



The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (commonly known as Sightsavers), ECOSOC Consultative Status

<https://www.sightsavers.org/>

Aissata Ndiaye, Senior Policy Advisor, Inclusion and Disability: andiaye@sightsavers.org

Chapeau

The Chapeau should include a recommitment to the promise to ‘leave no one behind’ in SDG implementation but also recognize that this promise is in peril. This recommitment is essential for eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions as well as meet the multiple crises that the world faces but will only be realised if member states take the transformative, accelerated, disability-inclusive action required. We call on Member States to reaffirm and renew their commitments to:

- Reaffirm that ‘the achievement of the SDGs is in peril. At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, we are alarmed that the progress on most of the SDGs is either moving much too slowly or has regressed below the 2015 baseline. Our world is currently facing numerous crises. Years of sustainable development gains are being reversed. Millions of people have fallen into poverty, hunger and malnutrition are becoming more prevalent, humanitarian needs are rising, and the impacts of climate change more pronounced. This has led to increased inequality exacerbated by weakened international solidarity and a shortfall of trust to jointly overcome these crises.’ (A/RES/78/1, 2023)
- “Recognizing that social inclusion and equality are intrinsically linked and that focusing on and investing in the most disadvantaged and excluded populations, which may include children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and indigenous peoples, is critically important for the effective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,
- Recognizing persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of development, stressing the need to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their participation, including through their representative organizations, in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” (Resolution, A/RES/74/120, 2019)
- Commit “to ensuring that persons with disabilities actively participate in and equally benefit from sustainable development efforts”. (A/HLPF/2023/L.1, 2023, para.14)

- Commit “to achieving sustainable development and shared prosperity for all by focusing our policies and actions on the poorest and most vulnerable. We will endeavour to identify those who are being left behind and reach those who are the furthest behind first. People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the 2030 Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities.” (A/HLPF/2023/L.1, 2023, para.37)
- Recognize “that the full realization of the right to education for all is an essential condition for achieving sustainable development” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/5, 2021)
- Reaffirm that “health is a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and continues to inspire our action and enhance our efforts, to achieve universal health coverage, by 2030” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para.2)

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

We call on Member States to reaffirm and renew their commitments to:

- “Strengthen social policies, as appropriate, paying particular attention to the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized social groups, inter alia, women, children, youth, persons with disabilities” (A/RES/75/151 , 2020, para.14)
- Recommend “that Member States enhance their capacity to more effectively collect age-disaggregated data, statistics and qualitative information, disaggregated also, when necessary, by other relevant factors, including sex and disability” (A/RES/75/151, 2020, para.24)
- “Commit to targeted and accelerated action to remove all legal, social, and economic barriers to achieving gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls including those with disabilities, their full, equal and effective participation in all decision-making processes, and the realization and enjoyment of their human rights.” (A/HLPF/2023/L.1, 2023, para.38c)
- “Pledge to take action to strengthen international, national and local data systems efforts to collect high quality, timely, relevant, disaggregated and reliable data on SDG progress and to intensify efforts to strengthen data and statistical capacities in developing countries.” (A/HLPF/2023/L.1, 2023, para.38r)
- Reaffirm their commitments from the “the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 – towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all, adopted at the World Education Forum 2015, which aims to mobilize all countries and partners and provide guidance on achieving the effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 and meeting the related targets on education for all” (language from resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021)
- Recognise the “significant importance of investment in public education, and doing so to the maximum of available resources” and commit to “Increasing and improving domestic

and external financing for education, including in sanitary and humanitarian emergencies and conflict situations” (A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021, para 5, b and c)

- Renew their calls upon States “to take all measures necessary, including by making education a priority in their national budgets by granting sufficient budgetary allocations to education, to ensure accessible, inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory quality education to all at all levels, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, paying particular attention to women and girls, children in the most vulnerable and marginalized situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and all persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations, including those affected by humanitarian emergencies and conflict situations” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021, para 7)
- “Continue increasing investment in inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all, including early childhood education, youth and adult literacy programmes and initiatives, digital education, cultural education, education for sustainable development, digital technologies for education, skills enhancement, affordable higher education and vocational training, education in emergencies and teachers’ continuous professional development.” (A/HLPF/2023/L.1, 2023, para.38d)
- “Pursue policies towards adequate, sustainable, effective and efficient health financing and investments in universal health coverage and health system strengthening ... to respond to unmet health needs and to eliminate financial barriers to access to quality, safe, effective, affordable and essential health services, medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and other health technologies, reduce out-of-pocket expenditures (...) which lead to financial hardship and ensure financial risk protection for all throughout the life course, especially for the poor and those in vulnerable situations” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para.83)
- “Implement the most effective, high-impact, quality-assured, people-centred, gender-, race-, and age-responsive and disability-inclusive, and evidence-based interventions to meet the health needs of all throughout the life course, and in particular those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para.51)

Chapter II. International peace and security

We call on Member States to reaffirm and renew their commitments to:

- Affirm “the importance of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in analysing protection needs and ensuring the participation of refugees and other persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner, as appropriate, in the planning and implementation of programmes of the Office and of State policies, also affirms the importance of according priority to addressing discrimination, gender inequality and the problem of sexual and gender-based violence and other harmful practices, recognizing the importance of addressing the protection needs of women, children and persons with disabilities in particular, and underlines the importance of continuing to work on those issues” (A/RES/76/143, para.46)

- Recognise “the negative impact of climate change, natural disasters, conflict and crisis on the full realization of the right to education” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021),
- Urge “all States to develop and strengthen emergency education preparedness within their respective education systems, grounded on human rights”; (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021)
- “Strengthen the resilience of health systems by ensuring that primary health care, referral systems, and essential public health functions (...) are among the core components of prevention of and preparedness for health emergencies, in order to respond to such emergencies while maintaining the provision of and access to essential health services and medicines, especially routine immunization, as well as mental health support, or to quickly reinstate them after disruption and commit to strengthening public health systems across all countries” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para.96)
- Ensure “universal and equitable access to timely and quality health and social services without financial hardship for all people, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations, as well as the elimination of the root causes of discrimination and stigma in health-care settings, including during pandemics and other health emergencies” (PD of the HLM on PPPR, 2023, para.32)

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

We call on Member States to reaffirm and renew their commitments to:

- Recognize “that information and communications technologies, including assistive technology and devices, have shown their potential to strengthen the exercise of human rights, and that they can create conditions enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy their human rights” (Resolution A/C.3/78/L.64,2023, para. 23 bis)
- Call “upon all States to take appropriate measures to accelerate efforts to bridge the digital divide and technological gaps, (...), in order to increase the digital competencies and innovation skills of all, including of women, girls and persons with disabilities, while ensuring the protection of personal data in the use of technology in education” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021, para 11)
- “Promote policies, laws and regulations to build and strengthen an interoperable and effective digital health system (...) while addressing the digital divides, to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage”(PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para.79)
- “Strengthen capacity on (...) disaggregated data collection, analysis and use (...) to achieve evidence-based decisions at all levels on universal health coverage, and to build and strengthen interoperable and integrated health information systems” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para. 81)

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

To ensure we provide the best possible future for young people today and future generations we call on Member States to:

- Urge “Member States to promote equal opportunities for all, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against young people, (...) and to foster social integration for social groups such as young persons with disabilities” (Resolution A/RES/74/121,2019, para.8)
- Reaffirm “that the right to education, enshrined in international human rights law, can help to enable the realization of many other human rights” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/5, 2021) and “that the human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality are central to the full realization of the right to education and emphasizing that everyone is entitled to the right to education without discrimination of any kind” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021)
- Urge member states to “give full effect to the right to education by, inter alia, complying with their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education by all appropriate means and without discrimination of any kind” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021)
- Urge “all States to strengthen their legal frameworks, to adopt adequate policies and programmes and to allocate sufficient resources, either individually or through international assistance and cooperation, to the full realization of the right to education and to expand educational opportunities for all, without discrimination” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/6, 2021)
- Request “States to promote gender sensitivity and disability inclusion within education systems in planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring and reporting, to gather data disaggregated by sex and disability and to share knowledge and experience on educational programmes and policies that support the empowerment of all girls and women and learners with disabilities” (Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/5, 2021, paras 9 and 10)
- “Promote participatory, inclusive approaches to health governance for universal health coverage (...) involving all relevant stakeholders, including local communities, health workers and care workers in the health sector, volunteers, civil society organizations and youth” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023, para.104)

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

We call on Member States to reaffirm and renew their commitments to:

- Commit “to accelerate the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and to take further actions to scale up financing for sustainable development, and provide means of implementation for developing countries” (A/HLPF/2023/L.1, 2023, para.38t)
- “Enhance cooperation at the local, national, regional and global levels through a One Health approach (...) to improve the prevention, monitoring, detection, and control of zoonotic diseases and pathogens, threats to health and ecosystems, the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance, and future health emergencies” (PD of the HLM on UHC, 2023 para.98)