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## Statistical Commission

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**Items for information: disability statistics**

## Disability statistics

### Joint report of the Secretary-General, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and international agencies

#### *Summary*

The present report has been prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2019/210 and comprises three parts: the first part describes current and planned activities on disability statistics by relevant offices of the United Nations, including the Statistics Division, the regional commissions and the World Health Organization; the second part describes relevant activities of the World Bank Group; and the third part provides a summary of the work of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics since the topic was previously discussed by the Commission in 2018. The third part includes information on ongoing capacity-building activities that the Group is conducting in collaboration with multiple United Nations agencies, other organizations and government agencies.

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\* E/CN.3/2020/1.



## I. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gives a high level of consideration to persons with disabilities in the context of development. The 2030 Agenda, which is built on the principle of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, implicitly promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Recognizing the marginalization of persons with disabilities, the 2030 Agenda adopts a holistic approach in addressing the inequalities faced by persons with disabilities in their societies. Through the principles of inclusive societies with reduced inequality, the Agenda sets targeted actions in specific areas such as education, employment and urban development and human settlement. As a plan of action that highlights poverty eradication as the overarching goal, the Agenda thus holds considerable promise for persons with disabilities.

2. Countries committed themselves to systematic follow-up and review in relation to the progress on delivering on promises made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to hold themselves accountable to their citizens. For follow-up and review, the 2030 Agenda underscores that quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind.

3. The report contains ongoing and planned activities on disability statistics that are carried out by offices of the United Nations, by the World Bank and by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, a city group under the aegis of the Statistical Commission.

## II. Ongoing and planned activities by United Nations organizations

### A. Statistics Division

4. During the period under review, the Statistics Division has undertaken a number of activities as described below.

#### **Collection and compilation of national data and metadata on disability**

5. The Statistics Division collected data and related metadata on disability from countries. A total of 103 responses were obtained from countries or areas as follows: Asia (35), Europe (32), Africa (18), South America (10) and North America (8). This activity was undertaken in response to a decision of the Statistical Commission, which, at its forty-ninth session, noted that, while data availability had significantly increased over the years, there were still substantial differences within and among countries in estimates of disability, and called upon the Statistics Division to compile and analyse national information in order to understand observed differences in national estimates of disability (see [E/2018/24](#)). Consequently, the Division has compiled and disseminated data on disability on its website through a dedicated portal, the United Nations Disability Statistics data portal (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/disability/statistics/#/home>).

6. The information, which comprises data and metadata, provides more recent statistics on disability and an update to what was previously disseminated in the early 2000s. Use of the online portal is intended to facilitate wider dissemination and accessibility of the data for the broader user community.

7. The Statistics Division continues to assess data obtained from countries and has to date disseminated through the data portal information on the proportions of the

population with and without disabilities, the prevalence of disability by type of disability, the sociodemographic and economic characteristics of the population with and without disabilities in terms of their educational and economic characteristics and on their living arrangements, and the quality of amenities that are available to their housing units.

8. The information in the data portal also includes questions that were used to collect the data that are being disseminated. The 103 countries or areas that provided the data show regional differences in the questions that were used to identify the population with disabilities; 35 used questions that are similar to those of the Washington Group, 29 used other questions and also questions similar to those of the Group, while 50 used other types of questions.

9. The data collected also show that countries exploit different sources of information for their data on disability. Of the 103 responding countries, the majority (71) used censuses to collect the data on disability, followed by sample surveys (68 countries) and administrative sources (52 countries).

10. Information in the data portal shows wide variations among countries or areas in estimates of disability, even when similar questions have been used.

11. The data that have been compiled by the Statistics Division show that more countries than ever before are collecting data on disability and that considerable quantities of data are available for national needs. The data, however, still show marked differences among countries in estimates of disability, thus indicating a need for more to be done to work with countries to improve measurement of disability and to better use data for inclusive disability programmes to ensure that no one is left behind.

12. The Statistics Division is utilizing the data that have been collected from countries as input to the preparation of the *World's Women 2020*. The data are being analysed to show differences between women and men regarding the prevalence of disability and the socioeconomic characteristics of women and men, with and without disabilities.

### **Summary report on regional meetings on disability measurement and statistics**

13. The Statistics Division has compiled a summary report of the main findings from the six regional meetings on disability statistics that the Division conducted in 2016 and 2017. Regional meetings were organized for: Asia (South and South-East) for 19 countries; the Caribbean for 14 countries; Africa for 14 English and French-speaking countries; Arabic-speaking countries for 11 countries; the North and Central Asia region and the Western Balkan States for 17 countries; and Latin America for 15 countries. The meetings had as objectives to: (a) review national experiences in measuring disability through censuses of the 2010 round; (b) discuss strategies for the compilation of data on disability for the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) share national experiences and intraregional cooperation for improved disability measurement and quality of data for monitoring related Sustainable Development Goals. Reports on and presentations given at the regional meetings are available on the Division website (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/disability/disab4.htm>).

14. Outcomes of the meetings show that many countries are collecting data on disability through their censuses. There are, however, observed regional differences in sources of data used. At the meetings it was emphasized that there are several sources of data on disability and that they should be treated as complementary since each has its strengths and limitations for the measurement of disability. It was

underscored at the meetings that the purposes of collecting the data on disability should guide the choice of data sources, as well as the methodologies to be applied.

15. Other observations noted include a general lack of disability specialists in national statistical offices, which affects the capacity of countries to collect good-quality data and to analyse the results. Also, at some regional meetings, countries noted a lack of adequate utilization of data on disability for policy purposes.

#### **Development of methodological guidelines**

16. The Statistics Division has drafted an annotated outline for the previously planned update of the United Nations *Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics* (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Y/10). The guide is intended to provide sound methodological guidelines for the producers and users of statistics on disability for improving the collection, compilation and dissemination and usage of data on disability. The update of the guidelines has not progressed as initially anticipated owing to changes in availability of the required resources for the revision.

#### **Disability statistics programme at the Statistics Division**

17. As has been reported to the Commission since its forty-seventh session, the Statistics Division, with funding from the Government of Australia, relaunched its disability statistics programme in 2015. The Division undertook several activities based on this extrabudgetary funding, including organizing regional meetings on disability statistics in support of the 2030 Agenda and the 2020 round censuses, the collection and dissemination of data on disability through the disability data portal (see para. 5) and the revision of the United Nations guidelines on disability statistics (see para. 16). Funding for the programme ended in 2018, at a time when the Statistics Division had already developed a viable plan, with ongoing activities, for a revitalized technical programme of work on disability statistics. The Division stands ready to reactivate and carry out planned activities for the programme should extrabudgetary funding become available.

### **B. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

18. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has continued its efforts to support national statistical offices and national disability entities in the region in the collection, analysis and dissemination of disability statistics. These activities have largely occurred in the framework of the working group on disability measurement of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. In 2018, in conjunction with the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference, the working group on disability measurement convened a virtual seminar with the national statistical offices of the region to review a methodological proposal on the measurement of disability for the 2020 census round. After incorporating the comments and suggestions that were received during the virtual seminar, a technical note containing the final recommendations was prepared and presented during a seminar that was organized in conjunction with the ECLAC Population Division in November 2018. The technical note will be included in a guidebook that the Division will prepare with its recommendations for the 2020 census round.

19. ECLAC has also provided technical assistance to national-level counterparts on various issues pertaining to disability measurement and statistics. As many countries of the region are in the process of preparing for their censuses of the 2020 round, the activities have mainly focused on supporting countries on disability measurement in this context. In this regard, ECLAC has: (a) conducted workshops to support sensitization on the inclusion of disability questions in the 2020 census (National

Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Ecuador); (b) supported the review of disability indicators in census databases (National Institute of Statistics of Guatemala and National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia); and (c) held initial meetings to evaluate the questions to be included in the 2020 census questionnaire and review the inclusion of disability questions (National Statistics Institute of Chile).

20. Finally, in 2018 and 2019, ECLAC was invited to give presentations on the status of disability measurement in the region and on disability statistics and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at seminars, courses and workshops geared towards a range of audiences.

21. Going forward, ECLAC expects to continue with these activities. Additionally, ECLAC has agreed to participate in two interinstitutional groups on disability statistics and indicators, one led by the Organization of American States and another organized by the Ibero-American General Secretariat. ECLAC is also in discussions with the Washington Group regarding the creation of a group (tentatively called the Buenos Aires group) to strengthen capacity around disability measurement in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### C. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

22. While the estimated number of persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region is approximately 690 million (applying the global estimate of 15 per cent prevalence), there is a large variation in national estimates of prevalence rates owing to differences in disability concepts and data collection methods. The most recent regional overview presents disability prevalence as ranging from 1.1 per cent in Brunei Darussalam to 24 per cent in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> Such variations point to a dire need for the region to establish reliable and comparable disability data across borders. This need is accentuated by ongoing demographic changes whereby a combination of lower fertility rates and unprecedented population ageing will in time result in an increased proportion of older persons and thus a larger number of persons with disabilities and difficulties in functioning. Furthermore, the Asia and Pacific region is vulnerable to many types of natural disasters such as typhoons, floods, drought, earthquakes and volcanic eruption, which also contributes to the increased number of persons with disabilities in the region.

23. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been continuously advocating for and building capacity of member States on disability statistics since the beginning of the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities in 2013. Towards achieving the objectives of the Decade, the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific was adopted by all member States in the region, comprising a set of 10 disability-specific development goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators.<sup>2</sup> The Strategy underscores the importance of evidence-based policymaking and encourages Asian and Pacific Governments to establish reliable and comparable disability data for tracking progress towards the achievements of its goals and targets (Goal 8).

24. In the past five years, ESCAP has implemented national technical cooperation projects on disability statistics in 17 countries,<sup>3</sup> which has led to the development and

<sup>1</sup> ESCAP, *Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific-Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development* (2019).

<sup>2</sup> The Ministerial Declaration and the Incheon Strategy were endorsed by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session (resolution 69/13) on 1 May 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

adoption of national action plans and awareness-raising among government officials on the Incheon Strategy and the international disability measurement standards, such as the questions of the Washington Group. The midpoint review of the Incheon Strategy implementation conducted in 2017 indicated that the ESCAP technical cooperation project contributed very strongly to establishing baseline data for the Strategy indicators. In countries where national consultations were held, the response rate to the midpoint survey was 85 per cent, much higher than the region-wide response rate of 60 per cent. More importantly, out of 30 Incheon core indicators, these countries reported data for an average of 15.1 indicators, whereas countries that did not participate in national consultations reported on an average of 13.6 indicators.

25. In addition, the midpoint review also revealed persistent data gaps across all indicators of the Incheon Strategy, in particular for goal 1 (poverty and employment), goal 2 (political participation), goal 3 (accessibility), goal 4 (social protection) and goal 6 (gender equality).<sup>4</sup> Concrete action lags behind commitment across all areas of the Incheon Strategy. After the midpoint review, member States adopted the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities in Beijing, 2013–2022, which specifies policy actions to overcome policy and data gaps in support of each goal of the Incheon Strategy.

26. For the remainder of the decade until 2022, ESCAP will continue to support member States' efforts for establishing reliable and comparable disability databases in accordance with international disability measurement frameworks. The forthcoming ESCAP publication "From Indicators to Action: Operationalizing the Incheon Strategy indicators in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" will provide further guidance in this regard. Furthermore, in 2021, the region-wide data collection for the final review of the Incheon Strategy implementation will be conducted and results made available in 2022.

#### **D. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

27. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the international framework for the Sustainable Development Goals require that statistics and data be disaggregated by disability whenever applicable. Disability statistics existed in most Arab countries, but they were not harmonized or comparable. As a result, in 2016 the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Social Development and Statistics Divisions of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) embarked on a project with Arab countries to compile, verify and harmonize national data to the extent possible to allow for better comparability and improve national reporting. The outcome of this work resulted in the following three publications: Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017 (E/ESCWA/SD/2017/Technical Paper.1), Disability in the Arab Region 2018 (E/ESCWA/SDD/2018/1), and Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries (2018) (E/ESCWA/SD/2018/MANUAL.1).

28. The Statistics Division at ESCWA continued implementation of the Disability Statistics Programme and, as part of that framework, held the first joint meeting between statisticians and policymakers and civil society from Arab countries to discuss refining the collection of data on persons with disabilities. The goal of the Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Improving Disability Statistics in the Sustainable Development Goals that was attended by 60 participants was to develop a framework of disability indicators for the Arab region and a related handbook on

<sup>4</sup> ESCAP, *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific: Assessing Progress of the Incheon Strategy* (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.18.II.F.4).

disability statistics for future methodological reference. Government officials from 13 countries across the Arab region, as well as international experts, representatives of United Nations agencies, members of civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities, reviewed best practices for collecting data in accordance with methodologies developed by the Washington Group. Arab national statistical offices have taken major strides towards producing disaggregated standardized data on persons with disabilities in the areas of demography, education and work.

29. In 2019, the Statistics Division at ESCWA produced the first disability framework: 115 indicators to bridge the gap between policy and statistics. It is the first three-dimensional disability framework that maps disability-related indicators to three major development frameworks: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition to the *Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries*, published by ESCWA in 2018, the Framework and its 115 indicators embody a major step forward in bridging the gap between policy and statistics and to monitor progress made. The Framework will be an important tool for guiding efforts at the national and regional levels to harmonize the production of comparable data. It will also facilitate reporting on the situation of persons with disabilities in critical disability-inclusive development goals. These include inclusive education, employment, empowerment, health and justice. The framework will, through improved disability statistics, provide a clearer method for comparing persons with disabilities and those with no disabilities. The framework will also assist data producers to provide valuable and better information for policymakers to ensure that all people with disabilities everywhere and anywhere are indeed included.

30. The Statistics Division at ESCWA has also developed the first regional database on disability statistics, which will be updated from recent household surveys and censuses implemented by member countries. A dashboard presenting country profiles through a disability lens is also being finalized. ESCWA will continue to support member States' efforts for establishing reliable and comparable disability statistics.

## E. International Labour Organization

31. In the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,<sup>5</sup> adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2006, the Assembly sets forth in article 27, on work and employment, the right of all persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. That is, to have the same employment opportunities, remuneration and labour rights as people without disabilities. The Convention also includes provisions for the collection of statistical data (article 31). Labour market indicators for persons with disabilities are essential for developing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes for ensuring labour rights.

32. Similarly, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the General Assembly recognizes persons with disabilities as one of the vulnerable groups, calls for their empowerment and commits to enhancing capacity-building support to developing countries to increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by disability. The outcome document agreed by Member States on 1 August 2015<sup>6</sup> makes explicit reference to disability in three labour market indicators (Sustainable Development Goal indicators 1.1.1, 8.5.1 and 8.5.2).

<sup>5</sup> See [www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml).

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>.

33. Promoting equal opportunity and treatment in employment is also a central element of the International Labour Organization (ILO) decent work agenda. In its 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, ILO indicates that various forms of equality and non-discrimination must be considered to be cross-cutting issues in the strategic objectives of decent work. In its manual, *Decent Work Indicators: Guidelines for Producers and Users of Statistical and Legal Framework Indicators*,<sup>7</sup> ILO proposes the development of an indicator for the evaluation of the employment situation of people with disabilities, under the substantive element of the decent work agenda “Equal opportunity and treatment in employment”.

34. In order to provide data for monitoring the progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 8.5, the ILO Department of Statistics has begun systematically compiling and disseminating the unemployment rate by disability status on an annual basis.<sup>8</sup> Data on average hourly earnings by disability status are not widely available. Data on social protection needed for monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 1.3 are compiled mainly through the ILO Social Security Inquiry<sup>9</sup> and the ILO Social Protection Department’s annual collection of administrative data from national ministries of labour, social security, welfare and finance, inter alia.

35. Given the limitation of the unemployment rate for measuring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 8.5 for persons with disabilities (the indicator does not take into account the fact that there are significant proportions of persons with disabilities that are excluded from labour markets because they face various obstacles in the labour market), additional indicators are needed. For example, the indicator for employment-to-population ratio disaggregated by sex, age and disability status provides valuable information on participation gaps (e.g., by sex, age and disability status), thus casting light on difficulties faced by particular population groups in accessing employment (and not just the difficulties in finding employment as evidenced by unemployment rates).

36. However, comparing the labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities is not sufficient. Disaggregating outcome indicators will allow the identification of the gaps in the work experience between persons with and without disabilities, but it will not provide the information necessary to reveal the barriers and facilitators that drive those outcomes. This information is needed for the proper development of policies to rectify outcome gaps. Therefore, ILO, in collaboration with the Washington Group, has developed a labour force survey module that collects additional information regarding obstacles that people with disabilities face in the labour market.

37. The module has gone through cognitive and field testing and was endorsed by the Washington Group at its 19th meeting, in 2019. It covers the following: (a) disability identification; (b) barriers; (c) accommodation; (d) attitudes; and (e) social protection.

38. The Washington Group short set of questions (for the working age population) has been incorporated in the ILO labour force survey model questionnaires<sup>10</sup> and the module on persons with disabilities in the labour market, and its implementation guidelines will be incorporated in the ILO labour force survey model shortly.

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<sup>7</sup> International Labour Organization (Geneva, 2013). Available at [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/publication/wcms\\_229374.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/publication/wcms_229374.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> The data are available at <https://ilostat.ilo.org>.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the Social Security Inquiry, see [www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowTheme.action?id=10](http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowTheme.action?id=10).

<sup>10</sup> Available at <https://ilo.org/LFSresources>.



39. As part of the project “Including People with Disabilities in the Arab Labour Market”, covering the period 2020–2023, ILO in collaboration with ESCWA, will assist selected countries in the ESCWA region to generate reliable data on the employment situation of persons with disabilities. Similar activities are also planned in Kenya and Bangladesh.

## **F. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO Institute for Statistics)**

40. Disability is a priority for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics because of its prominent role in monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. Two targets under Goal 4 contain references to disability: (a) Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situation; and (b) Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

41. The Institute is the custodian agency for the global and thematic indicators under Sustainable Development Goal targets 4.5 and 4.a. To support monitoring of progress towards these targets, the Institute began publishing education indicators disaggregated by disability status in 2017. The Institute is also supporting efforts to increase the availability and comparability of data on persons with disabilities through collaboration with partner agencies and promotion of common standards for measurement.

42. The Institute web page on “Equity in Education”<sup>11</sup> provides an overview of Institute activities in this area. The Institute regularly presents the results of its research and analysis at international conferences and expert meetings. The findings have also been disseminated in several Institute publications, including “Education and Disability” (2017),<sup>12</sup> “Education and Disability: Analysis of Data from 49 Countries” (2018),<sup>13</sup> and *The Use of UIS Data and Education Management Information Systems to Monitor Inclusive Education* (2019).<sup>14</sup>

43. In addition, the Institute made substantial contributions to the education chapter in the 2018 *Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities* by the United Nations.<sup>15</sup> The Institute also published the *Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education* (2018),<sup>16</sup> which offers methodological guidance on the monitoring of equity in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

44. Data by the Institute confirm that persons with disabilities are less likely to ever attend school and more likely to be out of school and have fewer years of education than people without disabilities. They are also far less likely to complete primary or secondary education or gain basic literacy skills.

45. The Institute has also released recommendations related to the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal targets 4.5 and 4.a. These recommendations include, among others: (a) increased data collection on education and disability to fill gaps in current data coverage for monitoring of international goals, (b) consistent application of international norms and standards, including use of survey questions developed by

<sup>11</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/equity-education>.

<sup>12</sup> Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247516>.

<sup>13</sup> Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000262805>.

<sup>14</sup> Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370915>.

<sup>15</sup> Available at [www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/publication-disability-sdgs.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/publication-disability-sdgs.html).

<sup>16</sup> Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000262806>.

the Washington Group, (c) strengthened efforts to make Educational Management Information Systems more inclusive and aggregate school-level data on disability at national level, (d) investment in national statistical capacity for disability measurement, in particular in developing countries, (e) better coordination of activities by national and international agencies in the area of disability statistics, and (f) increased funding by international donors and foundations for collection and analysis of data on disability.

46. The Institute will continue to expand the availability of education indicators disaggregated by disability status and contribute to related efforts to improve the evidence base for analysts, advocacy groups, policymakers and other stakeholders.

## **G. United Nations Children's Fund**

47. In 2018 and 2019, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) data work in the area of disability has been focused on the development of tools and mechanisms for providing continuous technical assistance and support to countries for the collection, analysis and reporting of child disability data. Below is an overview of the main activities and products completed in 2018 and 2019.

### **Support for data collection**

48. A significant milestone was achieved in 2016 with the launch of the module on child functioning, developed by UNICEF and the Washington Group. Based on the framework outlined in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, and incorporating the biopsychosocial model of disability, the module covers children between 2 and 17 years of age and assesses difficulties in functioning in different domains including hearing, vision, communication/comprehension, learning, mobility and emotions. The questions can be incorporated into existing data collection efforts and address the need for nationally comparable and internationally harmonized data. The module, together with the Group's short set of questions for adults, have been included in the current round (the sixth) of the UNICEF multiple indicator cluster survey programme, which is expected to result in close to 70 surveys by 2021. In the last two years alone, the module has been implemented or included in plans for data collection in over 40 countries that have conducted the survey.

### **Capacity-building**

49. To support capacity-building in relation to the collection, interpretation and use of disability data, UNICEF, in collaboration with International Disability Alliance, CBM, the Washington Group and the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development, hosted two workshops on the measurement of disability for representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities. The workshops were held in June 2018 and June 2019, in connection with the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with the participation of over 50 representatives.

### **Resource package on collecting and analysing data on persons with disabilities**

50. This resource package consists of six videos: (a) introduction – explains the purpose and content of the resource package, (b) current landscape of disability measurement – provides an overview of the current state of disability measurement, including data availability and measurement challenges, (c) methods for collecting data on persons with disabilities – discusses different data sources and explains their strengths and weaknesses for providing information on persons with disabilities, (d) The UNICEF/Washington Group module on child functioning – explains how the

module was developed and how it can be used to collect data on children with disabilities, (e) the Group's short and extended sets for collecting data on adults with disabilities – explains how the two modules were developed and how they can be used to collect data on adults with disabilities, and (f) translating knowledge into action – focuses on how to analyse and interpret disability statistics to identify disparities and promote action aimed at improving the wellbeing of persons with disabilities. The videos, developed with inputs from the Group, are aimed at raising awareness about disability statistics, discussing different methods for collecting data and sharing information about available tools for gathering reliable and comprehensive data on persons with disabilities.

### **Publication**

51. UNICEF, in collaboration with Humanity and Inclusion and the International Disability Alliance, released a new publication, *Including Everyone: Strengthening the collection and use of data about persons with disabilities in humanitarian situations*.<sup>17</sup> The paper presents four humanitarian case studies: the 2015 Nepal earthquake, the ongoing humanitarian response in Somalia, the Rohingya refugee operation in Bangladesh and the European migrant and refugee crisis. Each example provides perspectives on the importance of disability-disaggregated data in shaping humanitarian actors' planning and implementation processes. The paper briefly documents progress in policies and guidelines related to disability data in the humanitarian sector and reviews existing tools and mechanisms for gathering data on persons with disabilities.

### **Planned activities for 2020**

52. UNICEF will continue efforts to strengthen the availability and quality of data and analyses on children with disabilities, including through the following initiatives: (a) finalization of tools to support the collection of reliable, comprehensive and comparable data on school participation for children with disabilities; (b) testing the feasibility of collecting data on children with disabilities in administrative data systems; (c) production of a global data report on children with disabilities; (d) provision of support and technical assistance to countries on the collection, analysis and use of child disability data; and (e) organization of workshop on analysing data from the child functioning module.

## **H. World Health Organization**

53. The World Health Organization (WHO) work on disability statistics relates to the global monitoring of needs, barriers and inequalities faced by people with disability and updates on that work in the period 2018–2019.

54. WHO has a long tradition in the conceptualization and measurement of disability and achieved an important milestone with the endorsement of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health by all WHO Member States at the fifty-fourth World Health Assembly in 2001 (resolution WHA 54.21).<sup>18</sup>

55. WHO is presently supporting member States to collect disability and functioning data at the population level using the model disability survey, a general population household survey module.

<sup>17</sup> Available at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/including-everyone-strengthening-the-collection-and-use-of-data-about-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-situations/>.

<sup>18</sup> [http://apps.who.int/gb/archive/pdf\\_files/WHA54/ea54r21.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/gb/archive/pdf_files/WHA54/ea54r21.pdf?ua=1).

56. Two versions of the model disability survey are currently available; a standalone version that is ideal for a dedicated survey on disability and a brief version that could be used as a module and integrated into existing household surveys.

57. The model disability survey has already been implemented nationwide as a dedicated disability survey in Chile, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Qatar. The survey has also been implemented regionally in Cameroon (Adamawa), Pakistan (Balochistan) and the United Arab Emirates (Dubai). WHO provides Member States with technical support throughout the implementation process, with a strong focus on sustainable capacity-building strategies for national or regional statistical offices.

58. In 2018 and 2019, WHO expanded the implementation of the model disability survey in cooperation with countries. The standalone version was completed in nationally representative samples in Costa Rica and Afghanistan. In Costa Rica, WHO offered technical support to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities, to prepare the data collection and analyse the data. The report and microdata of the model disability survey in Costa Rica is currently available from INEC.<sup>19</sup> In Afghanistan, WHO offered technical support through the Asia Foundation, a non-profit international development organization focused on the region, to implement the survey. Through the implementation, the model disability survey was translated into Dari and Pashto. The report and data from the model disability survey in Afghanistan will be made available by the Asia Foundation at the beginning of 2020.

59. The stand-alone version was also implemented in a pilot in Korea by the National Rehabilitation Center. The Center translated the survey into Korean.

60. In 2018, the brief version of the model disability survey was implemented as a module with the Gallup World Poll in India, Tajikistan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Gallup World Poll is an annual global survey vehicle used to collect data representative of the world's adult population. It is the only global study of its kind and contains dozens of questions on a variety of environmental factors relevant to the experience of disability, such as economic empowerment, access to clean water, access to nutritious food, citizen engagement and public safety. The brief model disability survey with the Gallup World Poll was implemented in these three countries as a means of testing a new, efficient way of obtaining high-quality, standardized and comprehensive disability data globally. The combination of the brief model disability survey with the World Poll variables not only allows for the disaggregation of key World Poll indicators by level of disability, but will also make it possible to go beyond disaggregation and analyse the complex ways in which all of these societal factors influence disability, and vice versa.

### III. Ongoing and planned activities by the World Bank

61. The World Bank Group signed the Inclusive Data Charter<sup>20</sup> at the Global Disability Summit in July 2018. At the Summit, the World Bank Group announced new commitments on disability inclusion to accelerate global action for disability-inclusive development in key areas. The commitments build on the World Bank Group's ongoing efforts to respond to the need for accelerated action to achieve disability-inclusive development in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>19</sup> <http://inec.cr/>.

<sup>20</sup> Available at [www.data4sdgs.org/initiatives/inclusive-data-charter](http://www.data4sdgs.org/initiatives/inclusive-data-charter).

Two of the 10 commitments<sup>21</sup> are specifically on disability data – one on the scaling up of disability data collection and use guided by the Washington Group short set of questions, and the other on introducing questions on disability into the Women, Business and the Law project. The World Bank Group is making significant progress in fulfilling the commitments, including as shown below.

### **Guidelines and action plan for disability data**

62. In order to increase the availability and quality of microdata on persons with disabilities, the Living Standards Measurement Study programme has produced a guidance note on designing disability modules in household survey questionnaires.<sup>22</sup> The Washington Group short set of disability questions, officially endorsed by the World Bank Group, is the main reference for the guidelines. The guidelines are an internal World Bank document supporting the team task leaders in addressing disability in multi-topic household surveys, advising on modifying a multi-topic household survey to improve its usefulness to disability. The guidelines were endorsed and released in 2019. The inclusion of the Group's short set in a multi-topic household survey allows the disaggregation of a number of Sustainable Development Goal indicators by disability status and helps in determining whether persons with disabilities have equal access to opportunities. The World Bank Group is also producing its inclusive data action plan.

### **Women, Business and the Law**

63. The Women, Business and the Law project examines how laws and regulations promote women's employment and entrepreneurship. The project collects primary data through its global network of local experts in 190 economies. During the 2020 data collection cycle, the project added the following four questions on the legal framework for women with disabilities in its questionnaire sent to family law practitioners: (a) Does the constitution guarantee equal rights for persons with disabilities?; (b) If yes, does it recognize and protect the rights of women with disabilities?; (c) Is there a law, other than the constitution, which addresses the rights of persons with disabilities?; (d) If yes, does it recognize and protect the rights of women with disabilities?

### **Training, collection, harvesting and compiling data and indicators on disability**

64. The World Bank Group continues to support, technically and financially, the collection of disability data using Washington Group short set questions. The World Bank Group's support for upcoming surveys and censuses include Armenia, Guatemala, Malaysia, the Maldives, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The World Bank Group is providing a series of technical assistance and training workshops on disability data to national statistical offices and key stakeholders.

65. The World Bank Group is also conducting analysis on disability data collected through household surveys including disaggregation of Sustainable Development Goal indicators by disability status, to improve the use of existing underutilized data.

### **Global Education Policy Dashboard work on disability-related statistics**

66. The World Bank is creating the Global Education Policy Dashboard to monitor how countries' education policies and systems are oriented towards learning for all

<sup>21</sup> See [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/07/24/world-bank-group-announces-new-commitments-on-disability-inclusion](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/07/24/world-bank-group-announces-new-commitments-on-disability-inclusion).

<sup>22</sup> Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/456131578985058020/Disability-Measurement-in-Household-Surveys-A-Guidebook-for-Designing-Household-Survey-Questionnaires>.

children. The Global Education Policy Dashboard, planned to be launched in 2020, captures the following areas related to children with disabilities: (a) whether the school is accessible for students with disabilities; (b) whether the toilets are accessible for students with disabilities; (c) whether the classrooms are accessible for students with disabilities; (d) whether the curriculum, text books and other learning materials are accessible for students with print disabilities (such as braille or audio book, large print, etc.); (e) whether there are children with disabilities and/or diverse educational needs in the school, including physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities; (f) whether teachers participated in training on inclusive education pedagogy and/or whether there are teachers who have received more specialized training on inclusive education pedagogy; and (g) whether there are screenings and assessment activities organized at the school (for example, to assess vision, hearing, motor skills and learning).

#### **Integrating disability in Educational Management Information Systems**

67. The World Bank Group assists countries, in collaboration with other stakeholders and local ministries of education in various regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia and Africa, in integrating disability into Educational Management Information Systems. The work is often guided by the Washington Group/UNICEF module on child functioning, so that the Educational Management Information Systems helps design and deliver system and services to improve learning and to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

### **IV. Ongoing and planned activities by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics**

68. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics was constituted as a city group under the Statistical Commission in 2001, holding its first meeting in 2002. It was established to improve the quality and international comparability of disability statistics. Currently, the Washington Group has over 162 country members and partners including multiple United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities. Nineteen annual meetings have been held using a regional rotation system to facilitate attendance by all member countries. The 2019 meeting was held in Buenos Aires and co-hosted by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Argentina and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia. The 20th meeting will be held in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the World Bank, and the 21st in Kenya, sponsored by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

69. To fulfil its mission, the Washington Group has developed multiple question sets that address different aspects of disability statistics. The question sets have been developed collaboratively with partners and have been widely tested to ensure that they produce internationally comparable data that are relevant for policy and programme development and evaluation. Question sets are extensively documented and include guidance for implementation and the analysis of the resulting data. Most recently, and with funding from the Government of Australia, the Group has been engaged in building disability data collection and analysis capacity at the country and regional levels. The Group's website is being redesigned to optimize accessibility and will contain updated documents, frequently asked questions and topical blogs to assist

data collectors and users as they adopt the question sets and analyse the resulting data.<sup>23</sup>

### **Washington Group short set on functioning**

70. Reflecting the definition of disability in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Washington Group short set on functioning consists of six questions assessing difficulties in core domains of functioning. The Group's short set identifies those at greater risk than the general population for participation restrictions in the absence of appropriate accommodations.<sup>24</sup>

71. This question set is well suited for disaggregating the Sustainable Development Goals. It creates an intuitively well understood internationally comparable distinction between persons with and without disabilities, where disability status is defined as having "a lot of difficulty" or "cannot do" in at least one of six core domains of functioning. Adding the short set of questions to an existing survey allows for the disaggregation of all indicators generated by that survey.

72. Since its adoption in 2006, the Washington Group short set has been: (a) used in censuses or surveys in over 80 countries; (b) promoted by international aid programmes (Department for International Development, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia), to collect disability data in all programmes and projects; (c) included in the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, revision 3, and the Conference of European Statisticians *Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*;<sup>25</sup> (d) included in the demographic and health surveys of the United States Agency for International Development and the UNICEF multiple indicator cluster surveys; (e) included in some 70 World Bank-sponsored Living Standards Measurement Studies and some 70 UNICEF-supported multiple indicator cluster surveys (see below); and (f) promoted as the means to determine disability status in humanitarian settings.

73. The Washington Group short set has been used by: (a) United Nations agencies: Statistics Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO) and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; (b) International NGOs: Humanity and Inclusion, Sightsavers, CBM; and (c) academia.

### **Washington Group extended set on functioning**

74. The extended set on functioning includes domains that could not be included in the short set, obtains more information on some domains than are provided by the short set, and obtains information on the use of mobility assistive devices in order to assess functioning.

<sup>23</sup> Detailed information on the Group and the rationale, development, testing and use of all its tools can be found at [www.washingtongroup-disability.com](http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com).

<sup>24</sup> See [www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/WG-Document-2-The-Washington-Group-Short-Set-on-Functioning.pdf](http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/WG-Document-2-The-Washington-Group-Short-Set-on-Functioning.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Economic Commission for Europe (New York and Geneva, 2015).

75. In addition to the six Washington Group short set domains, the Group's extended set also includes the following domains of functioning: affect (anxiety and depression), pain, fatigue and upper body functioning. As with the short set of questions, the extended set has scaled response categories so that the level of functioning in each domain can be described.

76. The extended set has been implemented in 25 countries. An additional 8 countries have reported plans to include the extended set in an upcoming survey.

#### **Washington Group/International Labour Organization module on disability and employment**

77. To meet the need for data to address the ILO policy interest in establishing and monitoring the effectiveness and impact of national legislation, programmes or policies to promote equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities, the Washington Group collaborated with ILO to produce a module on disability and employment for inclusion in labour force surveys. The completed module was endorsed by the Group at its 2019 annual meeting and has been integrated into the ILO model labour force survey questionnaire.<sup>26</sup> The module, used to disaggregate Sustainable Development Goal labour-related indicators by disability status, uses the Group's short set with the recommendation to include two additional questions on anxiety and depression. ILO further recommends routine inclusion of the disability questions into the labour force survey questionnaire and inclusion of the expanded module, which includes barriers to employment, every two to five years.

#### **Washington Group/United Nations Children's Fund child functioning module**

78. The Washington Group, in collaboration with UNICEF, developed a special set of questions devoted to measuring child functioning.

79. The child functioning module, adopted in 2016, addresses functioning among children 2–4 years of age over eight domains of functioning, and among children 5–17 years of age over 12 domains. It is currently available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. The child functioning module and the Washington Group short set (for the population aged 18 and above) have been incorporated into UNICEF-supported multiple indicator cluster surveys, currently at various stages of implementation in 68 countries.

#### **United Nations Children's Fund/Washington Group module on inclusive education**

80. To support the promotion of the right to education for children with disabilities through cross-nationally comparable data, UNICEF and the Washington Group are completing a survey module on inclusive education to assess the school environment and participation, inform policy, provide a statistical summary of environmental influences on participation in school and identify key areas for intervention. The questions are focused on education through a formal mechanism (as opposed to home schooling or tutoring) and are designed to capture the interaction between the participant and the environment by obtaining parental responses to questions across the following three participatory domains: attitudes towards education for all children; accessibility, including the physical environment (entryways, corridors, classrooms and bathrooms), transportation to and from school, information accessibility (classroom teaching material available to children who may have a variety of difficulties), communication accessibility and programme accessibility and adaptability; and affordability. A final component focuses on out-of-school children and attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers to school participation.

<sup>26</sup> Available at <https://ilo.org/LFSresources>.



Final cognitive and field testing will be carried out in 2020, and it is anticipated that the module will be finalized in late 2020.

### **Capacity-building**

81. Over the past two years, the Washington Group has focused on developing regional capacity in disability measurement and data analysis and dissemination. Implementation workshops have been held in the Pacific Island region, Northern Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Africa, Eastern Africa and the Russian-speaking countries, incorporating the Commonwealth of Independent States. Non-regional workshops covered the South Asia and South East Asia regions. The workshops included discussion to identify best practices for improving disability statistics.

82. During 2018 and 2019 the Washington Group conducted 14 workshops – five regional, five national and four specifically for organizations of persons with disabilities and five webinars. The Group also provides assistance and advice by telephone and email as required and requested.

### **Planned activities for 2020**

83. The Washington Group will continue efforts to establish regional hubs under the leadership of one or more entities in each region. The goal is to build regional capacity in disability statistics and further the work of the Group among countries that share a common language or culture and common challenges.

84. Some other specific activities include: (a) continue the development of guidelines for analysing data collected using the Washington Group tools; (b) expand the development of standard templates for tables and reports in order to support the dissemination of comparable disability statistics; (c) finalize the inclusive education module, including final rounds of cognitive and field testing, development of implementation guidelines and completion of the teacher version of the child functioning module; (d) provide verified and tested translations of all question sets in, at a minimum, the official languages of the United Nations; (e) continue work on developing measures of psychosocial functioning; (f) address the feasibility of collecting information on disability through administrative data systems; (g) continue to facilitate the use of the Group's products through knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities both regionally and nationally; and (h) continue and strengthen collaborations with partners (national statistical offices, United Nations agencies, organizations of persons with disabilities, NGOs) on projects that result in quality, comparable data.

85. The Washington Group disseminates its work products globally through the internet ([www.washingtongroup-disability.com](http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com)) and scientific publications.

## **V. Conclusions**

86. The present report provides information on activities of the various organization regarding disability measurement and statistics. These activities, which are in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are intended to help countries to generate good quality data on disability for policies that ensure that persons with disabilities are not left behind. Efforts by the various actors will hopefully help to ameliorate the persistent situation of observed differences in estimates of disability among countries, thereby improving cross-country comparison of the data and generation of good-quality and reliable data for planning purposes.