

# Disability Inclusion

## A Practical Guide for UN Personnel

**1 in 6 People globally live with a disability**  
**WHO and World Bank Estimate**


### Why This Matters

An estimated 1 in 6 people globally live with a disability (WHO/World Bank). Disability inclusion is essential to the UN's commitment to leave no one behind. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) call on all UN entities to integrate disability inclusion across programming, operations, and workplace culture. UN Volunteers play an important role in making this commitment visible in everyday work.

### Key Principles

- ▶ **Nothing about us without us.**  
Involve persons with disabilities in decisions that affect them.
- ▶ **Include from the start.**  
Plan for accessibility at the beginning of a project, not as an afterthought.
- ▶ **Disability is part of human diversity.**  
UN Volunteers with disabilities bring valuable perspectives and experience.
- ▶ **Reasonable accommodation is a right.**  
Accessibility adjustments enable equal participation.
- ▶ **Inclusion happens through everyday practice.** Small actions by UN Volunteers help create inclusive environments.
- ▶ **Work with OPDs as partners.** Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) should be engaged as partners and experts, not only beneficiaries.

### Inclusive Language Matters

Use 	Avoid 
Person with a disability	The disabled
Wheelchair user	Wheelchair-bound
Person who is blind	Suffering from blindness
Deaf person or person who is deaf	Hearing impaired
Person with a psychosocial disability	Mentally ill (when referring to a person)
Organizations working on disability inclusion	Disability charity

# Your Daily Inclusion Checklist



Meetings and Events	Programming Design	Workplace Behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ask participants about accommodation needs.</li> <li>▶ Share accessible materials in advance.</li> <li>▶ Use captions, interpretation and readable formats.</li> <li>▶ Describe visuals clearly during presentations.</li> <li>▶ Check venue or platform accessibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Engage OPDs as partners.</li> <li>▶ Budget for accessibility measures.</li> <li>▶ Ensure consultations are accessible.</li> <li>▶ Use disability inclusion indicators in monitoring.</li> <li>▶ Include disability inclusion from the start.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Add alt-text to images and captions to videos.</li> <li>▶ Ensure documents are screen-reader friendly.</li> <li>▶ Respect preferred communication methods.</li> <li>▶ Normalize conversations about accessibility.</li> <li>▶ Use clear and simple language.</li> </ul>

## Overcoming Common Barriers

**“It’s not my area of work.”** Disability inclusion applies across all functions.

**“I don’t know how to start.”** Start by listening to persons with disabilities.

**“It costs too much.”** Many adjustments require little or no funding.

**“Leadership isn’t prioritizing it.”** Use practical examples and evidence.

## Your Next Steps

### This week

- Share this guide with a colleague
- Add alt-text to images in your next document/email.
- Check whether your next meeting venue or online platform is accessible.

### This month:

- Start using the accessibility checker tool in your documents and presentations.
- Identify an Organization of Persons with Disabilities and invite them to a discussion.
- Review one existing project for potential accessibility or inclusion gaps.
- Raise disability inclusion during a team meeting or planning discussion.



## Key Resources

<a href="#">UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)</a>	<a href="#">UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)</a>	<a href="#">UNV Connect - Disability Inclusion Community (eCampus)</a>	<a href="#">OHCHR Disability Rights Resources</a>
<a href="#">IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action</a>	<a href="#">UNDP Disability Inclusive Communications Guidelines</a>	<a href="#">UNDP Reference Guide: Creating Accessible Electronic Materials &amp; Websites</a>	<a href="#">UNDP Tips for Creating Accessible Word Documents</a>