

- SECRETARY-GENERAL

Remove All Physical, Cultural Barriers to Persons with Disabilities, Secretary-General Urges in Message for International Observance

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message, "Transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society for all", for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed on 3 December:

Resilience is central to achieving sustainable development. In its pledge to leave no one behind, the 2030 Agenda embodies a commitment to building the capacities of those who face marginalization and exclusion, in order to reduce their vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks.

In recent years, the international community has achieved notable progress in advancing the rights of the world's 1 billion persons with disabilities. Disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Yet, persons with disabilities remain too often excluded from the design, planning and implementation of policies and programmes that have an impact on their lives. Too often they face discrimination in labour markets and in access to education and other services.

To overcome this challenge, the path towards inclusive, accessible, usable facilities, technologies, infrastructure, services and products must be ensured by, for and with persons with disabilities. We must build on their agency, working together to design, develop and implement affordable and innovative solutions to realize equality for all.

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us remove physical and cultural barriers, build resilient societies and create opportunities that truly leave no one behind.