

Towards Inclusive Decision-making

# ENABLING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur  
on the rights of persons with disabilities



**Embracing  
Diversity**

**Persons with disabilities constitute at least 15 per cent of the global population, which equates to 1 billion people.**

**However, they rarely occupy positions in governments and they are usually not consulted in policymaking—even on matters directly affecting them.**

**Ensuring their participation in the implementation of policies and programmes can have a profound effect on societies, which benefits everybody.**

# Fighting poverty and exclusion through inclusive decision-making

Participation is a core human right and a fundamental democratic principle. It improves the quality of governance, promoting transparency and accountability. But it is also a powerful tool for social transformation: diversity in the decision-making promotes agency among marginalized people, fights exclusion and contributes to lift people out of poverty.

The Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations:

1

**Legal Recognition** of the right of persons with disabilities to **participate in decision making processes, and to be consulted directly or through their representative organizations** in all matters affecting their lives.

2

**Accessibility and accommodation:** Facilities, procedures and information related to public decision making and consultation must be accessible, and reasonable accommodation must be provided to persons with disabilities in all cases.

3

**Promotion:** Encourage and support the participation of **women and girls** with disabilities, and **of groups who experience discrimination** on the basis of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, nationality, social origin, ethnicity, age or other status.

States must always prioritize the opinions of persons with disabilities in matters that affect them.

# Supporting representative organizations of persons with disabilities

Representative organizations of persons with disabilities are non-governmental membership-based organizations, which are led by persons with disabilities. They are strategic actors in the fight against inequality and exclusion. Adequately supported, they can play key roles in the promotion of human rights and effective governance, holding authorities accountable and making them responsive to people's needs and rights.

The Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations:

1

**Ensure autonomy and independence of the organizations.** States must adopt measures to limit the ability of national, regional and local authorities to hinder their operations, particularly through registration or funding requirements.

2

**Access to funding:** States should not only economically support organizations of persons with disabilities, but also allow them to access foreign funding as a part of international cooperation, which CSOs are also entitled to benefit from.

3

**Include them in decision-making:** States must promote the participation of representative organizations of persons with disabilities beyond disability-specific consultative bodies and mechanisms. As disability is a **cross-cutting issue**, their organizations should have the **same opportunity to participate** in these forums as others do.

Organizations of persons with disabilities strengthen the influence of the disability community, and play an essential mediating role between individuals and the State.