliver services. Before using and communicating via social media, consider how to improve accessibility for all. For instance, persons with disabilities often have difficulty navigating social media due to lack of headers and keyboard shortcuts, alternative text for images, closed captioning and audio description of videos, colour contrast options and clearly labelled content with Easy Read symbols. Consider the above elements before posting on social media platforms so that everyone can access your information.

Monitoring and maintaining quality and compliance

It is important to regularly review and maintain digital accessibility as organisational needs, user requirements and audiences will change over time. Also, technology is rapidly changing, so it is important to keep up-to-date with the latest standards and regulations.

Obtaining free, prior and informed consent for use of personal data and images is a legal obligation. For this to happen, all data collection processes must be fully accessible, using respectful and inclusive methods of communication, so that all persons with disabilities can make informed and independent choices about the use of their personal information. This is applicable to all types of data, be this use of images, surveys, feedback mechanisms, registration processes, personal testimonies, case studies, campaigns. It is also important to ensure that consent forms are available in local languages, including sign language and multiple formats such as Braille, large print and Easy Read versions, as well as child-friendly versions where applicable.

Storage and use of data are also a legal requirement and this will be governed by different legislation in different contexts. It is important to keep up-to-date with the latest legal requirements on data protection. Whilst data protection is critical for all users, it can be particularly sensitive for persons with disabilities who may not wish to disclose their disability as this may result in increased discrimination or harm. Confidentiality and personal preferences on use and storage of data needs to be respected at all times.

Feedback mechanisms are critical for social and digital online content management to guard against inappropriate content being posted, websites or social media platforms being hacked, or users being

exposed to offensive language or images. Fast, effective and accessible feedback mechanisms are essential to quickly address issues that may arise and ensure all end users have a safe online experience. Make sure that you and your team are in a position to respond to and answer complaints in an appropriate and timely manner. This may mean working with other departments in your organisation or seeking advice from OPDs and relevant professionals in order to address any safety and accessibility issues.

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- Organisational website, social media and digital infrastructure are fully accessible and safe, complying with the latest legislation and standards on accessibility and data protection
- All digital content such as reports, web content and social media posts are fully accessible with staff confident to use accessibility checkers or seek support of appropriate expertise when needed
- Feedback and complaints systems are accessible and regularly maintained to ensure that any safety or accessibility issues identified are addressed in a timely manner to ensure no harm
- All staff are confident in upholding the organisation's obligation to obtain free, prior and informed consent from all persons for use of images and data
- Budgets are allocated for OPDs and accessibility professionals to support regular audits, review of digital content and systems, training of staff and maintenance of accessibility features

Commitment 2:
Our information and communications, including systems and technologies, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

Accessible ICTs Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Content development	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Are staff knowledgeable and confident on national and international standards related to digital accessibility and data protection?		
2. Does all content developed comply with relevant accessibility standards and best practices, such as alternative formats, captioning, audio description, translation, copy editing for plain language, etc.?		
3. Do staff consider both accessibility and safety when preparing and posting digital content, including through social media?		
4. Do you have an allocated budget to ensure compliance and maintenance of digital systems and content in line with accessibility standards?		
5. Do all materials produced use respectful and appropriate language that do not reinforce negative stereotypes or stigma?		
6. Is digital content developed and validated through consultation with staff and OPDs prior to dissemination?		
7. Are staff confident to use accessibility checkers and produce accessible digital content for reports, presentations, social media posts, blogs, etc.?		

Means of communication	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
8. Does the organisation facilitate the use of accessible technology, means of communication and formats, as chosen by persons with disabilities?		
9. In the absence of an accessible digital infrastructure, are there alternative options available for people to access information on an equal basis with others?		
10. Are systems to request assistive technologies in place and are staff provided with relevant training on how to use that technology?		
11. Does information and communication through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) include alternative text, audio description and captioning?		

Monitoring and maintaining quality and compliance	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
12. Are accessibility audits undertaken by OPDs and accessibility professionals to maintain compliance with standards and improve accessibility and safety of websites and online content?		
13. Do staff obtain free, prior and informed consent to use personal data in communication and marketing materials, including images, videos, narratives, testimonies and case studies?		
14. Is feedback gathered from a diverse range of staff, visitors and customers to ensure digital content and systems meet accessibility standards?		
15. Do senior managers review and act upon complaints received about digital content and accessibility of sites and systems?		

References and useful resources

CBM Digital Accessibility Toolkit: provides a selection of tools and recommendations pertaining to the accessibility of ICT which are useful for ensuring the inclusion and accessibility of your capacity development and training initiatives.

E-accessibility toolkit: is a joint initiative of ITU and G3ict. It contains online resources for policy makers implementing the CRPD. Within this toolkit, you will find information about e-accessibility basics, e-accessibility initiatives around the world, key areas to promote ICT accessibility, and different tools for policy makers.

GARI project: run by the Mobile & Wireless Forum, the Global Accessibility Reporting Initiative (GARI) is a project designed to help consumers learn more about the accessibility features of mobile devices and to help them identify devices with the features that may assist them with their particular needs.

Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict): is an advocacy initiative. Its mission is to facilitate and support the full implementation of ICT accessibility and assistive technologies as set out in the CRPD. It was launched in December 2006 by the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at UN DESA.

Guide to Data Protection (UK ICO): developed by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), provides organisations with guidance on how to address data protection.

International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP): their mission is to define, promote, and improve the accessibility profession globally. It does this through networking, education, and accreditation to enable the creation of accessible products, content, and services. It shares information with its members about accessibility standards and laws around the world and provides them with updated accessibility training. Check out WBU-G3ICT-IAAP Webinar on Creating and Evaluating Digital Documents for Accessibility

International Telecommunications Union (ITU): is the UN specialist agency for information and communications technologies. It is a worldwide reference for ICT and accessibility.

National Federation of Disabled People – Nepal (NFDN): is an organisation of persons with disabilities who has developed useful resources on accessibility including The Web Accessibility Guide: Promoting Web for All.

Smart Cities for All Toolkit: was developed by G3ict and World Enabled as part of the Smart Cities for All initiative to define the state of ICT accessibility in Smart Cities worldwide. The objective is to eliminate the digital divide for persons with disabilities and older persons in Smart Cities around the world. The Smart Cities for All Toolkit comprises four tools addressing ICT accessibility and digital inclusion for persons with disabilities and older persons.

Staying safe online: developed by People First, is an organisation run and controlled by people with learning disabilities for people with learning disabilities. It is an accessible website with advice on how to stay safe on line.

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C): provides strategies, standards, resources to make the Web accessible to people with disabilities.

Be economical

Designing for accessibility from the beginning means avoiding costly corrective measures to remove barriers in the future. Universal design can be achieved with minimal additional investment, while returning a high rate of social and economic benefits.

Accessibility is good for business

The global market of people with disabilities is large and growing as the global population both grows and ages

1 billion
persons with disabilities

$13 trillion
business opportunity

Accessibility is an investment, not a cost

Some of the economic benefits of accessibility are:

✔ Increased diversity and talent
✔ Increased innovation
✔ Strong brand reputation
✔ Increased sales and customer loyalty
✔ Enhanced employee engagement and retention
✔ Cost savings from litigation and re-building

Pay less than 1% now or 20% later
Building for accessibility and universal design usually costs less than 1% of the total infrastructure cost. Incorporating accessibility afterwards is more expensive – by up to 20% of the original cost (WHO and World Bank – 2011).

Gain talents and spending power
Hiring persons with disabilities gives you access to a diverse talent pool that can foster innovative ideas, processes and market reach. Together with their close friends and families, persons with disabilities have a disposable income of over $13 trillion USD globally (The Return on Disability Group – 2020).

USD1.37 – 1.94 trillion per year
Globally, the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the workplace deprives societies of an estimated USD 1.37 – 1.94 trillion in lost GDP annually (ILO)

Commitment 3

Our procurement of goods, services and facilities include consideration of accessibility criteria and standards

Commitment 3:
Our procurement of goods, services and facilities include consideration of accessibility criteria and standards

Why is this commitment important?

As governments increasingly adopt legislation that prevents discrimination on the basis of disability, more and more organisations and agencies are becoming liable in the provision of their goods, services and facilities. Throughout any procurement process, even in a humanitarian context, it is critical to embed accessibility considerations from the beginning in order to avoid any complications and unnecessary additional costs later on.

This commitment is to support your organisation's awareness of existing legal obligations around procurement and accessibility. While it provides recommended steps on how to improve accessibility, it is good to also seek additional legal and technical advice to aid your compliance efforts.

This commitment will help you to:

✔ **Know and meet relevant specifications and standards**

✔ **Understand how to ensure your tendering process is accessible and what this entails**

✔ **Monitor and maintain quality and compliance to ensure inclusive procurement**

What do you need to know?

Specifications and standards

For any procurement process, it is important to be aware of your legal obligations to reduce any risk and liability to your organisation. So, check to see what legislation, policies or guidance exists around procurement and what are you liabilities. These may be from national regulations on approved goods and services, through to donor requirements, or local conservation regulations. It is important to also look at the full range of regulations including on accessibility, health and safety, and broader non-discrimination policies on equitable access to goods and services. Be careful, while some codes and standards may refer to ISOs and be CRPD

compliant, others may not. Where there are none, or inadequate domestic standards, use relevant international standards as your reference. In all cases, it is key to consult persons with disabilities and OPDs on which products or services will best meet requirements.

In order to comply with required standards, make sure they are incorporated into your specifications for the goods or services being procured; both in terms of purchase and ongoing maintenance. Also keep in mind the principles of universal design as you develop your specifications so that you maximise the accessibility and usability of the products, goods or services you are procuring.

Finally, regularly review and update your standard operating procedures (SOPs) on procurement to be up-to-date with latest standards on accessibility and ensure relevant staff are trained in how to comply with these regulations.

Tendering process

Good tendering processes that are open and transparent can improve competition, increase value for money and efficiency, and reduce the risk of unfairness, fraud or corruption. They can also ensure that both the process and its outcomes do no harm and do not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Fair tendering processes also open up opportunities for local, smaller and specialist suppliers to be considered, which can be good for the environment and boost local economies.

Key elements within an inclusive tendering process are:

- Defining accessibility standards and requirements
- Preparing the specifications
- Advertising the tender
- Selecting and contracting a provider

Defining accessibility standards and requirements

Many organisations are not aware that they need to consider accessibility standards as part of their procurement of all goods, products and services be they physical or virtual. The reality is, if your goods, products or services are intended for the general population, then at least 15% of your target group are likely to be persons with disabilities, increasing to around 40% when also including older persons. It is therefore important that you assess accessibility issues across different requirements – sensory, cognitive, physical, gender or age related. In order to do this, consult a diverse range of users, OPDs and accessibility professionals to help you prepare specifications so that your goods, products and services can be used to the widest extent possible.

Preparing the specifications

The specifications you prepare for any tendering process, need to explicitly state your expectations on accessibility and the standards you require to be met. This is especially important in contexts that have limited national regulations and standards. Suppliers will take accessibility more seriously when this is also explicitly stated as a priority within the award criteria. Bear in mind, not all suppliers are familiar with accessibility standards. If this is the case, you might want to provide a briefing with OPDs, or a more detailed information package to include references such as the CRPD and relevant ISO standards.

Overall, your tendering documents should include:

- Clearly defined specifications that need to be met
- Eligibility criteria where relevant (this is often the case with donors or funders who may place conditions on procurement and tendering processes)
- A clear award criteria that includes accessibility and usability standards, as well as any relevant professional qualifications and accreditations
- A clear and transparent process for selection, including deadlines and any other disqualifying criteria
- Quality assurance requirements with user-testing that includes a diverse range of persons with disabilities
- Request for samples or examples of their work, including prototypes or references from previous clients that demonstrate their competence on accessibility
- Any additional relevant guidance or policies on accessibility, safeguarding and ethical sourcing

Finally, make sure that your tendering documents are provided in accessible formats and when possible and relevant, are in local languages to promote more sustainable sourcing.

Advertising the tender

When advertising for suppliers it is important that the summary description includes clear information on the process and deadlines. The advertisement should be distributed through a wide range of outlets such as print media, online, and technical and professional networks. This may require going beyond your traditional list of suppliers to include those that provide specialist or bespoke services. This will help to increase your choice of suppliers, ensure a more competitive process that leads to higher quality options, with greater opportunities for local suppliers.

It is good practice to keep an up-to-date list of suppliers that have been reliable in the past and have demonstrated experience with accessibility compliance. It is also important to consult OPDs and accessibility professionals on their recommendations for suppliers with a good track record. Having an up-to-date list of reliable suppliers is particularly useful when you have urgent procurement needs, especially in times of emergency or humanitarian crises.

When advertising, make sure all your communications are accessible, including any supplier briefings. See **commitment 2** and **commitment 6**

Selecting and contracting a provider

Tendering processes create competition and while this can support better provision of goods and services, it may expose organisations and members of staff to bribery, fraud and corruption. It is therefore essential to have a clear and transparent selection process that details the criteria of who is eligible to be part of the selection panel.

It is also good practice to ensure that your selection panel comprises a diverse range of people. To ensure transparency, all members of the panel must formally declare any conflicts of interest. For public procurement and other tenders that provide goods, products or services targeted towards the general population, it is important to include a representative from a national umbrella OPD.

When deciding between suppliers, price should not be the main or only criteria for selection. Quality and endurance of goods, proximity of support and maintenance services, usability and accessibility, as well as environmental impact, are all key considerations. Ultimately, safety and accessibility are legal requirements that are a must. Remember, a necessary accessibility adaptation or lawsuit on discrimination or personal injury later on, will end up costing you far more than you saved, as well as your organisation's reputation.

In the final stages of the selection process it is vital to check references and proof of demonstrated experience, particularly on accessibility, before contracting. In your contract with suppliers be sure to include:

- Clear stipulations around accessibility and safety
- Requirements for user testing and feedback from a broad range of end users
- Penalties for non-compliance
- Guarantee of service and/or maintenance as relevant

Finally, make sure to document the process, including the outcome and rational for the decisions made by the selection panel.

Monitoring and maintaining quality and compliance

Good communication and follow up between the staff who undertake procurement of goods, products and services and those responsible for managing them is essential for maintaining quality. Be sure to consistently document and share your learnings and good practices, including any challenges, so that you can constantly improve your practice.

Having clear monitoring and feedback mechanisms on procurement can help to:

• Quickly identify and address any issues that arise
• Ensure appropriate allocation of budget for ongoing maintenance as well as contingencies in case goods, services or products fail
• Improve compliance with safety and accessibility requirements
• Listen to end users and keep up-to-date with latest innovations and regulations
• Learn and plan forward for future procurement processes, including getting more realistic cost estimates to improve budgeting

Listening to end users is critical for good quality monitoring of goods and services. Having inclusive and accessible feedback mechanisms also requires proactively seeking feedback. Many people with disabilities will not necessarily be confident to complain or may be so tired of complaining about inappropriate goods and services that are never changed that they have given up on using feedback mechanisms. Involving OPDs in helping you monitor and assess user satisfaction can create safer, more inclusive feedback mechanisms. This can encourage more people, especially from under-represented groups, to share their experiences of what does and does not work.

(!) Remember: There may be circumstances where you must fast track or adapt your procurement procedures to meet the requirements of your donor. In all cases, it is important not to compromise on accessibility compliance. Remember, if your programme is being funded under international cooperation by a government that has ratified the CRPD, they also have obligations to ensure accessibility requirements are met. Likewise, if there is domestic legislation in place, you are also legally bound to comply.

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- All tenders and award criteria explicitly prioritise accessibility
- Buyers and suppliers understand and commit to accessibility standards with more suppliers having accredited qualifications on accessibility
- Accessibility is embedded into all SOPs for procurement, maintenance and safety
- Finance and operation staff are confident in how to use and apply accessibility standards and policies in all stages of procurement. See **commitment 4**
- Increased number of persons with disabilities involved throughout procurement processes from the outset
- Safety and accessibility standards are considered together to ensure that one does not undermine the other
- Appropriate budget allocations to ensure accessibility, as well as ongoing maintenance of accessibility features
- Increased user satisfaction rates documented from all users on goods, products and services procured

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Commitment 3:
Our procurement of goods, services and facilities include consideration of accessibility criteria and standards

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Inclusive Procurement Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Specifications and standards	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Are staff knowledgeable and confident on legal requirements and relevant national and international accessibility standards related to procurement?		
2. Are all tenders for goods, products and services based on needs assessments, including consultations with end users, including a diverse range of persons with disabilities?		
3. Do all requests for tenders (TORs, bill of quantities, service agreements, etc.), including those fast tracked in emergencies, specify relevant ISO/national accessibility standards as a contractual requirement?		
4. Is maintenance of accessibility standards and user-testing included in contract delivery and warranty periods?		
5. Are OPDs and accessibility professionals consulted before tenders are issued?		

Tendering process	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
6. Are tender announcements accessible and reach out beyond traditional outlets (especially for service contracts such as consultants, designers, translators, etc.)?		

Tendering process	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
7. Do assessments of suppliers of goods, products and services favour those that can evidence relevant accreditation and experience in accessibility, equality, environmental responsibility and ethical sourcing?		
8. Do assessments of bids for goods, products and services include specific criteria on accessibility, environmental and ethical considerations, including responsible sourcing?		
9. Do selection panels include a diverse range of people with relevant expertise and experience – with transparent processes for declaring any conflicts of interest?		
10. Are supplier references, samples and prototypes checked in terms of quality and compliance with accessibility standards and user satisfaction?		
11. Do staff and end users test and sign off on the quality and appropriateness of deliverables ahead of final contracted payments?		

Monitoring and maintaining quality and compliance	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
12. Is learning from all tender processes consistently documented and used to inform future procurement?		
13. Is feedback gathered from a diverse range of users to measure satisfaction and uptake of goods, products and services?		
14. Do annual budgets ensure funds for maintenance of safety and accessibility features of all goods, products and services procured?		
15. Are procurement SOPs kept up-to-date with national and international accessibility standards and legislation?		
16. Do senior managers review and act upon complaints received about the safety and accessibility of goods, products and services procured by your organisation?		

References and useful resources

The following links will direct you to further guidance and standards relevant to procurement and accessibility. While this is a list of some common global standards on accessibility, it is advisable you undertake a comprehensive search for standards relevant to the goods, services or facilities that you procure, particularly those that are directly relevant to the country you are operating in.

Accessible ICT Procurement Toolkit: provides useful guidance on ensuring compliance in line with EU standards and includes an accessibility requirement generator to support writing tender calls.

Good practice Guidelines on Procurement and Accessibility, developed by the Irish National Disability Authority, provides a website with practical guidance on procurement and accessibility.

IT Procurement Toolkit: developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, provides guidance on how to take accessibility into account when buying IT systems including principles of accessible procurement.

Public Procurement and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Rights in Practice: developed by the International Disability Alliance, reviews how public procurement has been and can be made compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Three simple steps to accessible procurement: is a blog published by AbilityNet and contains lots of useful advice and suggestions that should help you in your decision making.

UNESCAP Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in accessibility in Asia and the Pacific: outlines the tools and approaches for successful investment in accessibility. It provides recommendations to governments across key areas of focus to ensure that societies are built to be sustainable and inclusive. It contains a comprehensive list of ISO standards on accessibility.

UNESCAP Disability-Inclusive Public Procurement: Promoting Universal Design and Accessibility: provides analysis of policies and give recommendations for disability-inclusive public procurement.

Be environmentally friendly

Accessibility considerations can help make your organisation greener and more sustainable. By adopting universal design strategies you can contribute to environmental, economic and social priorities on a large-scale such as: sustainable urbanization, climate change mitigation, resource conservation and job creation, disaster resilience, and improved quality of life for all.

universal design
Making inclusive design choices that recognise human diversity across the entire population.

green design
Making design choices for the planet, using fewer resources and less energy.

A sustainable future for all

According to the International Energy Agency, COVID-19 recovery plans provide a $3 trillion investment opportunity to deliver cleaner, affordable, more secure and more resilient energy system, and a major boost to employment and economic growth (IEA – 2020). This opportunity can be used to enhance both your energy efficiency and accessibility at the same time to bring back an even higher rate of return.

Universal design contributes to a greener, healthier planet

By promoting…

Smart Cities that use information and communication technologies to support remote work, e-commerce, e-government services and smart buildings for all

Compact communities with green public spaces and housing in close proximity to everyday destinations (e.g. shops, civic and cultural places, workplaces, parks, etc.)

Public transit use and pedestrian activity such as walking, biking, and other mobility devices (e.g., wheelchairs, scooters)

'Complete streets' that serve multiple functions and can accommodate travel, social interaction, and commerce

Accessible infrastructure that uses local resources and are usable throughout their lifespan

Universal design contributes to…

✔ Smart growth and reducing urban sprawl
✔ Sustainable mobility with decreased need for parking spaces and other automobile-oriented infrastructure
✔ Preserving nature, culture and heritage
✔ Climate change mitigation with reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions with associated health and environmental benefits.
✔ Reducing the need for future accessibility retrofitting which can create unnecessary waste and energy usage.

Commitment 4

# Capacity development, knowledge management and learning systems are inclusive and accessible so that all can equally contribute and benefit

Commitment 4:
Capacity development, knowledge management and learning systems are inclusive and accessible so that all can equally contribute and benefit

Why is this commitment important?

The organisations that are committed to learning are the ones that become leaders in their field; innovating and setting trends, with the agility to adapt in a constantly changing world. They thrive and grow by creating inclusive, open and accessible learning cultures which are driven and modelled by leadership and embedded into organisational systems and practice. Strong learning cultures take time to develop. They rely on a commitment to change, with allocated resources, to create safe environments for meaningful dialogue and peer exchange.

This commitment aims to support organisations to adapt and develop their systems and approaches to nurture and appreciate the skills, knowledge, and practices of all staff. Access to knowledge, tools and experience is a prerequisite to ensure that everyone in your organisation, including leadership, management, interns and volunteers are confident to champion inclusion and accessibility in their day-to-day work.

> **This commitment will help you to:**
> ✔ **Design inclusive capacity development and training programmes**
> ✔ **Ensure mentoring and ongoing professional development**
> ✔ **Disseminate learning and develop effective sharing forums and communities of practice**

What do you need to know?

Designing inclusive capacity development and training programmes

Dynamic capacity development programmes require organisational commitment and investment in time and resources. Time for reflection, meaningful exchange, shared learning, within respectful spaces that are supported by management and leadership. For capacity development programmes to be successful, they need to be embedded

into organisational systems and formally recognised as part of an organisation's commitment to the professional development of all its staff.

A common mistake that organisations make is investing in training as the main, or sole, means to develop capacity despite the overwhelming evidence that training alone rarely succeeds in changing knowledge, attitudes and practice. Therefore, it is important to consider a blended approach, using a variety of strategies which can be complementary. These range from: peer-to-peer support, coaching, self-directed learning, online learning, job shadowing, exchange programmes, informal buddy systems, to formal accredited professional courses.

Key elements to incorporate into inclusive capacity development and training programmes:

- **Inclusive facilitation** techniques are essential to ensure that all staff feel equally welcomed and valued and can meaningfully participate, regardless of their class, faith, race, gender, age, status, ability, culture, linguistic or any other identity. Inclusive facilitation also supports the needs of different types of learners with different learning styles and preferences and is equally relevant for online as well as face-to-face learning events. See **commitment 6**

- **Universal design for learning (UDL)** principles are important in developing learning environments that provide equal opportunities for people to succeed in their own way and at their own pace. The principles provide flexible approaches and options that differ from traditional curriculums and create diverse and accessible ways of sharing and demonstrating knowledge and learning. The principles are also meant to inspire and respond to learner motivations.

- **Addressing unconscious bias** starts with identifying and challenging your own biases, and then those of others. This is key to be able to address deeply embedded prejudices, attitudes, and stereotypes that underpin discrimination and inequality. Capacity development programmes equally need to assess if they are reinforcing or challenging dominant and traditional norms and biases, or inadvertently creating an environment where discrimination is tolerated.

- **Take the time to properly analyse** what is needed and understand the motivations and interests of all learners/ staff so that capacity development programmes are relevant. A great deal of resources and time can be wasted on programmes that are delivered as a box-ticking exercise for compliance, with little meaningful outcomes.

- **Reflect on different cultural influences and social norms**, both within organisations, and the wider community. These might positively influence attitudes and practices, or negatively inhibit them. Capacity development programmes need to effectively work with these norms to reinforce or challenge them, as needed, to promote greater inclusion.

- **Think about the 4AQ of accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability of learning opportunities.** This is especially important when deciding on location, venue, spaces, and timings of capacity development and training activities, be these face-to-face or online. These are all critical factors in influencing who is effectively able to participate and who is left out. See **commitment 5**

- **Ensure budget allocation** to resource a dynamic and innovative capacity development approach that allows for flexibility. This should be able to cover costs for traditional capacity development initiatives, as well as piloting new approaches. To increase responsiveness, it is important that the budget is not too prescriptive and can allow for a range of expenditure. These can range from stipends, paid sabbaticals and bursaries to draw upon OPD expertise, provision of accessibility and reasonable accommodation, exchange programmes, internships and job shadowing, to outsourcing webinars and accredited courses.

> **Given that disability is a social justice issue that seeks to transform unjust systems and practice, it is only fitting that any capacity development and training programme should use a human rights approach which reflects a commitment to inclusion, participation, and voice. This requires that organisations recognise the central legitimacy of the lived experience and expertise of persons with disabilities. It is essential to engage persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the design, delivery and evaluation of inclusive capacity development programmes.**
>
> **A key challenge can be that agencies do not know how to get in touch with disability experts on inclusive facilitation and accessibility. The IDA-IDDC Bridge CRPD SDGs initiative has developed a diverse expert pool of inclusive facilitators with disabilities from OPDs across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Europe.**

TIP

Mentoring and ongoing professional development

There is a great deal of research into what motivates and is effective for adult learners. Successful adult learning programmes create respectful, collaborative peer learning and mentoring opportunities, that directly respond to an individual's personal and professional development

aspirations. They are also practical, experiential and relevant to people's work, drawing upon and valuing their lived experience and knowledge.

No matter how diverse the different capacity development preferences, or learning pathways agreed with different staff members are, it is important to ensure that these are:

- Clearly linked to people's professional development plans
- Formally agreed upon as part of key performance objectives, so training is not added on to people's work loads
- Promoting ownership and self-responsibility of personal and professional development
- Documented and shared in a variety of accessible and innovative ways that promotes reflexive thinking and the valuing of skills and experience
- Regularly reviewed and monitored, using a wide variety of inclusive feedback mechanisms, to understand what works, what doesn't and what can be done differently
- Independently reviewed on a regular basis to have an objective overview of how effective different mentoring and professional development approaches have been. This is especially helpful to be able to compare, benchmark and learn from other organisations

> **(!) Remember: Feedback and evaluation mechanisms are key to assess if capacity development and mentoring approaches are effective in meeting people's needs. To do this feedback mechanisms should be diverse and consider acceptability as well as accessibility, so that everyone is comfortable to share. Different people have different preferences. Whilst some people are happy to use formal feedback mechanisms such as traditional interviews, surveys or questionnaires, others may prefer more informal, personal or anonymous methods. A key to inclusive capacity development is learning as you go, so it is important to find diverse ways to elicit feedback throughout the process, not just at an interim, or end point.**

Disseminating learning and developing communities of practice

In order for training and learning opportunities to have strategic value and be meaningful, there needs to be a clear plan for how these are followed up and integrated as part of an organisation's wider capacity development approach.

Creating a nurturing environment is key to supporting staff to apply and share learning. This can be done through formal and informal communities of practice, be they within your own organisation or as part of alliance, partner or professional networks.

Communities of practice are critical spaces to celebrate achievements, troubleshoot issues and create positive momentum for change. It can be an important space for staff to build understanding and achieve quality of work towards accessibility.

Effective learning cultures and communities of practice require:

- Allocation of staff time to actively support and nurture learning spaces, ideally led by technical resource persons or groups who are qualified in the subject area to encourage practitioners to share
- Inclusive and accessible feedback mechanisms that proactively seek a wide range of views
- Committed budgets to ensure accessibility of learning spaces, including maintenance of accessibility features
- Proactive management of shared learning spaces with timely sharing of resources to stimulate exchange and dialogue
- Creation of opportunities to share experiences, both formal and informal, to capture learning and good practice examples

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- Staff have access to diverse capacity development and training opportunities to support their ongoing professional development and inclusive practice
- Induction packages and key performance objectives include appropriate training and capacity development strategies that motivate and inspire staff to be champions of inclusion
- Budget is regularly allocated to support inclusive and accessible capacity development and training programmes with clear expectations and learning objectives/outcomes and set within realistic timeframes
- Learning from participatory reviews and evaluations of capacity development programmes is consistently used to address issues and gaps within systems and practice and improve future capacity development programmes
- A vibrant community of practice, where staff proactively engage and exchange with professional peers and are recognised as thought leaders in their sector
- High quality of organisational output, leading to greater staff and customer satisfaction, as well as increased growth, visibility and reputation

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Commitment 4:
Capacity development, knowledge management and learning systems are designed and supported to be inclusive and accessible so that all can equally contribute and benefit.

</div>

Training & Capacity Development Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Designing inclusive capacity development and training programmes	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Do you design your capacity development and training programmes based on consultation with staff/participants on their learning needs and expectations, including preferred methods, timings and locations?		
2. Do your capacity development and training programmes have clear objectives to create change in systems, practice and attitudes?		
3. Is the content and methodology of your capacity development and training programmes fully accessible, using inclusive facilitation techniques to address different learner styles and preferences, so that everyone can meaningfully participate?		
4. Are your capacity development and training programmes designed to be flexible and responsive to different contexts and learners, including being able to adapt in times of crises?		
5. Do you have an allocated budget to provide for accessible and inclusive capacity development and training programmes (such as costs for accessible transport, sign language interpreters, captioning, support persons, creche support for parents of young children, etc.)?		

Mentoring and ongoing professional development	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
6. Do you have accessible and user-friendly evaluation and feedback mechanisms in place for all participants to share their learning and suggestions?		
7. Do line managers and senior management actively support all staff, especially women and those from under-represented groups, to have access to meaningful ongoing learning and professional development opportunities?		
8. Is there a culture where all staff are confident and proactive in taking personal responsibility for their own learning and progressing inclusion and accessibility as part of their work?		
9. Has an appropriate budget been allocated to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for all staff, such as peer exchange, job shadowing, accredited training, sabbaticals etc.?		
10. Are all staff given opportunities to learn about, recognise and challenge unconscious bias, including in their own practice?		
11. Do management act upon the findings of reviews and independent evaluations of capacity development and training programmes to promote innovative practice and strategies for organisational learning and growth?		

Disseminating learning and developing communities of practice	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
12. Do all staff have opportunities to share learning, exchange experiences and resources, and keep up-to-date on latest professional developments? (These might be through an internal community of practice or through other organisations or networks)		
13. Is there a budget to formally support the development of communities of practice? (This could include having a designated information and knowledge management coordinator, an accessible online platform, exchange programmes and learning events, etc.)		

Disseminating learning and developing communities of practice	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
14. Are there budgets to develop, design and disseminate resources on learning in accessible formats and local languages?		
15. Are there accessible and diverse feedback mechanisms in place that allows for the analysis of learning spaces to ensure that they are effectively meeting practitioners' needs?		
16. Do senior management and leadership act upon key learning from staff and communities of practice, especially feedback that challenges organisational culture and norms?		

References and useful resources

Consensus and facilitation resources: developed by Seeds for Change, provides guidance that will help you design and facilitate participatory processes, enabling participants to contribute equally.

Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Toolkit: developed by CBM, helps support staff and partners to build capacity and knowledge on disability inclusive development. It has been designed as both a self-study guide as well as a resource to support those undertaking training and capacity development. Chapter 4 in particular looks at design and development of inclusive training and capacity development approaches.

CBM Digital Accessibility toolkit: provides a selection of tools and recommendations pertaining to the accessibility of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) which are useful for ensuring inclusion and accessibility of your capacity development and training initiatives.

IDA-IDDC Bridge CRPD SDGs initiative: has developed a significant amount of inclusive facilitation expertise across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Europe.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines: developed by CAST, provides guidance with a range of tools, research and learning on how to develop flexible learning opportunities to support a range of learning styles, abilities, interests and motivations that can be adapted for children and adults alike.

∞ Increase resilience

Removing accessibility barriers in your organisation creates a more resilient and safer environment for all employees and their communities. Accessibility can help you better prepare for crises and reduce the negative impacts of disasters. If a disaster does strike, then accessibility is key to reducing inequalities and can help you to Build Back Better.

Emergency preparedness and Build Back Better: message received!

Persons with disabilities and older persons are at higher risk of exclusion, isolation, illness and death during and after emergencies, disasters and pandemics.

Data on COVID-19 is evidencing that persons with disabilities, older persons, and persons from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds are among those hardest hit by the pandemic (IDA 'Covid-19 End-Discrimination Campaign' and WBU Covid-19 report 'Amplifying voices: our lives, our say' – 2020)

Survey on Living with Disabilities and Disasters conducted in 137 countries showed that:

- 72% of persons with disabilities had no personal preparedness plan for disasters.
- Less than half of emergency and disaster relief sites are accessible for persons with disabilities (UNISDR – 2013)

The 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan resulted in a death rate among persons with disabilities that was twice the death rate of the rest of the population (UNESCAP – 2019).

Accessibility saves lives and promotes resilience

Rebuilding stronger, faster, and more inclusively could generate major benefits, totalling US$173 billion per year, or 31 percent of current well-being losses due to natural disasters (GFDRR – 2017)

You can save lives and promote resilience by ensuring:

- ✔ Your emergency preparedness planning involves persons with disabilities and older persons
- ✔ Your physical and digital infrastructure is accessible (early warning systems, transport, buildings, information and communication, etc.)
- ✔ Your evacuation plan takes into account all persons with disabilities
- ✔ Your emergency shelters and sites are accessible and easy to get to
- ✔ Your Build Back Better strategies follow accessibility standards and universal design to avoid new barriers

Commitment 5

Our programmes and services are non-discriminatory and accessible to all persons with disabilities in their communities regardless of age, gender, faith, ethnicity or any other identity characteristic

Commitment 5:
Our programmes and services are non-discriminatory and accessible to all persons with disabilities in their communities regardless of age, gender, faith, ethnicity or any other identity characteristic

Why is this commitment important?

Rights-based programming is critical if we hope to effectively challenge systemic, deeply- held discrimination and transform unjust policies, systems and practice. To have this kind of impact, programmes need to be designed to address discrimination and staff confident enough to model inclusive human rights-based approaches in their daily practice.

This commitment aims to uphold the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination in programmes, regardless of their scale or context. It is relevant to governments, civil society and the private sector and can equally be used in development, humanitarian, disaster risk reduction, as well as environmental and peace building programming.

This commitment will help you to:

✔ **Ensure programme management and governance structures can identify and address discrimination**
✔ **Design, plan and implement programmes that promote equality**
✔ **Develop inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning processes to promote programmes that are fully inclusive, accessible, and accountable to the communities and constituents they serve**

What do you need to know?

Programme management and governance
The starting point for equality and non-discrimination across any programme is with senior leadership who have the decision-making power. Ultimately, equality and non-discrimination are political decisions which leadership and senior management commit to in order for systems, programmes, policies and practice to be inclusive and accessible for all.

On a global level, there is widescale political buy-in of governments, civil society and businesses to promote Agenda 2030. This is driven by a shared commitment to leave no one behind in the joint effort to realise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets across all countries and all sectors. To achieve this, many civil society organisations have developed strategies and frameworks with standards and indicators that seek to promote and measure equality and non-discrimination in line with their organisational values and mandates. Equally, the private sector and local governments have also developed formal commitments and targets for inclusion, be this through a service charter or local policy framework to promote inclusion and accessibility.

Accessibility is a prerequisite to ensure persons with disabilities are able to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others. It is needed to support organisations, regardless of sector, in their efforts to deliver against the SDGs, in line with the CRPD. It is also key when programming to look at the specific measures required for women with disabilities in line with CRPD Article 6 and, children with disabilities in line with CRPD Article 7.

Leadership across government, civil society and businesses have responsibility to model and ensure that institutional governance structures, including policies and standards, monitor and uphold human rights and are accountable to persons with disabilities. While senior management are responsible to ensure these policies and standards translate into practice and are understood by all staff, interns and volunteers.

Some practical steps that senior management and leadership can take to promote equality and non-discrimination in programme management and governance are to:

- **Regularly assess** how well your programme systems and procedures are in line with human rights principles/sector standards. Benchmark your programmes to ensure your systems are fit for purpose in terms of ensuring non-discrimination

- **Provide regular diversity and equality training** to help support senior leadership and management to recognise and address unconscious bias and discrimination within programmes

- **Engage a diverse range of persons with disabilities** at all levels of governance and across all stages of programme management to help oversee and ensure accountability to all persons with disabilities

- **Ensure transparent governance mechanisms to oversee policy compliance**. This can be done in a number of ways to increase accountability such as through internal authority structures, or independent audits commissioned to OPDs and other relevant professionals

- **Undertake regular participatory risk mitigation assessments** which engage a diverse range of end users to ensure a do no harm approach for all constituent groups

- **Ensure that all senior staff are inducted and take responsibility for programme standards and policies**, including that they are adequately resourced to build capacity of staff to meet these standards

- **Join networks/communities of practice to nurture peer support and learning**. This can be especially important for smaller organisations to get exposure to different approaches and accountability mechanisms

Design, planning & implementation

In order to achieve equality and non-discrimination in programmes and truly leave no one behind, we must actively listen to and engage all groups, especially those typically excluded from programme design, planning and delivery. This requires programmes to create safe and inclusive environments that allow all groups to share their experiences of exclusion and jointly build approaches that identify and overcome barriers.

A rights-based approach to programming starts with programme staff. To be able to transform unjust systems and practice, it is important to first reflect on staff's own attitudes, practice, programmes and ways of working. Programmes are not neutral and can either reinforce discrimination and the status quo or challenge inequality and be transformative. The 4AQ (Accessibility, Availability, Acceptability, Affordability & Quality) is a framework that can provide a critical lens to promote inclusive and transformative programming. Its main focus is to ensure a holistic and rights-based approach to programmes and services by looking at a number of considerations which include:

- **Availability:** is there enough supply and availability of appropriate services/ programmes for all?

- **Affordability:** are programmes affordable for all, or does there need to be sliding scales or additional measures in place to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to access them?

- **Accessibility:** are infrastructure, buildings and information all accessible? Are programme times and locations accessible to different groups such as women and men, those who are working? Do programmes make use of accessible communications and language, such as using accessible formats and mediums that include plain language and Easy Read documents?
  See **commitment 1**, **commitment 2** and **commitment 6**

- **Acceptable:** is the programme sensitive to different gender identities, minority groups, and cultures, and responsive to the needs of everyone, ensuring no groups are excluded or alienated?

- **Quality:** is the programme of sufficient quality? Is it supported by qualified staff and OPDs with the skills, knowledge and behaviour to meet appropriate standards to benefit all and do no harm?

In order to know how well programmes and services meet these criteria, it is essential to proactively engage persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups in programme design from the beginning. Having under-represented groups actively engaged throughout all stages, from planning and implementation through to monitoring and evaluation, will help ensure that no one is left behind.

Bear in mind that sometimes, under-represented groups are harder to reach and therefore you will need to take additional measures to reach out to them through other organisations, informal networks or self-help groups. This may require efforts such as providing language support, augmentative and alternative modes of communication and working with key informants from within under-represented groups to help build connections and trust.

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL)

Effective monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) requires organisations to have a clear commitment to evidenced-based, reflective practice, where staff have safe spaces to regularly review and share learning. Organisations also need to be clear about what is important for them to measure. This involves thinking on how they collect and effectively manage programme data or service information and use it to advance learning and evidence.

The way that an organisation collects, uses and disseminates data is an indicator of how committed they are to accountability and upholding human rights. This requires organisations to have data policies supported by procedures and training for all staff to ensure ethical and responsible management of data. This is even more critical when working in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, especially politically driven conflicts, where mismanagement of data can put individuals, or groups in direct harm.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) define a human rights-based approach to data management as having 6 core principles:

Participation: use a diverse range of processes and facilitation methods to encourage participation from diverse groups.

Be transparent, open and ready to create separate spaces to facilitate the voice and views of those most marginalised or vulnerable. Ensure that participatory processes never put marginalised groups at risk of harm or further discrimination

Disaggregated data: this kind of data is critical to identify and address inequalities within programmes and services. Programme outcomes will determine which level of data disaggregation is needed but minimum criteria are age, sex and disability. Further disaggregation on the grounds of race, ethnicity, caste, or other minority status can equally be important to measure

Self-identification: data about personal characteristics should be provided by individuals on a free and informed basis, and only held with the full consent of the individual concerned. Data collection should never place any individual or group in a vulnerable position and should always uphold the principle of 'do no harm'. It is important when managing data anonymously to consider if the sample is sufficiently large and diverse to protect individuals' confidentiality

Transparency: data should be available in accessible formats and in a timely manner to inform end users and increase accountability to communities. This requires that programmes and services proactively engage with end users to find out the most appropriate means and methods to collect, manage and disseminate data. This also needs to consider appropriate formats, medium and languages. See **commitment 2**

Privacy and confidentiality: are critical to ensure no data that would disclose an individual's personal characteristics is made public. Organisations need to ensure robust data management systems that are in line with statutory data protection requirements, to uphold the integrity of individuals and groups. For example, if data is released in the public domain in images or quotes, formal documented permission of the individual concerned is required. In addition, appropriate considerations need to be undertaken to ensure that public disclosure does not put any child or adult at risk

Accountability: programmes and services need to have clear mechanisms and procedures to ensure they are accountable to those they serve. These mechanisms need be embedded throughout design and implementation and ensure that complaints are immediately flagged. This includes having confidential whistleblowing mechanisms in place to ensure protection of those who wish to address serious cases of discrimination or violations that may put an individual or group at risk. These monitoring and feedback mechanisms also need to be in accessible formats

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- Programme information, reports and evaluations are available in the public domain in accessible formats and local languages, that communities and end users can access

- Improved quality of engagement with OPDs, communities, partners, and service users, who regularly access programme information and use inclusive feedback mechanisms that are available in local languages and accessible formats

- Organisations have clear policies and accountability mechanisms that are regularly reviewed, understood and acted upon by all members of staff across all areas of programming

- All programmes are designed based on a participatory disability and gender analysis and are able to baseline and monitor disability and gender equality

- Under-represented groups, especially those who face multiple and intersecting discrimination, and who are at higher risk at times of emergency, are actively engaged in programmes and services

- Programmes and services consistently measure and demonstrate how they address accessibility, availability, affordability, acceptability and quality (4AQ)

- Increased numbers of diverse persons with disabilities actively involved in key decision making on the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and services

- Leadership act on the findings of programme and service audits to implement change in systems, policies and practice to increase equality, non-discrimination and accountability

> ## Commitment 5:
> ## Our programmes and services are non-discriminatory and accessible to all persons with disabilities in their communities regardless of age, gender, faith, ethnicity or any other identity characteristic

Equality and Non-Discrimination Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Programme management and governance	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Do organisational policies, standards and procedures address equality and non-discrimination in line with a human rights-based approach?		
2. Are leadership and senior management adequately trained in recognising and addressing unconscious bias, to ensure that all programmes, systems and practice respect the principles of equality and non-discrimination?		
3. Are persons with disabilities, especially those from under-represented groups, represented in senior decision-making and governance positions?		
4. Are all programme systems and procedures fully accessible and in line with the principles of universal design?		
5. Do programme managers oversee and ensure the active engagement of a diverse range of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations at every stage of the project cycle, from initial planning to evaluation?		

Design, planning & implementation	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
6. Do situation analyses (including rapid needs assessments, post disaster assessments, etc.) identify under-represented groups and analyse social roles, relations, norms and inequalities in relation to disability and gender?		
7. Are under-represented groups that have been identified actively engaged in the planning design and implementation of programmes?		
8. Are the findings from situational analyses on disability and gender equality used to inform programmes and define indicators to measure change, including in humanitarian responses?		
9. Does the design include specific measures with budget to address equality and non-discrimination in line with a human rights-based approach?		
10. Are programmes and services designed and implemented comprehensively to address accessibility, availability, affordability, acceptability and quality (4AQ)?		
11. Are there budgeted activities that challenge attitudes, stigma, stereotypes and discrimination faced by all persons with disabilities?		
12. Do budgets provide for accessibility, participatory processes, reasonable accommodation and other specific measures to ensure non-discrimination? (e.g. language interpreters, childcare assistance, translation, accessible transportation, digital accessibility, Easy Read and Braille documents, etc.?)		
13. Do programmes identify, monitor and mitigate potential risks so that no person is harmed by your work?		

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
14. Are information and feedback mechanisms provided in a range of accessible formats, including local languages?		
15. Do MEAL activities create safe and accessible spaces for all to participate equally, including where necessary, separate spaces to ensure that diverse voices are heard?		
16. Is disaggregated data consistently collected and analysed following OHCHR principles of participation, self-identification, transparency, privacy and accountability?		
17. Do evaluation teams use local expertise, including persons with disability with diverse lived experiences?		
18. Do evaluation teams use participatory processes, including use of local language, that enable diverse and under-represented voices, including children, to be heard?		
19. Are the initial findings and recommendations of evaluations shared with communities and users in accessible formats and local languages, to ensure feedback and validation prior to finalisation?		
20. Is learning on equality and non-discrimination from evaluations consistently used to inform future programmes and strategies?		
21. Is learning from programmes shared back with partners at community, national and international levels in accessible formats and languages to ensure accountability?		
22. Do senior managers act upon all reported incidents of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation, that are raised?		

References and useful resources

A Human Rights Based Approach to Data, Leaving no-one behind in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development: developed by OHCHR, provides practical guidance to help programmes address how to develop effective data collection and management in line with the human rights principles of participation, data-disaggregation, self-identification, transparency and accountability.

A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators: The ILO Participatory Gender Audit Methodology: developed by ILO, is designed to support organisational learning on gender equality. It provides some useful participatory workshop exercises for organisational reflection that can be adapted for a wide range of groups.

A Practice Note: Collecting and using data on disability to inform inclusive development: is a practical guide to support programmes on collecting and using data on disability to increase accountability to persons with disabilities. It provides helpful methods and tools that can be used to improve programmes. It was developed by Plan International Australia, CBM Australia and Nossal Institute for Health.

Disability and Gender Analysis (DGA) toolkit: developed by CBM, is a useful resource to support more holistic inclusive programming. It provides technical support and templates to look at individual, organisational and programmes assessments. It is also available in Spanish and French.

Factsheets including Easy Read formats: developed by Women Enabled International, provides a helpful overview of the rights of all women and girls with disabilities. It gives practical examples of specific rights violations, identifies barriers and recommends action to support the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

OPERA framework: developed by the Centre for Economic and Social Rights, is a helpful resource to support programmes and services analyse Outcome, Policy Efforts, Resources and Assessment. It uses mixed methods to get a more holistic and deeper appreciation of how to make change.

The Gender Audit Handbook: A Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation: developed by InterAction, provides support to organisations on how to assess and improve their approach to gender in systems and programming.

Working to improve our own futures: inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in humanitarian action: developed by the Women's Refugee Commission, shares findings from a global mapping on inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in humanitarian action. It presents recommendations to strengthen inclusive humanitarian programming.
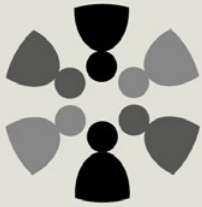
Create inclusive cities and communities

Your organisation can help communities be more inclusive so that everyone has equal access to services and can participate and contribute to society. You can do this by providing reasonable accommodation, complying with accessibility standards and following universal design principles.

Future-proofing with universal design

2020

Today, more than half of all persons with disabilities and older persons live in cities with:

- **Inaccessible transportation and public spaces**
- **Inaccessible digital infrastructure**
- **A lack of access to adequate housing, employment, health and education** (UNDESA – 2019)

2050

- **70% of the world's population will live in cities while 60% of urban settlements remain to be built (**UN Habitat**)**
- **Over 2 billion persons with disabilities and older persons will be living in urban communities by 2050 (**UCLG**)**

The demand for inclusive and accessible infrastructure and services is rapidly increasing. Accessibility benefits everyone and should be provided to all. Adopting universal design is the only way forward to meet the needs of our future populations otherwise our communities risk becoming more fragmented and socially polarised over time.

You hold the key to a positive impact on society!

'The lack of accessibility is a fundamental barrier that causes persons with disabilities to be excluded, and it needs to be urgently addressed to promote the independent living of persons with disabilities and their participation in society and development' (Accessibility and the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – UN General Assembly 2019)

By delivering on your accessibility commitments, you can support inclusion for individuals and their communities while contributing to a better world. Unlock opportunities for sustainable development!

Commitment 6

Our meetings and events, online and in person, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

Commitment 6:
Our meetings and events, online and in person, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

Why is this commitment important?

Our ability to work effectively relies on good collaboration across departments and teams and between organisations and stakeholders. Whatever the meeting or event, whether it is online or face-to-face, international or local, they all require accessible and inclusive processes so that everyone has the opportunity to equally participate.

Very often, existing infrastructure and practices determine who is, and who is not, able to access or fully participate in a meeting or event. Lack of accessibility, or a lack of budget often becomes the excuse for excluding or limiting the participation of certain individuals or groups. Poor accessibility is not only discriminatory but also comes at a great cost, including the loss of valuable contributions, ideas, life experience and knowledge.

This commitment builds on the realisation of standards already outlined in **commitment 1**, **commitment 2** and **commitment 3**.

This commitment will help you to:

✔ **Plan more confidently for meetings, webinars, presentations, workshops and events**

✔ **Ensure all events and meetings, online or face-to-face, are inclusive**

✔ **Develop inclusive feedback, learning and compliance systems**

What do you need to know?

Meeting event preparation and planning
Pre-event planning: When planning for an event it is important to always budget for accessibility and reasonable accommodation, as well as other specific measures. If this is your first time planning an accessible event, then ask local OPDs and other organisations with experience to advise on suppliers and costs on items such as: sign language interpreters, accessible taxis, real-time captioning, personal assistance allowances, illustrators, and production of materials in Braille and Easy Read documents etc.

In order to increase participation, remember to think about other groups who may be excluded on the grounds of poverty, caste, gender, class, ethnicity or race. Other equality measures may include provisions such as childcare allowances, interpreters for minority languages, food and travel subsidies, or hire of an additional quiet area for breast feeding mothers.

Prior to any meeting or event, it is critical to know who is coming and what are their specific needs. This can be a question that is added to your registration form or included in the announcement of the event with a contact detail. Remember, for some groups there may be stigma attached to asking for support, so be very sensitive to managing requests and respecting confidentiality.

Site inspection/digital platform check: Keep an up-to-date list of accessible venues, service providers and platforms that have been approved by OPDs; this can save you a lot of time and stress. If you don't have a list, ask local OPDs to advise. In some areas, it may be impossible to find an accessible venue with features like step-free access or accessible washrooms. Therefore, as a potential customer, you can use this as an opportunity for advocacy, and negotiate with the service provider to have accessibility features installed in time for your event. Making the business case can be compelling if you have a large event as this can be an incentive for local venues to invest in accessibility. This type of advocacy is best led with local OPDs, who can then advise and oversee any adaptations required.

If you are hosting a virtual meeting, check in advance how well digital platforms meet international accessibility standards and check with any participants with disabilities on their preferences. Remember, if you are hosting an international online meeting, not all platforms are available in all countries, and some are more accessible than others in terms of bandwidth. See **commitment 2**

> (!) **Remember: In the absence of full accessibility, look to agree on reasonable accommodation provisions with facilitators, presenters or participants who have indicated an accessibility requirement.**

Logistics to access the event: When selecting an accessible venue, it is essential to also consider the accessibility of the surrounding areas including proximity to public transport and parking. Make sure to include information on accessible transportation to the venue in the event information pack. This is especially useful for attendees who are not familiar with the area.

When booking accommodation, you also need to think about the number of nights that need to be booked. If people are coming from a long distance, they may need to arrive the night before and rest before the event. Similarly, if an event is ending in the evening, there may not be available transport to return for some participants. Persons with disabilities may also have additional requirements that necessitate a longer stay. Make sure to include all of these considerations in your budget planning.

Likewise, if your meeting is virtual, you will need to think about how people are accessing your event, especially if people are joining from low-income settings, where there is less internet access and lower bandwidth connections. Find out from participants which digital platforms are more reliable, or familiar to users. If needed, look to find options for people to dial-in by phone or to go to a different office or hotel location that has stronger internet connection. In all cases it is good to do some connectivity tests before the meeting, especially if this is a new platform for some participants.

Running events and meetings

An inclusive meeting is one where every attendee feels comfortable to participate in their preferred way, so it is important to create a safe, respectful and open space for people to contribute. Always be sensitive to the fact that attendees may have different cultures and ways of communicating, so try to create a shared culture from the outset of the event that promotes respect and celebrates diversity. This shared culture should also extend to accessibility-related practices such as keeping the venue space safe and clear of obstacles (bags, laptops in aisles), respecting break times and minimising background noise.

While it is everybody's responsibility to do their part, you may also want to ask for some volunteers to be inclusion advocates in the meeting or event to remind people how to best respect everyone's needs.

Below are some good practices to help you run an accessible event:

- For large-scale events, always plan to provide Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs). These should be arranged through OPDs led by Deaf people to ensure accredited and recommended interpreters are hired. As with any language interpretation, make sure to allow time for the interpreters to keep up. For full day events ensure that there are at least 2 interpreters per person. If Deaf people speak the same language, they can share interpreters, but be mindful if there are workshops or conferences with parallel sessions, you will need to contract more SLIs to ensure equal choice for Deaf participants.

- Share your presentation materials and explain any key terms in advance with SLIs, interpreters, captioners, support persons and illustrators so they are equipped to be able to effectively provide their assistance.

- If you are sharing materials and handouts, make sure they have all passed an accessibility check. Before disseminating materials in accessible formats, it is good to check their usability with OPDs. See **commitment 2**.
- At the start of the webinar or a face-to-face session, the moderator should inform the audience that in order for the session to be accessible, attendees should be mindful not to speak too fast and to state their name each time they speak.
- Presenters and facilitators should always describe any visual references they use, whether it is in slides, posters or videos. Remember to share your slides electronically with participants who would like to follow simultaneously using a screen reader.
- Speak at a steady pace and keep your language jargon-free. Try to avoid difficult terminology by using clear language to explain complex concepts. Also avoid the overuse of acronyms.
- During a question and answer session, allow a short pause in between questions and answers so that participants, moderators or presenters who need extra time to ask a question or make a comment have a chance to do so.

(!) **Remember: While interpreters, personal assistants and support persons play an important role in facilitating the participation of attendees with disabilities, they are not the participants. Your communication should always be directed to the person with disability.**

Feedback, learning and compliance

Feedback on content and methodology: Throughout your meetings and events use a variety of feedback mechanisms and ask people how they like to give feedback. Finding out what makes people more comfortable is important, not everyone feels comfortable with traditional surveys. There are many other ways to ask for feedback, such as having an anonymous feedback board where people can draw or write comments, a suggestion box, or an exit poll. You can also ask participants to volunteer to gather feedback for your event or meeting. This way people may feel more comfortable to share critical feedback with a fellow participant than with the event facilitators or organisers.

Remember, different styles of approaches that recognise different preferences is important to increase participation and learning,

especially when working with under-represented groups, or hosting events that involve people from different cultures. See **commitment 4**

Post-event surveys on venue and suppliers: When asking for feedback on the event venue and suppliers, include questions not just on accessibility, but also the friendliness of staff and how comfortable people felt to use the services of suppliers. It is important to share this feedback with the different suppliers to help them improve their compliance with accessibility standards. Use these findings to update your supplier lists to include those that have given a good service. For those that don't meet standards, it is important to let them know what they need to do differently if they wish to get future contracts. Always be careful to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. For instance, if there is just one person who is hard of hearing in the meeting and there are complaints on the captioning service, this will clearly compromise their anonymity.

Acting on the feedback to improve practice: Be ready to learn from the feedback you receive. Even if persons with disabilities have been included at events, this does not necessarily mean that their experiences were positive. The same is true of other under-represented groups. Be sure to proactively act upon the feedback and recommendations provided and, where you are unable to make changes immediately, return to let participants know and ask them for their ideas and suggestions on how to improve practice.

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- Increased numbers of persons with disabilities and people from under-represented groups actively participating in consultations, meetings and events with increased levels of satisfaction
- Event management SOPs include accessibility checklists that ensure the provision of accessibility and reasonable accommodation requests are consistently met
- Up-to-date supplier lists of accessible venues and event related suppliers, approved by local OPDs, are available and consistently used by all departments
- All contracts with venue providers for meetings and events explicitly reference provision of accessible environments
- SOPs on inclusive event management are regularly reviewed, understood and acted upon by all staff across all departments
- Senior managers regularly monitor reports on use of budget allocation for provision of accessible meetings and events
- Organisations model a culture of inclusion where staff and customers regularly use accessible feedback systems, and managers promptly act upon complaints

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Commitment 6:
Our meetings and events, online and in person, are accessible to all persons with disabilities

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Inclusive Meetings & Events Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Meeting event preparation and planning	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Do you have an up-to-date directory of suppliers for meetings and events that have a proven track record of providing accessible, high quality services? (e.g. venues, hotels, taxis, captioning, SLIs, translators, etc.)		
2. Do you intentionally collect disaggregated data on attendees to be able to monitor how inclusive your meetings and events are?		
3. Do budgets provide for accessibility, reasonable accommodation and other specific measures in all your meetings and events?		
4. Do your pre-event registration forms ask participants for their accessibility and inclusion requirements and do you have systems in place to then ensure these are met?		
5. Do you take into account gender, cultural, religious and security considerations when planning your meetings and events to ensure an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment?		

Running events and meetings	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
6. Do you offer remote, online participation to your events and meetings to increase participation and reduce impact on the environment? (e.g. live-streaming, dial-in access, web conferencing etc.)		
7. Are staff confident to use inclusive facilitation methods and practices in all meetings and events to ensure equality of participation for all?		
8. Is all information and communication used in meetings and events provided in a range of accessible and respectful formats to ensure all participants can effectively contribute?		
9. Do meetings and events create safe spaces for everyone to participate equally, and have separate spaces where necessary, to increase the voice of less represented groups?		
10. Are accessible orientations on safety and evacuation procedures conducted before all meetings and events?		

Feedback, learning and compliance	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
11. Do you have a variety of feedback mechanisms to consistently monitor how accessible your meetings and events are for all participants, especially for under-represented groups?		
12. Is data from your feedback and evaluation forms analysed to track progress and identify barriers to participation that need to be addressed?		
13. Is key learning from event planning and delivery documented and shared to improve and support future events and meetings?		
14. Do leadership and managers model inclusive practice in meetings and events and act upon complaints about inaccessible or exclusive meetings and events?		

References and useful resources

Accessible webinars – making online work for everyone: is a blog from Jisc providing practical guidance about the '3 P's of accessible webinars' including: Planning, Presentation and Post event follow-up.

CBM Digital Accessibility Toolkit: provides a selection of tools and recommendations pertaining to the accessibility of ICT which are useful for ensuring the inclusion and accessibility of your capacity development and training initiatives.

Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Toolkit: developed by CBM, provides guidance on disability inclusive development. It has been designed as both a self-study guide as well as a resource to support those undertaking training and capacity development. It provides a checklist for organising accessible meetings and events (pages 149-150).

How to Make Your Virtual Meetings and Events Accessible to the Disability Community: is a blog from Rooted in Rights and explains how to make virtual events accessible from the beginning of the planning process.

IDA Resource on accessibility: provides recommendations and resources about inclusive and accessible participation in global events and meetings.

Planning Accessible Meetings and Events: A Toolkit: developed by the American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights, assists entities in planning meetings and events that are accessible to persons with disabilities. It provides recommendations and checklists for all phases of a meeting or an event, from choosing the venue to promotion, registration, presentations, materials, social events, meals, and staff and volunteer training.

UNESCAP Disability Inclusive Meetings – an Operational Guide: seeks to offer a comprehensive set of practical suggestions for meeting organisers at all levels.

Promote wellbeing and do no harm

Improving accessibility can help to enhance everyone's wellbeing all round. Environments that are healthy for all, improve our quality of life through increased social inclusion, active living, safety and access to nature.

Universal design makes us feel good, happy and safe

Better health

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and 1 in 4 people experience mental health issues (WHO). Insufficient physical activity is one of the leading risk factors for death worldwide. Universal design includes accessible green public spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, pedestrian and cycling amenities and residential greenery designed for all ages and abilities. These options can promote mental and physical health by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, stimulating social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise and excessive heat.

Greater safety

Universal design protects people from physical harm, and removes impediments that cause anxiety, stress, and psychological harm. Design strategies such as open sightlines, wide usable routes, clear and defined circulation paths, and thoughtful lighting can help to achieve a sense of safety in the built environment.

Better ergonomics

Between 1 in 3 and 1 in 5 people (including children) live with a musculoskeletal pain condition (WHO). Universally designed workstations, furniture and fixtures increase usability, comfort and productivity while preventing injury and reducing strain.

Make sure you do no harm

Inappropriate accessibility provisions can inadvertently do more harm than good, but this does not have to be the case.

Do	Don't
✔ **Do mainstream** accessibility into new or existing strategies, policies, programmes and processes	✘ **Don't create** accessible options that segregate people with disability further from society
✔ **Do respect** people's choices, dignity and autonomy, engaging with people disabilities as you create solutions	✘ **Don't presume** what is and isn't accessible on behalf of people with disabilities
✔ **Do ensure** you have accountability and transparency measures in place with accessible monitoring and feedback mechanisms	✘ **Don't assume** your responsibilities stop once you have delivered an accessible solution
✔ **Do consider** context realities and the links between accessibility and environmental sustainability to have positive impacts on the environment	✘ **Don't let** your accessibility solutions have a harmful effect on the environment

Commitment 7

Our workplace promotes an inclusive and accessible environment that supports all staff to thrive, with provision of reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities where needed

**Commitment 7:
Our workplace promotes an inclusive and accessible environment that supports all staff to thrive, with provision of reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities where needed**

Why is this commitment important?

The success of any organisation depends upon its people and their diverse abilities, skills, languages, cultures, and backgrounds. Striving for diversity and inclusion is not just the right thing to do but the smart thing to do. Research from across employment sectors and country contexts shows that greater diversity in the staffing of people with different lived experiences helps promote innovation, creativity, and smarter solutions to the constantly changing environments in which we work.

This commitment aims to support all employers – local government, private sector, or not-for-profit – to meet their legal obligations. Some of these obligations are best understood as practice to progressively improve over time, while others are legally binding with more immediate obligations. These time-sensitive obligations include providing reasonable accommodation, meeting national employment regulations and standards, and complying with mandatory organisational/sector policies and codes of conduct.

This commitment will help you to:

✔ **Recognise and meet your legal requirements as an employer**

✔ **Know how to assess and respond to reasonable accommodation requests**

✔ **Ensure your recruitment processes are inclusive to reach out to, and draw in a more diverse workforce**

✔ **Improve staff retention and professional development opportunities to support all staff to thrive and grow**

✔ **Improve your networks to create more diverse employment pathways for persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups**

What do you need to know?

Understanding the legal frameworks for inclusive employment

Before you get started it is important that you are aware of what currently exists in your context/organisation. In most countries there will already be national legislation in place such as employment acts, labour laws, and diversity/gender/disability and race equality acts that will have specific measures that address non-discrimination and promote equality. In addition, most organisations already have employee handbooks, terms and conditions of service, and/or a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.

Familiarise yourself with national guidance and policies on employment law and the existing policies and procedures already in place in your organisation. It can also be helpful to find out what other organisations/ sectors have in place too. Get in touch with OPDs and networks of human resource professionals, especially those that are active in advocating for inclusive employment.

As part of your assessment it is critical that you analyse if the regulations in place, including national laws, are compliant with the CRPD. As more countries ratify the CRPD (181 at the time of publication) States, private sector and civil society will need to evidence how they ensure there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability.

> (!) **Remember: Every organisation, regardless of size or sector, needs to legally prove that no discrimination takes place on the grounds of disability. This is not a nice to have option, but a legal obligation.**

CRPD Article 27 Work and Employment details the rights of persons with disabilities to have dignified work. The article stipulates that the obligations of non-discrimination, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and provision of positive measures (such as providing quota systems or targets) are met, in order to ensure inclusive employment. It also clearly prohibits the abuse of employment, especially forced labour or labour where persons with disabilities do not benefit from the fruits of their production or labour.

Many OPDs have substantial knowledge and expertise on inclusive employment. Increasingly they are being called upon to advise and support analysis on national employment laws and regulations, as well as organisational policies and practice. OPDs can be contracted

to support your organisation to review and develop your policies and procedures, as well as train staff on how to implement these in their practice to be compliant with the CRPD.

Assessment and provision of reasonable accommodation

Ideally, all workspaces should be inclusive and accommodate the needs of all employees to provide opportunities for flexibility to optimise staff contributions. Using the principles of universal design creates a more welcoming and accessible environment for all and often decreases the need for specialised support and assistance. See **commitment 1** and **commitment 5**

However, in the absence of an accessible environment, the minimum legal requirement to ensure non-discrimination is the provision of reasonable accommodation. This includes having support measures in place so that all applicants, staff, interns and volunteers with disabilities can participate on an equal basis with others.

'Reasonable accommodation' within employment processes needs to be considered in all stages of the process from recruitment through to professional development. In short, there are three main areas of provision of reasonable accommodation to be considered within employment processes:

1. Changes to the job application process
2. Changes to the work environment, or the way the job is usually done
3. Changes that enable an employee, intern or volunteer with a disability to enjoy equal benefits, privileges and professional development opportunities as their peers

These three considerations also need to be embedded within systems and factored into organisational budgets across programmes, operations and HR departments. This said, the process of providing reasonable accommodation is individualised, interactive, and an on-going process that takes time. It can involve diverse solutions anywhere from adapting working times or tasks to the provision of accessibility features such as support software or assistive technology; from adapting a workplace setting such as a seating arrangement to providing coverage of personal assistance for travel or having a buddy system or job share arrangement.

Leadership and management need to be clear on and confident in assessing and providing reasonable accommodation in order to create a non-discriminatory work-based practice. Not all requests for reasonable accommodation are indeed reasonable.

To help assess what is reasonable the following five questions can be used:

1. **Does it work for the person: is the adaptation what the staff member with disabilities needs?**
2. **Is it appropriate: is it not more than what the staff with a disability needs but is sufficient to do what the job requires?**
3. **Is it possible: is the accommodation technically possible or available in country?**
4. **Is it financially possible: does the employer have the money for it?**
5. **Is it economically feasible: will doing it jeopardise the business?**

TIP

Having a clear process set up for staff requests and for requests to be assessed and formally registered is a minimum standard to ensure non-discrimination. It is also a litigious matter and leadership and management should be mindful of their responsibilities towards both the staff and the organisation.

Respecting confidentiality and the right to non-disclosure

Not all disabilities are visible and regardless of visibility, all persons with disabilities have the right to choose if they wish to discuss and disclose their disability and to ask for reasonable accommodation. Many people with disability may not choose to disclose their disability. The choice of whether or not to disclose a disability needs to always be respected as an individual choice that is very personal. In most countries, especially those who are compliant with the CRPD, **it is not a legal requirement for an employee to have to disclose their disability.**

Sometimes employees may also disclose their disability to their direct line manager and request reasonable accommodation but also ask that this is kept confidential. Again, the personal preferences of a person with a disability needs to be respected. Many persons with disabilities prefer not to disclose, especially if they do not feel part of an open and trusted environment. Often an indicator of how successful an organisation is in creating inclusive and supportive environments is that more staff with non-visible disabilities are willing to openly disclose their disabilities or health conditions.

Inclusive recruitment

A key method of understanding an organisation's work culture and values is by looking at how they recruit and treat their staff. Organisations that recognise that recruitment and retention of staff is a two-way process succeed in attracting and retaining the best candidates. Ultimately, creating innovative learning environments where both the organisation and staff thrive depends on diversity and being ahead of or leading trends in their respective fields.

The recruitment process is also a very public advertisement for an organisation and an opportunity to reach new audiences. Each time recruitment processes follow a traditional weighting of skills and leadership positions, good candidates from diverse backgrounds will be missed. Unless the diversity of lived experience is positively prioritised and valued as a skill set in essential or desirable job requirements, the status quo that undermines women, persons with disabilities and minority groups will remain. Equally, each time that recruitment panels are formed that reflect the status quo continuation of natural bias will be endemic, reinforcing standard group thinking.

Typically, another traditional error that many organisations make is chasing the same qualified candidates from minority groups. This can result in the same few people, or certain groups having more opportunities and exposure, while narrowing the opportunities for others. It is important that recruitment processes are regularly evaluated to see if there are any unconscious biases or affinities that are excluding different minority groups. Being ready to act on findings and disrupting traditional recruitment processes can be the best way to changing dynamics and creating strong, diverse and innovative work forces.

Here are some basic tips that recruiters can follow to make a difference in how they recruit diverse applicants:

- Ensure that job advertisements reach beyond traditional outlets – e.g. sending through non-traditional networks, posting on social media and using diverse advertisements to attract a wider range of candidates
- Offer dynamic tasks and recruitment processes with provision of reasonable accommodation that do not disadvantage candidates but help to ensure that all candidates can show their diverse skills and are considered on an equal basis
- Ensure the recruitment panel is also diverse and that traditional biases are not reinforced
- Invite a wide range of OPD partners or under-represented groups to be part of the recruitment process from the design and assessment of tasks to the short listing of candidates and being on recruitment panels

- Offer constructive feedback to candidates who have been called to interview but who do not succeed as this is also a valuable way of showing you are an employer that values candidates' time
- Get regular feedback, post-recruitment from applicants on how the organisation did through the recruitment process and look to identify what could be done better for future recruitment
- Create relationships with OPDs, women's organisations, organisations of indigenous persons and other under-represented groups to get feedback on how recruitment advertisements are perceived and experienced. These groups will also then be more likely to recommend people to apply

Staff retention and professional development

Women and men with disabilities often find it harder to secure work, especially in development and humanitarian organisations. This is frequently due to inaccessibility in the field/environments and a concern for health and safety that is often overly protective. When staff with disabilities do get jobs there is also a tendency to typecast or limit the exposure for professional development opportunities. Recruitment of staff with disabilities can also be tokenistic to certain roles that have high visibility but little career development opportunities.

Looking at disaggregated employment data can be an important first step to analyse how well you are doing as an organisation in terms of promoting successful retention and professional development of staff. It is not enough to set quotas such as a 10% minimum target for employing staff with disabilities, but in addition, have data that tracks how well staff with disabilities are doing once they enter the workforce. Who is being promoted and who is staying in the same role or function? How often have staff with disabilities been offered training opportunities, conference attendance or job exchanges on an equal basis with peers? Disaggregated data can also reveal the number of persons with disabilities, women and under-represented groups that are in senior roles or have key decision-making functions. Data on who is being promoted internally within an organisation is a telling sign of the values and/or unconscious biases held within an organisation. Make sure to review your data and act upon it.

Very often employees are content to stay in the same position, and this can be a genuine personal choice that should be respected. However, this may also mask underlying institutional bias or the perception that there is a truly equal playing field that discriminates or favours certain groups of employees over others, whether based on gender, faith, class, ethnicity or impairment.

Professional development of staff relies on creating enabling environments for staff, volunteers and interns with disabilities.

This responsibility stretches from creating welcoming and accessible environments (see **commitment 1** and **commitment 2**), to proactively promoting an inclusive work culture (see **commitment 4**), to ensuring everyday work practices are non-discriminatory (see **commitment 5**) and meetings and events are accessible (see **commitment 6)**.

In addition, there are some practical processes that can help ensure professional development is nurtured:

- Regularly ensure diversity and equality training for all staff with practical mentoring and regular reviews of practice and systems to challenge unconscious bias within the workplace
- Ensure all staff with direct line management responsibilities are trained and confident on how to assess and provide reasonable accommodation
- Make sure that reasonable accommodation processes are systematically implemented and regularly reviewed by HR/senior management
- Get regular feedback from staff to make sure systems are respectful, nurturing and supportive and that there are not organisational practices that are alienating or discouraging staff. This should not purely rely on formal appraisal processes or employer feedback surveys but also include more informal feedback mechanisms that will not directly impact an individual's appraisal
- Have an inclusive employment group that is made up of staff from different departments from diverse backgrounds to help the HR team/ senior management to monitor and review how established systems and practices are working. For smaller organisations, this can be a community of practice or interest group from peer organisations
- Regularly and actively review employment data on recruitment, retention and staff development including pay scales, benefit packages and who has access to training and professional development opportunities to ensure these are fair and non-discriminatory

Creating inclusive pathways for employment

Often employers complain they cannot attract qualified staff, whether they are persons with disabilities or people from other under-represented groups or backgrounds. This complaint is frequently made on the grounds that persons with disabilities, women or ethnic minorities have had less access to formal education and opportunities. However, it is important to reflect on barriers that exclude minority groups, including addressing systemic unconscious bias or deeply ingrained discriminatory practice.

There are several ways that organisations can work to bring about change and create inclusive pathways for employment experience for those groups most excluded from the workplace:

- Create opportunities in your organisation for students with disabilities to come on work placements/job shadowing
- Work with colleges and universities to support job placements and exposure during higher education
- Develop internship opportunities for young persons with disabilities to get starter career opportunities across all departments and at all levels from apprenticeships to post-graduate internships to professional posts
- Build strong networks with other employers in both public and private sectors at employment agencies, civil society organisations and academic institutions to create diverse pathways for job sharing, exchange or peer mentoring
- Proactively engage with communities of practice working with OPDs to create a network of disability confident and inclusive employers to exchange and learn ways to create better career pathways and opportunities
- Specifically invest in talent development initiatives targeting young people from under-represented groups to join the work force

What does meeting this commitment look like?

You will be able to measure your success by seeing incremental change in the following ways:

- All recruitment processes, regardless of the area of operation, are fully accessible from initial advertisements through to interviews and onboarding/induction
- A rising number of staff, consultants and volunteers with disabilities and from other under-represented groups apply for positions
- Increased numbers of persons with disabilities, women and under-represented groups within the workplace, including in senior leadership and decision-making positions
- All staff with line management responsibilities are confident in assessing and supporting reasonable accommodation requests
- Increased use of budgets allocated for reasonable accommodation
- Active use of accessible feedback and complaints mechanisms with increased staff/volunteer dialogue to constructively troubleshoot issues
- Leadership and management act upon the findings of independent HR reviews to address unconscious bias and remove barriers within employment processes

**Commitment 7:
Our workplaces promote an inclusive and accessible environment that supports all staff to thrive, with provision of reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities when needed**

Inclusive Employment Self-Assessment Template

Mark scheme:

0	No, not at all
1	Rarely/ad hoc
2	Sometimes/partially for some
3	Always/consistently for all

Please use the comment section to note the reason for your rating. Please write your thoughts or ideas in the comment section. You might write down accessibility gaps or ideas on how to make changes.

Recruitment	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
1. Does your organisation actively look to attract persons with disabilities and persons from other under-represented groups?		
2. Is there a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process in place, from advertising to interview and feedback?		
3. Are interviews offered to all applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for the job?		
4. Do you use a dynamic range of tasks and recruitment processes, with provision of reasonable accommodation, to allow all applicants to demonstrate their skills?		
5. Are recruitment panels diverse so that traditional biases are not reinforced?		
6. Do you provide constructive feedback for all applicants with disabilities who have not been successful to support their learning and confidence?		

Retention – creating healthy environments for staff to thrive	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
7. Is there a formal, regularly reviewed system in place for the assessment and provision of reasonable accommodation for all staff with disabilities?		
8. Do staff, volunteers and interns have regular training and mentoring opportunities with OPDs on how to address disability equality in their day to day work?		
9. Does leadership and management monitor and audit data on staff promotions, pay scales and in-work benefits, to identify and address any inequalities and discrimination?		
10. Are employees with disabilities and other under-represented groups able to join staff councils, committees and trade unions to take part in collective bargaining and decision making on an equal basis with other employees?		
11. Are systems in place to monitor, manage and support staff that are sick or regularly absent from work, including effective measures to support return to work and maintaining a healthy work-life balance?		
12. Do you proactively use a variety of accessible, individual and collective feedback mechanisms to listen and respond to all staff, interns and volunteers?		
13. Are managers sensitive to workplace power dynamics and take responsibility to ensure that staff, with disabilities, women, ethnic minorities, or other marginalised groups, are confident to voice concerns without fear of negative consequences?		
14. Do leadership and managers ensure that there is a confidential, safe, accessible and effective complaints system in place to address all forms of abuse, exploitation, violence, bullying, harassment, fraud, etc. raised by staff, customers and partners?		

Creating inclusive pathways for employment	Mark 0 to 3	Comment
15. Are leadership and management knowledgeable and confident on their legal obligations on inclusive employment, and how to apply and meet these standards within the workplace?		
16. Does your organisation provide internships and volunteer opportunities for a diverse range of young persons with disabilities, especially those from under-represented groups?		
17. Do leadership and management monitor the use of budgets for professional development and training opportunities to ensure that all staff are equally able to access and benefit from them? (This includes monitoring use of budget allocated for reasonable accommodation and specific measures).		
18. Do you actively work with other organisations and networks to promote and provide opportunities, such as job shadowing, exchanges and sabbaticals, to support the professional development of persons with disabilities and people from under-represented groups?		
19. Do staff engage in an active community of practice between departments and/or with other organisations, including OPDs, to exchange, learn and increase accountability on inclusive employment practice?		
20. Do leadership and management act upon the findings of independent HR reviews to address unconscious bias and remove barriers to professional development opportunities for persons with disabilities and people from other under-represented groups?		

References and useful resources

Achieving equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities through legislation guidelines: developed by ILO and Irish Aid. Department of Foreign Affairs, provides detailed support to policy makers and those advocating for change in legislation and employment standards and practice to promote a human rights-based approach to inclusive employment.

Let's talk: Improving conversations about disability at work: developed by Wilkes. M from Scope, provides practical recommendations to employers, governments and persons with disabilities on how to manage data confidentially to support greater inclusion.

Moving towards disability inclusion: developed by ILO, provides lots of useful examples from around the world of different initiatives and lessons learned on inclusive employment that can inspire you and your colleagues.

National Federation of Disabled People – Nepal (NFDN): is an organisation of persons with disabilities who has developed useful resources on accessibility including a Resource Book for Employers on Hiring Persons with Disabilities.

Promoting Diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments a practical guide promoting equity: developed by ILO, gives detailed support to employers on how to assess and manage reasonable accommodation in the workplace

Recruiting, managing and developing people with a disability or health condition: is a resource developed as part of the UK government disability confident scheme. It is a practical guide for line managers on all aspects of recruitment, retention and professional development of staff with disabilities.

The UK's Disability Confident Employer Scheme: explains what is needed to become Disability Confident Committed, or a Disability Confident Employer or Leader.

Toolkits on how to interrupt bias within the workplace: developed by Work Life Law, offers menus of bias interrupters that organisations can implement into their business systems, as well as steps that individuals can take to help create more equality in their workplace.

50 Ways to Fight Bias Gender bias: developed by Lean In, provides tools including card-based activity with short videos to address bias head-on

Glossary

Accessibility: means ensuring that people with disabilities are able to have access to the physical environment around them, to transportation, to information such as reading material, to communication technology and systems on an equal basis with others. Accessibility like participation is a broad term and is understood in many different ways. A common misconception is that accessibility is only about physical access, however this is a very limited viewpoint, as many people with disabilities will have different access requirements. For example, someone who is visually impaired and requires accessible reading material differs from someone who is Deaf who requires a sign language interpreter. Someone who has a psycho-social disability may require different room lighting or sound screening, whilst someone with an intellectual disability may require Easy Read documents. Accessibility requirements vary greatly for different impairment groups and within each group people also have very different preferences. Accessibility requires forward thinking by those responsible for delivery of private and public services to ensure that people with disabilities can access and use services without barriers.

Accessibility audit: means using a number of standardised tests and methods to establish what elements of an environment (physical or digital), a service or a facility, are accessible and which elements need to be modified and improved. It is a form of evaluation lead by accessibility professionals that can help organisations with assessing barriers, measuring compliance with accessibility standards and identifying solutions to improve accessibility and usability for all persons with disabilities.
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Accessibility features: any accessible technology, assistive technology, and specialty hardware and software that are either built-in or added on to products. The purpose of these features is to make technology easier to use by meeting a user preference, a user need, or facilitating a user interaction with the technology.

Accessible formats: information available in formats such as, but not limited to, Braille, tactile graphics, large print, text-to-speech, oral presentation, electronic files compatible with screen readers, captioned or signed video for persons with hearing impairments, icons and animations, or 3D models for persons with cognitive disabilities.

Accessibility policy: is a living document which sets out the goals and the rules your organisation will put in place to become more accessible. A policy should be reviewed and updated whenever your organisation's practices or procedures change. For example, as you move forward with implementing your multi-year accessibility plan, you may need to update the policies you have written, or to draft new policies.

Accessibility professionals: Individuals who have acquired interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, often using their lived experience, to promote inclusion and diversity through the implementation of accessibility standards, codes, legislation, and application of universal design principles to environments and communities. Accessibility professionals can be found in any field, across disciplines and with different levels of certification/qualifications.
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Alternative (or Alt) text: This is text to describe visual content that is non-text, such as photographs, graphics, images, graphs, tables, so that both their content and function can be read by people who use screen readers.
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Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to systems and devices that aid communication for people who find it difficult to speak. These methods are diverse and can range from use of low technology letter or picture boards to advanced computer technology. It also includes signing, gestures, written words, symbols and picture books. **Back to:** P39 P71

Assistive technology: any information and communications technology, product, device, equipment, and related service used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with specific needs or disabilities.
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Barriers: when discussed in relation to persons with disabilities, barriers can have a number of meanings. They can be structural barriers, such as physical barriers (e.g. stairs), but can also be structural in terms of how a society organises itself in areas such as welfare and support services, such as opportunities to own or control resources and decision making. Barriers can also be attitudinal, for example, prejudice and negative perceptions of persons with disabilities can create barriers hindering their full and equal participation in society.

Build Back Better: is an approach associated with rebuilding following natural disasters in communities and countries with a vision of achieving resilience through stronger, faster and more inclusive post-disaster reconstruction.

Civil society: the term used to describe non-state actors (individuals or groups that are not part of the government). It is made up of a wide range of people and groups such as charitable or not-for-profit organisations, self-help groups, unions, indigenous people's organisations, faith-based groups, and many other activist groups advocating for rights. Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) have an important role to play as part of civil society.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): The CRPD is an international human rights treaty, which protects the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the Convention (those who have ratified it) are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities.

Digital accessibility or Information and Communication Technologies (ICT): the quality of a mainstream technology such as a computer, mobile phone, self-service kiosk, piece of software or any device that acts as a digital content holder, to be used by the widest range of users possible, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

Disability: According to the CRPD, Article 1 states that 'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

Disaggregated data: data that has been broken down by detailed sub-categories, such as on the grounds of age, marginalised group, gender, region, level of education. Data disaggregation is key to reveal inequalities and monitor and support strategies for inclusion and equality that address discrimination. For data disaggregation that supports the rights of all persons with disabilities, the Washington Group Data Sets have been developed to more effectively ensure that national statistics, policies and programmes are effectively accessible for all persons with disabilities in line with CRPD Article 31.
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Discrimination: Discrimination happens when people are treated worse than other people for some unfair reason or poor attitudes. This includes denying the person the changes or adjustments that are possible to allow this person in a particular situation to exercise or enjoy their human rights in the same way as other people do and on an equal basis with others.

Environmental sustainability: is based on a simple principle that everything we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.

Equality: being respected equally and all persons being given equal opportunity to access all rights. This concept recognises that everyone is different and may have different needs. All human beings should be treated as all other rights holders in all aspects of life.
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Free and Informed Consent: a concept often used in relationship with clients receiving any social or health care services. It means that clients using services should be given full information in accessible formats so that they can make informed decisions about their treatment and services. This includes all the potential risks and harms known and also fully respects the right of a person to refuse a service or treatment. Free and informed consent is a critical part of Article 25 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in relation to health services.

Gender: refers to socially constructed and hierarchical categories assigned to individuals on the basis of their apparent sex at birth. While other genders are recognised in some cultures, in the majority of societies people are expected to conform to one of two gender roles matching their apparent sex of male or female. Gender attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable.

Gender analysis: examines the differences in women's and men's lives, including those which lead to social and economic inequity for women, and applies this understanding to policy development and service delivery. Gender analysis is concerned with the underlying causes of these inequities and its aims to achieve positive change for women.

A gender analysis is important to integrate into all programme and project assessments or situational analysis to ensure that gender-based bias, inequality and injustice are addressed. A gender analysis also ensures that interventions do not have unintended consequences or the potential to exacerbate gender inequalities. Gender analysis can be used as a tool to increase greater understanding of different needs and experiences of women, men, girls and boys to support greater equality and justice for all.

Gender Equality: refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will be the same but rather that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on their gender identity. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration and recognises the diversity of different groups or women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but is the concern of both men and women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for and indicator of sustainable development. For more information, see the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) article 6 and Sustainable Development Goal 5.

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) is underpinned by five key human rights principles: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and Legality. These are often referred to as PANEL. They underpin all international human rights treaty bodies and are based on common agreement that human rights are:

- Universal: are for everyone; all human beings are equally entitled to all rights
- Indivisible: they cannot be separated from each other
- Interdependent and interrelated: improvement in one right advances others, while denial of a right negatively impacts others

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Inclusion: when all peoples participate in all aspects of civil, political, social and economic life. At the state level it is the process by which traditionally marginalised groups are consulted and considered in all policy and budgetary decisions. The disabled people's movement advocates strongly for inclusion of persons with disabilities at all levels, and especially in compliance with the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that states meet their obligations for all government public policy at national and district levels.

Inclusive development: ensures that marginalised groups actively participate and benefit from development processes and outcomes regardless of age, gender, disability, state of health, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, level of education, religion or any other characteristics. It seeks to address the deepening inequality and consequent lack of access to opportunities for those who are excluded from development gains and processes.

Inclusive facilitation: an approach that creates conducive environments, spaces, and opportunities for all people to participate and contribute to learning, dialogue and knowledge development. It is based on valuing diversity and creating accessible spaces so that all persons can contribute, co-produce and enrich learning processes. Practitioners of inclusive facilitation are committed to a rights-based approach that values the voice, agency, and participation of all, especially those traditionally left behind. It requires analysis and understanding of traditional norms, biases, stigma, and stereotypes and barriers that can exclude based on disability, gender, race, faith, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic. Inclusive facilitation relies on a continuously open learning approach, where practitioners ask participants their aspirations and motivations for learning, as well as the methods that can best facilitate their contribution and well-being. A combination of openness, flexibility, and the use of a variety of methods to suit different learners at different times is a hallmark of inclusive facilitation, as is use of a diverse range of accessible feedback mechanisms to be able to adapt and respond to all learners. **Back to:** P59

Independent living is a concept used to describe approaches that result in persons with disabilities to live in communities with independence, autonomy and dignity. Such approaches would enable or provide a range of support services for persons with disabilities, including, if necessary, services that will support in decision making.

Intersectionality: this originated in feminist theory. It is the recognition of the complexity of how multiple discrimination intersects. The intersection of different identities produces a particular experience of oppression that cannot be adequately explained by an additive strategy of gender, plus race, plus class, plus sexuality. For example, a middle-class educated professional man with a physical disability who lives in Europe will experience different types and forms of discrimination than a young woman with a learning disability from a rural village in Asia or Africa. The complexity of development also requires that if we want to succeed in having inclusive development it requires a more complex analysis of the differing discriminations that can compound a person's exclusion.

Marrakesh Treaty is an international agreement that was adopted in 2013 and added to the body of international copyright treaties administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). It has a clear humanitarian and social development dimension and its main goal is to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise unable to access printed content. **Back to:** P39

Non-discrimination: requires that people are entitled to equal treatment irrespective of their particular characteristics. It is used to assess apparently neutral criteria that may produce effects which systematically disadvantage persons possessing those characteristics. Non-discrimination is fundamental to the human rights-based approach and one of the underlying principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. **Back to:** P74 P75

Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (OPD): Organisations of Persons with Disabilities are led, directed and governed by of persons with disabilities who lobby and advocate for the rights of their members. Some OPDs are impairment focussed, others such as national umbrella organisations, represent a diverse group of persons with disabilities. Some OPDs have a focus on specific issues such as women's OPDs. Others may focus on a particular interest such as sports. Some OPDs also focus on services or providing opportunities for employment and loans. A general definition of an OPD is a representative organisation or group of persons with disabilities, where persons with disabilities make up the majority of the staff, management, board, and volunteers at all levels of the organisation. OPDs are sometimes referred to as DPOs as well, or Disabled Peoples Organisations. For more guidance on what is an OPD refer to CRPD General Comment No.7 which is available in many languages and in Easy Read. **Back to:** P25

Person-first language: is a way of communicating based on the importance to affirm and define the person first, before the impairment or disability. **Back to:** P38

Progressive Realisation: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) combines both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. It also requires States Parties to ensure and promote the full realisation of these different rights. However, a distinction is made between immediate and progressive realisation for these rights. States Parties to the CRPD are required to immediately implement civil and political rights. Civil and political rights are covered by the right to life (Article 10); the right to equal recognition before the law (Article 12); freedom from exploitation violence and abuse (Article 16); and the right to participation in political and public life (Article 29). Reasonable Accommodation (Article 2) and Non-discrimination (Article 5) are also considered immediate.

In contrast, States Parties to the CRPD can progressively realise economic social and cultural rights over time. These rights are essential for persons with disabilities and help set the terms of access, entry and participation for persons with disabilities in the mainstream. They enable persons with disabilities to live a genuinely independent life and to participate in their communities. Economic, social and cultural rights were included in the CRPD and tailored to tackle the various barriers faced by persons with disabilities in achieving a life of independence as well as inclusion. Economic, social and cultural rights include the right to education (Article 24), the right to work (Article 27), the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 28) and the right to health (Article 25). These rights reflect a blending of the principle of non-discrimination with obligations that are more progressive in character.

Reasonable accommodation

All support or practical changes necessary and appropriate that have to be made for persons with disabilities to exercise and enjoy their rights, that should be respectful of people and do not be very difficult or really too expensive for the company, organisation or person that have to do it. **Back to:** `P13` `P16` `P18` `P25` `P27` `P75` `P98`

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction:

was adopted in March 2015 and is a voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognises that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk, but that responsibility should be shared with local government, the private sector, and other stakeholders. Through its seven targets and four priorities for action, it aims for the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries.

Standards: a document intended for common and repeated use. It is created by consensus and approved by a recognised body. A standard sets out rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results aimed at achieving an optimal degree of order or level of quality. Standards are voluntary and do not have the force of law unless they are adopted in legislation or regulations. ISO standards are internationally agreed by experts. Think of them as a formula that describes the best way of doing something. It could be about making a product, managing a process, delivering a service or supplying materials – standards cover a huge range of activities. **Back to:** `P47`

Standard operating procedures (SOPs):

are detailed, written instructions on how to perform routine organisational procedures. They are written in plain language and provide step-by-step instructions. SOPs are used in all areas of an organisation's operations such as finance, security, ICT, marketing, HR, to ensure all staff are consistent in following organisational procedures. The purpose is to reduce risk and strengthen compliance.

Sustainable Development Goals:

These were established by the United Nations in September 2015. It is a joint plan that has 17 goals highlighting three dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental. Governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and lots of other people have agreed to try to end poverty, promote peace, share wealth and protect the planet by 2030. This plan is also known as Agenda 2030.

The New Urban Agenda:

was adopted in October 2016 at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development, also known as 'Habitat III'. It is an action-oriented document which sets out global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development for the next 20 years, guiding the efforts around urbanisation of a wide range of actors including nation states, city and regional leaders, international development funders, United Nations programmes as well as civil society, including the private sector.

Unconscious bias:

also commonly known as implicit bias, are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs and prejudice about various social and identity groups, and these are often incompatible with one's conscious values. We all apply these biases to all aspects of our lives, including our behaviour and decision making. Common biases that impact decision making include affinity bias which is a tendency to favour people who are similar to us, often resulting in group think; confirmation bias when we seek to confirm our beliefs, preferences or judgements with those like us; halo effect when we like someone or share similar traits with someone and therefore are biased to think everything about that person is good; and social or likeability bias when we tend to agree with the majority or someone more senior than us to maintain harmony.[1] **Back to:** `P59` `P74`

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1 Definitions of types of common bias taken from, *In the Eye of the Beholder, avoiding the merit trap*, https://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MCC-CEW-Merit-Paper-FINAL.pdf

Under-represented groups: means persons in a minority with less voice or visibility. The disability movement, like other social movements, is not homogenous. There are some groups that have traditionally been under-represented or harder to reach such as persons who are deafblind, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psycho-social disabilities, and persons with albinism.
It can also include those who are less engaged in decision making such as women, children, older people and indigenous persons, as well as faith, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual orientation or gender identity minorities. This will be different in different countries and contexts.
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Universal Design: is a concept that aims at making life easier, healthier, and friendlier for all. Universal Design helps to understand and recognise that there is a wide spectrum of human abilities. Everyone passes through childhood, periods of temporary illness, injury and older age. By designing for this human diversity, we can create things that will be cost effective and easier for all people to use without need for adaptation, specialised design or multiple separate and costly solutions. Universal Design promotes as inclusive a design as possible, taking into consideration assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. Any organisation, services including management practices and policies can benefit from universal design thinking. The concept of universal design has spread worldwide and is practiced in many different ways. New ideas and new professional methods have been implemented, and the concept has many names and professionals connected to it, such as: Design for All, Inclusive Design, Universal Accessibility, Life Span Design.

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Universal Design for Learning (UDL): is a framework developed by CAST, that recognises learner variability and helps create learning goals, methods, materials and assessments that provides a flexible, responsive approach to teaching and learning that includes everyone. It is based on three core principles: multiple means of representation, giving learners various ways of acquiring information and learning; multiple means of expression, giving learners more than one means to demonstrate what they have learnt; and thirdly multiple means of engagement, creating more diverse ways and opportunities to motivate and tap into what inspires and motivates people to learn.
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Web content development is the process of generating material that supports and promotes your online presence. It usually starts with your website, but web content can include any online content that represents you or your organisation. It consists of text, images, audio, and video that are accessible on the internet.
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Whole-of-organisation approach is a concept based on the principle that an inclusive and healthy workplace is one where the environment, policies, practices and culture all support inclusion and healthy behaviours. It emphasises the need for greater collaboration and coordination across departments and units within an organisation in order to provide joint and comprehensive solutions to accessibility issues. It requires commitment to accessibility across all areas and levels of an organisation, from strategic, to services, project and processes. It allows to eliminate duplication, optimise resources, create synergies among teams and agencies and creates a culture of continuous learning and improvement with a focus on achieving the possible outcome.
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The 7 principles of universal design

Universal design follows 7 Principles which aim to guide the design of environments, products and communications:

These seven principles may be applied to evaluate existing designs, guide the design process and educate both designers and consumers about the characteristics of more usable products and environments. Check out the Center for Universal Design for more information.

Principle 1: Equitable use

Design that is useful and marketable to persons with diverse abilities

Guidelines:
- Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not
- Avoid segregating or stigmatising any users
- Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users
- Make the design appealing to all users

Principle 2: Flexibility in use

Design that accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities

Guidelines:
- Provide choice in methods of use
- Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use
- Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision
- Provide adaptability to the user's pace

Principle 3: Simple and intuitive use

Design that is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration level

Guidelines:
- Eliminate unnecessary complexity
- Be consistent with user expectations and intuition
- Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills
- Arrange information consistent with its importance
- Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion

Principle 4: Perceptible information

Design that communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities

Guidelines:
- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information
- Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings
- Maximise 'legibility' of essential information
- Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions)
- Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations

Principle 5: Tolerance for error

Design that minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions

Guidelines:
- Arrange elements to minimise hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded
- Provide warnings of hazards and errors
- Provide fail safe features
- Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance

Principle 6: Low physical effort

Design that can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue

Guidelines:
- Allow user to maintain a neutral body position
- Use reasonable operating forces
- Minimise repetitive actions
- Minimise sustained physical effort

Principle 7: Size and space for approach and use

Design that provides appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility

Guidelines:
- Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user
- Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user
- Accommodate variations in hand and grip size
- Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance

Please note that the Principles of Universal Design address only universally usable design, while the practice of design involves more than consideration for usability. Designers must also incorporate other considerations such as economic, engineering, cultural, gender, and environmental concerns in their design processes. These Principles offer designers guidance to better integrate features that meet the needs of as many users as possible.