

Equal Opportunity for Self-determination Would Empower Persons with Autism to Make Stronger Positive Impact, Secretary-General Says in World Observance Message

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message on World Autism Awareness Day, observed on 2 April:

On this World Autism Awareness Day, let us all play a part in changing attitudes towards persons with autism and in recognizing their rights as citizens, who, like everyone else, are entitled to claim those rights and make decisions for their lives in accordance with their own will and preferences. Let us also renew our promise, engraved in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to leave no one behind and ensure that all people can contribute as active members to peaceful and prosperous societies.

As the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities points out, legal capacity and equal recognition before the law are inherent rights that persons with autism enjoy on an equal basis with other members of our societies.

In the exercise of those rights and their freedom to make their own choices, let us ensure that we make available the necessary accommodations and support to persons with autism. With access to the support they need and choose, they will be empowered to face the key milestones in every person's life, such as deciding where and with whom to live, whether to get married and establish a family, what type of work to pursue and how to manage their personal finances.

When they enjoy equal opportunity for self-determination and autonomy, persons with autism will be empowered to make an even stronger positive impact on our shared future.