I am Param Maragatham with the Earth Society Foundation and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth.

1. The state of affairs regarding persons with disabilities can be improved in the United States and across the world. Persons with disabilities can feel empowered and contribute to the development of a country by being involved with the implementation and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

There can be more awareness programs and opportunities to engage persons with disabilities in American society more to achieve the SDGs and create a more equitable society. For example, programs can teach people about what it means to have a disability, how to eliminate the stigmas associated with disabilities, and how people with disabilities can contribute to an organization's bottomline and mission. Organizations can create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and develop a culture of openness regarding disabilities.

Educational institutions can create fellowship programs to do groundbreaking research concerning disabilities, disability advocacy, and the advancement of disabilities' rights and human rights. The American government can encourage this by passing legislation and by providing federal grants for the research and even incorporate the research into legislation, policies, and programs.

Educational institutions can also prioritize persons with disabilities in their admissions process and provide resources and services to enhance their performance and development in school. The American government can mandate this to bring this idea into fruition.

Supporting and developing persons with disabilities and protecting their rights helps a government achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Those with disabilities tend to not make an exorbitant amount of money. Providing employment opportunities to persons with disabilities provides them with a salary, which prevents them from being poor and starving. They will have a decent amount of money to maintain their health and pursue education, contribute to the economy and infrastructure, allow them to live in decent housing with access to energy and in a somewhat equal society, where there is a sense of peace and justice. Perhaps the government can create service opportunities specifically encouraging people with disabilities to participate in preserving earth (the environment, oceans, biodiversity, climate change) in exchange for special recognition or remuneration.

2. There are federal equal opportunity laws that are in place in the American government, however, I do believe more can be done to protect persons with disabilities. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has in its jurisdiction the Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits discrimination against the disabled. Laws in its words may prohibit discrimination but discrimination against persons with disabilities still occurs in the workplace, school environment, commercial centers, public spaces and anywhere else in civilized society. I believe the denial of provision of reasonable accommodation amounts to discrimination. At the same time if reasonable accommodations cannot truly be provided due to insufficient resources or a natural inability to do so, then that lack of accommodation may not be deemed discrimination and may result in there just not being a good fit between the two parties involved. In certain areas of society the existence of any affirmative action measures for persons with disabilities exists, but it also does not exist in others. When riding public transportation in America, particularly in New York, one can notice signs on the bus and subway indicating seats are reserved for the disabled or elderly. Hiring organizations and educational institutions can prioritize the rights of the disabled in its goals and missions, but this is not always commonplace.

The US EEO Commission mentioned earlier, which has a decent budget, presents itself as a remedy available for persons who have been subject of discrimination on the basis of disability in trying to protect the rights of the disabled, but I am unsure of how effective it is in the long-term for disability advocacy.

3 and 4.

Service delivery programs like the nonprofits, Lime Connect and the Stability Network, the day program/club house Fountain House, the St.Luke's Adult Psychiatry Recovery Center, and ULTRA Testing are organizations that function without government oversight to enhance the life of the disabled through mentoring, employment opportunities, and tailored and structured guidance and activities for further engagement in and contribution to society. SAP is another company that focuses on the hiring and retaining of autistic capabilities. The government of America has sponsored the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which educates teachers on how to effectively assess students with disabilities and help them reach their full potential as well as any training for the educators. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act increases accessibility for those who are disabled. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provides additional employment opportunities to the disabled within the federal government. Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal contractors to actively engage in the employment of the disabled and record data points related to their performance. Curb Cuts to the Middle Class Initiative was created by President Barack Obama to encourage the employment of disabled people by federal contractors. Obama's Executive Order 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities also aims to promote the hiring of disabled people in federal agencies. Obama's Affordable Care Act aims to create a healthcare systems that is more inclusive of disabilities and addresses them as fully as can be. The Americans with Disabilities Act aims to protect people with disabilities from discrimination in public areas and facilities. The Department of Justice is aiming to enhance accessibility through technology for people with disabilities. The Department's OLMSTEAD ENFORCEMENT aims to provide services and resources to disabled people in the American state of Rhode Island. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act aims to increase awareness of accessible technologies to organizations for their deployment and engagement. The Workforce Innovation Fund focuses on providing jobs to the disabled. Disability Employment Initiative supports the employed disabled with services and resources. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research is responsible for research related to disabled people. The Department of Justice has a Community Relations Service to address hate crimes. The Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program is self explanatory.

Sources:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/disabilities>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/factsheet/expanding-opportunities-for-people-with-disabilities>