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ONLINE LAUNCH OF OHCHR'S SDG‑CRPD RESOURCE PACKAGE

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(captioner standing by)

>> VICTORIA LEE: Welcome, everybody. Welcome to the online launch event of this SDG CRPD Resource Package developed in the EU funded project of Bridging the Gap. My name is Victoria Lee and I work with the Office of the High Commissioner of human rights. Before passing it on to the moderator today, I want to share some technical information. The session is being recorded and will be made available later on the resource package. The link is posted in the chat. We have international sign interpretation, thanks to both Brigitte and Tina our international sign interpreters, and you should be able to see their video and you can also pin them. You can change the layout of what you see on your screen but clicking on View in the menu. There is also an option to hide non‑video participants to better focus on the international sign interpretation, and when we pass to a few videos, you can also choose side‑by‑side view to keep the interpreter visible.

We have real time captioning. It should come up automatically, and you need to click a button to accept it. You can also retrieve it by going to the multimedia viewer located at the bottom right‑hand corner of the WebEx platform. You can open the captioning also in a separate browser and that link is in the chat. We have a number of distinguished speakers, I thank them all for being with us today and for their contribution throughout this project.

Along with many, many others, including some of you joining us who participated in the development of the Resource List.

Finally, we're very grateful to have Gerard Quinn as our Moderator today. The newly Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities who take up the mandated in October. Welcome, Gerard, and I now pass you the floor.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Victoria. Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to be your moderator today is a very special day. The UN CRPD paints a picture of a more inclusive and equal society. This requires change in mentality, in law and policy, but also reform in underlying systems. This last part is key. Systemic change is, of course, the very essence of the UN SDGs, so it was natural and inevitable that we would seek practical ways of making both instruments work well together in the interest of humanity generally and persons with disabilities in particular.

Saying it is one thing but making it so is quite another. This Resource Package is exactly what policymakers, advocates, and others want and need. The European Union is to be commended for its support to enable this resource to be produced. It played a major role in unlocking the potential of change in every society. The tools it provides will assist in realizing the potential of both the CRPD and the UN SDGs for change. This is needed now more than ever as the world tries to build a much more inclusive and resilient society and economy after COVID, which we all hope will end soon.

So, it's with great pleasure that I will moderate today's proceedings. We begin first of all with a short video presentation by Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, so Victoria, if you can cause that to be played. Thank you.

>> MICHELLE BACHELET: Friends, the UN Human Rights Office is active in a design of a disability inclusive development agenda. In 2015, we foresaw the need to bridge gaps to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals will deliver for persons with disabilities in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To this end, I will support the European Union, and I'm happy to inform you that my office has developed an SDG CRPD Resource Package.

It includes policy guidelines, training materials, and human rights indicators to support the SDG implementation and monitoring guided by the Convention. I hope these tools will enable every policymakers to contribute to an inclusive world, one that values persons with disabilities and their experiences, and one which works to respond to the needs and uphold rights in the practical every day.

Persons with disabilities, governments, and the UN System have the power to change the life of our communities. I encourage you to use this resource package to guide your work. Let's make disability inclusive societies. My office stands ready to support you in this challenging task of designing better an inclusive society that gives every person a place to contribute.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you very much. And now we pass the floor on to United Nations Under Secretary General Ana Maria Menendez, we're delighted to have you with us Under Secretary General, and the floor is yours.

>> ANA MARIA MENENDEZ: Thank you very much. Thank you very much for giving me the floor, and also for inviting me to this event. It's really a great pleasure to be present here at the launch of this SDG CRPD Resource Package that has been developed by OHCHR.

The disability inclusion is one of the highest priorities of the Secretary General, who as you know launched a year and a half ago, in June of 2019, the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, and ever since I am really very honored to head our various small team in his office, in the Office of the Secretary General who are working with me, as I said, in order to make the strategy of action and not of words only.

And I have to say that as the Secretary General says pretty clearly, the UN should lead by example, and the strategy provides us with a necessary framework to work together in synergy with the CRPD and with the 2030 Agenda so that we truly leave no one behind.

The promotion of inclusion of persons with disabilities means, first of all, recognizing and protecting their rights. These rights cover all aspects of life, including the right to education, to live in one's community, to access health care, to start a family, to engage in political participation, and to have a decent work.

Note, I mean, I can note that this year has been really very challenging for all of us, including for persons with disabilities, and probably even more challenging for them.

Even under normal circumstances, more than 1 million persons with disabilities worldwide are less likely to enjoy access to education, to a decent job, which I said before are really jobs that they have, but we know they're more likely to be in poverty, experience higher rates of violence, neglect, and abuse, and discrimination.

So, a crisis as COVID‑19 with communities, persons with disabilities are among the worst effected and statement exclude from the institutional response. The SDG CRPD Resource Package developed by OHCHR as part of the Bridging the Gap Project is really very timely, and we continue toward collective efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities.

I am really particularly satisfied that the resources were developed through a consultative process, informing UN entities, governments, national human rights institutions, national statistics offices, international cooperation agencies, and most important and above all, organizations of persons with disabilities.

In order to achieve and measure progress on disability inclusion, solid data and evidence related to persons with disabilities is extremely important. We know that this is an area in which we are lagging behind considerably, and that's the reason why I'm particularly happy to see that the Resource Package has specific modules on data sources, as well as indicators which will further support our work on disability inclusion, including the implementation of our strategy.

As we have seen through the implementation of the strategy precisely, while it is possible to take some action on disability inclusion, we've seen our own resources, existing resources and capacities, and greater investment is required if we really want to build a true capacity to respond and to truly transform our work through building sustainable and lasting change.

And so that's the reason why I'm calling now for more investment to accelerate our work on disability inclusion. If we are to succeed in this agenda, beyond more resources, we need to build strong and resource‑oriented partnerships between us all, member states, UN entities, private sector, Civil Society, and particularly organizations of persons with disabilities.

From the first year of this strategy's reporting, it is evident that we still have a long way to go, but there has been already much progress and that has to be acknowledged. We still need dedicated guidance and tools across the UN System, and we need to make continuous efforts at the field level where the demands for changes are high.

Also, from the first reports, we have seen that where guidance exceeds, entities are finding it extremely valuable and are reporting on how they are using it.

I would like to conclude my remarks to congratulate OHCHR again for this Resource Package, and to look forward to seeing how this is going to be utilized across the system. And let me just finally thank the organizers once more for inviting me to this very important event. Thank you. Over to you.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you very much Madam Menendez. Thank you for reminding us of the high priority based from the Secretary General and yourself, and thank you for reminding us about the centrality of the UN Disability Strategy to the organization and your commitment to lead by example and thank you very much for reminds us about the need for data to inform change and drive change. And quite importantly, thank you for your call for increased levels of partnership as the way forward. Thank you very much, indeed.

I now hand you over to Ana Lucia Arellano Chair of the national disability alliance. Ana, the floor is yours.

>> ANA LUCIA ARELLANO: Thank you very much, Madam Under Secretary General, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, greetings from Latin America, it is a pleasure for National Disability Alliance to participate in this event. Four years of the Bridging the Gap Project have passed, including this very difficult 2020 and COVID‑19 pandemic, which has shown states and other stakeholders the need to double efforts to address the barriers and exclusions that persons with disabilities face and promote protection of rights.

The project is now coming to an end, offering very concrete and valuable tools for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which should influence policy development to prevent and mitigate the effects of the pandemic for an inclusive recovery and for building back better.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has actively involved the International Disability Alliance from the very beginning throughout many consultation processes, especially under CRPD indicators and on the policy guidelines. We are more than thankful, and we will be thrilled to count with, disseminate, and utilize all the resources developed.

The whole package is very much welcome and necessary. The Policy Guidelines and the CRPD Indicators will contribute to our advocacy, capacity building, and monitoring on the rights of persons with disabilities, both at a national and international levels.

In particular, of course, for the reporting to the CRPD Committee, review processes in Geneva and to the Voluntary National Reviews in New York, which we hope come back to normal as soon as it is feasible. Many other relevant stakeholders, including states at all levels of government, national human rights institutions, international cooperation agencies, organizations of persons with disabilities, OPDs, NGOs, academia, and the general public will have a chance to enhance their awareness and work based on the technical guidance provided. The Policy Guidelines, CRPD indicators developed will make a big contribution to the IDA's capacity building program through the Bridge CRPD‑SDG Training Initiative which has reached 513 participants and facilitators from all over the world. These new resources can be utilized to enhance the training curricula providing with comprehensive and systemized guidance.

Very importantly, the launch and publication of these tools, in particular the policy guidelines for SDG‑CRPD implementation, come to create the opportunity for us, organizations of persons with disabilities and other actors to advocate and engage with governments. In particular, with SDG focal points in a comfortable, constructive, concrete, and action‑oriented way in the many areas covered by the SDGs which are particularly relevant for the rights of persons with disabilities.

Indeed, through these tools, this project is offering to all stakeholders, in particular states in charge of SDGs and CRPD implementation very useful resources to highlight the importance of and enhance those collaborative efforts of states and other stakeholders with organizations of persons with disabilities to effectively involve and implement SDGs at the national, regional, and global level.

We add IDA remain enthusiastic and committed to engage, collaborate, and advocate for the implementation of the SDGs in line with the CRPD, taking advantage and promoting the use of Bridging the Gap I resources.

I finally take the opportunity to wish you all a great holiday season and end of the year, as well as a great start for 2021, in which I really hope that we will be able to meet in person to continue fostering our common goals of improving the lives of persons with disabilities around the globe and making this a better and inclusive world for all. I thank you very much for your kind attention. Back to you, Gerard.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you very much Ana Lucia. It's heartening to see IDA right on this project right from the beginning and gratifying to see the capacity building that IDA is doing right from the very beginning about the chemistry between the CRPD and the UN SDGs and I think you're quite right to characterize this resource as a set of concrete tools that it can help us materially move forward, and we look forward to the kind of partnerships that should ideally exist between Civil Society, governments, and others in helping to drive change forward, and we do hope we enter a post‑COVID world at some stage and we can all get together again, so thank you very much for that.

We now have two welcoming addresses on behalf of the Group of Friends of the CRPD. First of all we have Ambassador Socorro Flores from the permanent mission of Mexico to the UN in Geneva, and followed by that we have Ambassador Lucy Duncan the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations in Geneva, and so Ambassador, Flores, the floor is yours.

>> AMBASSADOR SOCORRO FLORES: Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here today. I really want to thank the Office of the High Commissioner of human rights for the invitation to participate in this launching event together with Ambassador Lucy Duncan of New Zealand as co‑coordinators of the Group of Friends to the Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities in Geneva.

The CRPD triggered a paradigm shift. The principles and standards therein, recognize persons with disabilities as rights holders and equal members of a diverse humanity. The adoption of this, now widely ratified international instrument, represented a significant step towards a change in the way persons with disabilities are perceived and treated, having in mind the importance of their full and effective participation and inclusion in society.

The 2030 Agenda, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, have come to anchor the human rights‑based approach in a framework of non‑discrimination, equal opportunities, and social development.

However, we know that additional work is needed to transform our commitments into tangible results. We recognize the very important merits of the SDG‑CRPD package, bringing together a comprehensive set of practical tools to effectively implement these two key international references.

The whole process of work and consultations carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner, with multiple stakeholders through the last four years was worth the efforts. The policy guidelines on the SDGs will definitely help states to incorporate the disability rights perspective in development policies, and the training materials are extremely useful and valuable to facilitate an effective implementation.

The human rights indicators on the CRPD, will very usefully track progress made on compliance with the Conventions, provisions, and the SDGs. States could address recommendations made by treaty bodies and other international mechanisms, considering the criteria presented in this package. This, together with the Data Source Guidance, will facilitate states to make comprehensive assessments when elaborating reports and improve in terms of accountable. These are excellent tools. It is now in our hands to make the most use of them, particularly in the current context where inequities have been exposed and deepened, and human rights are being challenged.

As the Secretary‑General recently mentioned during the SDG Moment event and I quote "when the public appetite for change is matched with political will and smart policy choices, rapid progress is unstoppable." end of quote. Let's make our progress unstoppable.

We look forward to hearing from the panelists' insights on how we can draw on these tools to move towards disability‑inclusive societies. I thank you. Thank you very much.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Ambassador. Ambassador Duncan, the floor is yours.

>> AMBASSADOR LUCY DUNCAN: In the language of New Zealand indigenous people, reo Maori, warm greetings to you all, I would like to begin by acknowledging the moderator and other speakers before me, in particular the co‑chair of the group of friends Mexico's permanent representative Socorro Flores. Thank you also to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and its office for this event and for the valuable resource package that is being launched today with the generous support of the European Union.

I am newly arrived in Geneva, just one week, and this is my first public event, and I'm delighted that this event focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities. Why? Well, the reason is New Zealand has a long in support of the rights of persons with disabilities both domestically and internationally, including by playing a core role through the negotiations on the Convention.

New Zealand is also firmly committed of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. There is no one goal covering disability, but as appropriate issues are mainstreamed across a number of them. New Zealand believes that development must be inclusive of persons with disabilities. Through our international development cooperation program, we invest in their human rights so that they can participate in their communities and live in dignity and safety, something which is essential for the achievement of the SDGs.

Examples of initiatives we support include, firstly, the Pacific Disability Forum's work toward a disability inclusive Pacific 2030. This includes strengthening disability inclusion in elections, censuses, humanitarian preparedness and response, as well as supporting women and youth with disabilities.

And secondly, New Zealand has recently begun implementing a significant program in the Pacific to help increase the educational inclusion of children with disabilities.

Given the cross‑cutting nature of disability issues, we see significant value in bringing together resources, such as those of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is launching today, to help clarify the nexus between the Convention and Sustainable Development Goals. As our moderator has indicated, finding practical, concrete approaches to implementing the Convention and the SDGs will improve people's lives.

The focus on practical approaches is even more critical today in the time of COVID‑19. The pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities, among other groups. The health crisis is exposing and exacerbating inequities, as my colleague from Mexico has pointed out, threatening the achievement of the SDGs.

So, as we prepare to build back better, it will be important to mainstream into decision‑making the Sustainable Development Goals, including on issues important to persons with disabilities.

In doing so, we must not forget the mantra, "Nothing About Us Without Us." The participation of persons with disabilities is crucial in every stage, whether the immediate response to the health crisis or longer term. We must ensure their voices are fully heard by decision‑makers at all levels. Thank you very much.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you so much, Ambassador. As both of you were speaking, I was reminding myself of the historic role that both Mexico and New Zealand played in drafting the UN CRPD, and with respect to Mexico, it's almost as if we're coming back full circle because, of course, the original vision of Mexico was that this would be a human rights treaty with very special social development context built in, so by marrying back the UN SDGs with the CRPD, we're kind of returning to that very original and very rich vision of Mexico and, of course, we have Ambassador Don McKay to thank for steering the negotiations very ably on the ad hoc committee throughout the early 2000s and you're quite right, Ambassador Duncan, to look forward to rebuilding our societies and economies on the lines suggested by the SDGs, but more inclusively and in a much more resilient fashion.

Now, we actually move on to the content of the package, and I think we begin with a video. The video is an overview covering the overall package itself, so Victoria, if it you would just run the video and then we'll move to the speakers.

(captioned video):

In 2015, States from all over the world committed to realising the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs, by 2030. The SDGs are a series of commitments that provide a road map for development addressing poverty, health, education, gender equality, employment, urban development and other relevant areas which should benefit, everyone including persons with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a human rights treaty, provides a framework to guide SDG commitments to ensure inclusive societies.

The United Nations Human Rights Office has developed a resource package to help implement and monitor the SDGs with a disability rights perspective. This package includes:

- policy guidelines, aimed at supporting policymakers in the development of laws, policies and programmes following the Sustainable Development Goals under the guidance of the CRPD;

- training materials and videos, aimed at supporting capacity-building on the intersection of the SDGs and the CRPD;

- human rights indicators, aimed at tracking the implementation of the CRPD and simultaneously contribute to monitoring the SDGs;

- data sources guidance provides examples of where data is being collected to inform the human rights outcome indicators.

Governments, organisations of persons with disabilities and civil society, national monitoring bodies, statistical offices, the private sector, service providers, and society as a whole have a role to play in ensuring that our societies are inclusive of people with disabilities. Let’s make disability-inclusive societies!

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you very much. That was very informative and now we move on to Facundo Chavez from the Office of the High Commissioner who will explain to us the background to drafting the package, what the purpose is, what the process for drafting it was, and what kind of tools it has produced, so Facundo, over to you.

>> FACUNDO CHAVEZ: Thank you, Gerard. Thank you very much. Thank you Madam Menendez and Ambassador Flores and Ambassador Duncan for being part of this moment. There is particularly important things behind the production of these tools, and that is the result of four years of work, so for us it is a very special day and special moment.

It's a great pleasure to continue to announce the launching of the SDG CRPD Resource Package. I would like to start first by thanking the many, many, many colleagues that contributed to the product over the past years, and particularly, I would like to thank the team that developed them (announcing names) and many others that also on a voluntary basis to contribute to this Resource Package. CBM Australia, Disability Allocation and Development and our friends at a TV. To everyone, thank you.

It was planned to bridge the gap between the development commitments in the SDGs and the legal obligations under the CRPD. The general approach in the SDGs was not meeting the specificity of the commitments in the CRPD, and we decided to connect both instruments to offer concrete guidance.

The first step was to define the start in indicator framework that would allow to focus the attention of the treaty in concrete areas of development that would contribute to taking the strategic steps towards compliance with the human rights obligations.

The work was key to define the areas. We didn't do that. It was the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities who has developed the standards that allows for making this categorization dually systemized in the human rights indicators for the CRPD.

This was massive work that required not only legal analysis, looking at the standards developed by the human rights system, but also a reality check of the priorities expressed by persons with disabilities themselves through alternative reports to the CRPD Committee.

The person leading this work was key. Not only because of her amazing legal knowledge on the treaty, but because she was in charge of supporting organizations of persons with disabilities to bring their concerns to the Committee since the beginning of the functioning of that body.

The second step was to translate the human rights obligations into practical policy guidelines that link the SDGs with the challenges that the states themselves commonly face to implement the CRPD. And the lessons learned through the work of treaty bodies and other processes, and in this process we looked at the realities that policymakers have to face, not only technical aspects, but internal processes. Many times without the necessary support and political support to make the standards of the CRPD a reality in their countries.

Hence, the policy guidelines were designed to give at a glance a full picture of the challenges ahead, and the key aspects to consider when implementing the SDGs from a CRPD perspective. Progressively, scaling up the complexity of technical guidance in a three‑step structure which starts in the brief sections, moves to the in‑depth in these materials, and finally, gets to the point of submissions and resources. So policymakers can look at the guidelines according to the strategic plan requirements and the policy‑development challenges.

We're confident to say that the policy guidelines integrate the latest knowledge in substantive areas of the SDGs that are a priority of the realization of economic and social rights of persons with disabilities while rooting them to the political rights necessary to ensure that substantive quality is built on not discriminatory grounds.

The final step that we took was to present these tools with concrete examples on data sources to inform the outcome indicators and training materials with audio visual aids to both support the capacity‑building processes and to serve as communication tool.

We hope you enjoy the presentation of each of these tools that we will have now, and we stand ready to support their use. We look forward to further collaboration, and I also would like to thank all the presentations that will come from colleagues in different UN entities and treaty bodies, and from many, many friends that are looking at these presentations today. Thank you, Gerard, again, for moderating the event and I'll give you back the floor.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Facundo. What was very clear and comprehensive. I think the one big takeaway from it is the title of the project Bridging the Gap was very, very aptly chosen because as you say yourself, this is really a task of translating some of the generalities of the UN SDGs into the specificities of the UN CRPD, and indeed, vice versa. Now over to Victoria Lee the Project Manager within the Office of the High Commissioner and she's going to talk to us about indicators and data sources guidance. Thank you, Victoria, over to you.

>> VICTORIA LEE: Thank you, Gerard. Hello again to everyone. For those who are not familiar, human rights indicators are measures for tracking progress in implementation of human rights, in this case the CRPD.

With this set, I believe it's the first time we have human rights indicators for a full treaty. To do this, we followed the Office's methodology on human rights indicators, meaning that we went through each CRPD provision and identified the key components and developed three kinds of indicators.

First, the structural indicators which measure the commitments of the State by looking at whether CRPD standards have been integrated into legislation and policies. Second, process indicators which measure the efforts of the states to give life to those commitments, for example, by allocating budget, providing training, carrying out consultations. And outcome indicators which attempt to capture the level of enjoyment of the right by the individual.

The work was based on the jurisprudence of the CRPD Committee and other human rights mechanisms, and it was an enormous endeavor. Fortunately, we benefited from the input of many of you who are with us today. We have consultations with government disability focal points, representatives of national statistics offices, national human rights institutions, organizations of persons with disabilities, as well as UN agencies, human rights experts, development partners, academia, and broader Civil Society.

The indicators help to shift the focus and scope of what we should be measuring guided by the CRPD, and this is important because we all know that what is not counted and not taken into account will not matter when it comes to policies, budget, and action.

In addition, the SDG indicators have been incorporated into the CRPD indicators as bridging the instruments and promoting their mutual reinforcement. However, indicators alone are not enough. They need data to respond to them. Which brings us to the data sources guidance, the guidance compiles examples of data looking specifically at the outcome indicators, where to find information to determine the lateral of enjoyment of rights.

The guidance draws on concrete data sources from national and global levels, it shows that there is already data out there which responds to the outcome indicators, as well as shows where more efforts are needed. For that purpose, we classified each outcome indicator into three categories. One for where the data already exists, for example, the rate of employment of persons with disabilities. The second from where data exists but requires disaggregation by disability in order to fulfill the indicator. For example, on political affiliation there is also on in office and commonly disaggregated by age and sex, but it's not systematically disaggregated by disability.

Finally, the third class refers to where we could not find an example of data being collected. This exercise was helpful to identify the gaps in data collection to know where to focus efforts as new data sources emerge. In fact, we will continue to seek out examples of data sources and we very much welcome feedback of sharing in further examples.

Both the indicators and data sources should serve a wide array of stakeholders involved in policymaking and development, and should also serve as a tool for organizations of persons with disabilities, Civil Society, NHRIs and others for monitoring and to urge states, donors, and development actors to do better and be held accountable for what they do.

We're very pleased that the indicators have already started being used in different contexts. For example, researchers in Canada at McGill University have developed data mining methodology based on the CRPD indicators, and this methodology is being used in global COVID‑19 monitoring projects to analyze pandemic response for persons with disabilities across 16 countries.

This demonstrates the overall objective of the res to help ensure that persons with disabilities are always part of the agenda, and for efforts and action to be aligned with the CRPD to advance rights and uphold inclusion. We hope that it will be used widely to this end. Thank you for your attention. Back to you, Gerard.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Victoria. That was very clear. I especially liked the metaphor of Bridging the Gap again between the indicators for the SDGs and indicators for the CRPD in producing something, a hybrid that helps governments. I'm very much taken with the indicators of substance process and outcome, and particularly your focus on data disaggregation as well as generating new sources of data, and perhaps big data can offer us something here as well as the advent of artificial intelligence.

So without further ado, I'll hand you over to Mary Keogh who will take to us about the policy guidelines that are part of this package. Thank you, Mary. Over to you.

>> MARY KEOGH: Thank you, Special Rapporteur. I'm here behalf on behalf of the IDDC a grouping of Civil Society organizations promoting inclusive international development and humanitarian action. And we very much welcome the launch of these guidelines, which we feel fill a very large and important gap in order to translate human rights into practical implementation. As INGOs, the guidelines are also a valuable resource to remind us of the bigger picture of reforms that our sectoral programs feed into, and how to complement that in our program and advocacy work at the country level.

From the perspective of IDDC members, the guidelines bring together the country implementation challenges and imperatives that we and INGOs are used to working with in our programs with the normative nature of human rights, this is a very unique contribution.

We think this will really help support policymakers to translate commitments into actual changes for people on the ground. We also can see the value in sharing these and pointing out governments and UN counterparts to the guidelines throughout the course of our work, and we encourage all of our fellow IDDC members to do the same.

CBM Global, through inclusion of Advisory Group were honored to work closely with the OHCHR team in September through October to help finalize the guidelines, which it also gave us a very good perspective on how useful they are. We found the exchange on the balance of implementation realities and human rights imperatives, extremely fruitful and useful, and it speaks to the value of the guidelines and how they offer something unique. Thank you very much for allowing us to intervene.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you very much, Mary. We're very indebted to IDDC for their involvement right from the beginning. I think the reoccurring team happened throughout the presentation the translation of both the instruments into practical lines of reform to help governments as well as equip Civil Society with broader areas of documentation.

So now we're going to move to remarks from UN agencies and experts who are actually involved in the drafting of the policy guidelines. Unfortunately, Stefan Trömel cannot be with us from the ILO, so I pass you over straight away to Alarcos Cieza from the WHO. Alarcos, the floor is yours.

>> ALARCOS CIEZA: Yes. Thank you, Gerard. Excellencies and also Under Secretary‑General, it's a pleasure for me to be here and also a reason to celebrate personally because the first project that I discussed with my colleagues of the High Commissioner of human rights, when I joined the UN System, was this project at the beginning when it was being crafted, so it's a great pleasure for me to be here today to discuss the launch.

And I have three messages that I would like to summarize in words. One is value, the second one is timeliness, and the third one is foundation. So, value, value because WHO highly values the resources that our colleagues from the Office of the High Commissioner of human rights have produced. They're absolutely excellent and provide a fantastic overview of what is already available but also go beyond by adding value toward these at every level. For example, if we look at that what DG has presented and the resources on the indicators, specifically for Article 25, they provide the division between level 1, 2, and 3, and by providing this division, they also provide clear guidance where our efforts need to concentrate on and specifically on level 2 and level 3 because there nothing is being done.

So that was value. Let me go to timeliness. The launch of this resource could not be more timely. One of the things that COVID‑19 has clearly shown all of us is that persons with disabilities are still an afterthought in the health sector, and we need to act urgently, and we only have 10 more years if we want to really achieve what we have committed to with the SDGs.

The link to this then, the beauty of the documents that are being launched today is that they come at the right time but also that they provide the right guidance and this guidance is simple. I would like to really also mention specifically this list of dos and don'ts are fantastic to provide, yeah, that guidance is so much needed.

And the third word was foundation, and completely for WHO, they are a fantastic foundation for what will come and what needs to come. As perhaps some of you know, our current Disability Action Plan 2014‑2021 goes to an end and we are because of that already planning a new agenda in three different pillars. The first one is disability inclusive universal health coverage, the second one is disability inclusive public health, and the third one is disability inclusive health emergency response. We are extremely welcoming how well the areas of universal health coverage and public health interventions, such as WASH but also the social determinants of health are useful resources. We will use this work being launched today as foundation for our work at WHO.

So as I mentioned, value, timeliness, foundation. So I want to thank our colleagues from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for this valuable timely information. Thank you.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Alarcos. It's gratifying to hear that the WHO and I assume representative of other agencies in the UN System, finds these guidelines to be a very, very practical help in moving things forward. No paradigm is ever fixed and it sets a foundation for further and better work into the future, so very, very gratifying to hear that from you.

Now we hand it over to Ana Pelaez from Spain who is the former Vice‑Chair of the UN CRPD Committee and currently member of the Committee for elimination against discriminations of women, CEDAW, very important Committee, and important to talk about her reflections on the resource. Over to you, Ana.

>> ANA PELAEZ: Thank you. Thank you very much. Can you hear me well?

>> GERARD QUINN: Perfectly well.

>> ANA PELAEZ: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for this invitation. It is for me an honor to be here with you today. As CEDAW Committee Member and also Formal Member of the CRPD Committee, it's so clear that we need really to have this kind of important tool of resources to ensure that no one is really behind.

Following the information provided by UN System, we have to take in mind that 60% of people with disabilities are women and girls, and we are women and girls too. This is so important also, not just to consider this important package for the follow‑up of the implementation of the SDGs or the CRPD, but it's also a fundamental tool to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are also part of this global system for reporting, for better knowing the situation for this invisible population.

When we are talking about women and girls with disabilities, you know very well that we are talking about more than 600 million of women and girls. Women and girls who are always forgotten. Always forgotten, for example, from the governments when the State Parties are reporting not just for the implementation of the CRPD Convention but also for example, when they're reporting about the implementation of the CEDAW Convention or for example when they're reporting about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and so on and so on and so on.

So this is why I really consider, and I would like to express my gratitude and my congratulations to the High Commissioner Office for Human Rights in relation to taking in mind the needs to have intersecting approach in relation with people with disabilities and the SDGs in this package.

Also, because with this kind of instrument, we are not just trying to help State Parties in order to ensure that no one is behind. For example, talking about women and girls with disabilities among the disability population, or for example, among to the childhood population or among to the women population. But also, for example, this is key instrument for the people who are working in statistics to better know how is the situation and how we can really know better the situation in relation with the gender linking with disabilities issue.

It's also a fundamental instrument, for example, for the national human rights institutions when they are reporting, not just as I mention again, not just for the CRPD Convention when they are reporting about human rights in any type of a treaty or system, is really fundamental. We have to take in mind that there are especially very important issues, such as for example, the persistence of violence against women which are affecting in some cases more than 20% of the female population which is the population of women and girls with disabilities, but nobody is reporting about this situation. Or, for example, when we're talking about harmful practices against women and girls such as, voice, forced abortion, such as for example, forced sterilization, which needs to be really reported by these fundamental instruments, also such as for example, the National Human Rights Institution.

But when we're for example talking about the development actors for international cooperation, these type of instruments are also fundamental, more and more and more now the development policies are taking in mind the need to consider disabilities, or for example also the need to consider gender and women's rights. But nobody knows the way to take in mind in intersecting forms these two fundamental categories, gender, women's rights, and disabilities, for example. And this is why I consider really the contribution of the High Commissioner of Human Rights Office is offering with this package is fundamental.

But also, not just because also Civil Society comes to use this instrument for better reports about the situation, but also very important, to involve directly women and girls with disabilities through their own representative organizations.

And I would like to take a little more moments here to say how important it is to engage women and girls with disabilities' organizations themselves. There are not many, but we need to ensure that these organizations, which are a specific focus on women and girls with disabilities, can also report using these fundamental instruments and resources here.

Finally, we are talking here about people with disabilities. We are talking here about gender, women eights rights in the case of my contribution here, but we need sometimes we forget also another important population, which is the population of women who are linked in with disabilities. Women are very clearly affected by this also, by the CRPD and by the disabilities issue because women are mostly the people who are looked in this population.

We need to ensure also how these women engage with disabilities, how they're also considered in relation with their fundamental rights, and this is not something which is already reporting in the UN System, and many mothers of children with disabilities, or for example, women linked with relatives with disabilities are also forgotten. So, please, I think this is how this instrument can also support and help to report about also these situations for these women linking with be disabilities even if they don't have disabilities themselves.

So, once again, congratulations for this important instrument and I have to say that the CEDAW Committee will approve also an instrument for indicators linking with the SDGs with this dimension also last year and for sure we can put together this instrument to better the situation now for women and girls with disabilities and women linking with disabilities. Thank you very much for your attention.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Ana. Thank you for your service to both treaty bodies. I was reminding myself while you were talking that somebody labeled the CRPD a visibility project, restoring visibility to persons with disabilities, and you have kind of reminded us that it's a double visibility project also revealing the visibility of women and girls with disabilities and the accumulated disadvantages and discrimination they face, too. Thank you for reminding us about the effects of invisibility for women and girls with disabilities, particularly during COVID where the rights of domestic violence have apparently increased many times over. And thank you for reassuring us that the gender perspective was adequately, even more than adequately taken account of in this package. And last but not least, thank you for sharing with us the view that this resource package could help women and girls with disabilities raise their voice and therefore shed their invisibility in the policy process into the future.

So last but not least in this segment, we're going to here from Andrea Parra about the training materials of this resource package. Andrea is a human rights lawyer, experiential trainer and was involved in the development of the package. So Andrea, the floor is yours.

>> ANDREA PARRA: Thank you very much and thank you to everybody that spoke before me. As an advocate and human rights advocate who has been on the ground for many years this question of how to implement international human rights standards in the domestic level is constantly on my mind and my work, and I want to thank particularly Mr. Chavez for having the vision of offering policymakers complete tools on how to make this material into our own context, and I want to thank Victoria Lee also for the incredible work that happened behind the scenes.

It was a pleasure for me also to work with the person who developed the videos, a great companion material to the material, and you will see when you explore the toolkit and the resource package, which I'm actually pasting in the chat again, that the characters in the videos were developed based on actual case stories that we know happened to people with disabilities, and those stories carry over into the training material because the key in experiential training is to think about how can people internalize knowledge that they can then bring into their own specific contexts.

So, each module for the policy guidelines has in‑person module and given the circumstances right now with COVID, it was also developed in an online version that is forthcoming. Each module has a specific framework because we don't assume that every policymaker has been involved with CRPD or the SDGs, and so it has a basic framework on what is disability, ableism, nondiscrimination and policies and then what Victoria explained, and then it goes into key concepts that each policy guidelines offers and what can be done actually done to implement them. The policy guidelines are key document, and as an advocate myself I'm very grateful for the content of the documents. The hope is that the training modules support the thinking of how to bring home the content of these policy guidelines and identify ways to concretely apply them. Therefore, it is very important that any person using it, using the training modules thinks about who their audience is and brings in local activists with disabilities and persons with disabilities as experts in their own needs so that they can be part of the training experience that is offered by this resource package.

And that way, we believe that the whole package will be as effective as possible because it is this process and as you have mentioned, Gerard, a discussion of bridging gaps and how do we actually bring from the global UN international human rights standards into the local application and implementation for policymakers and it is key, it will make it as effective as possible.

So thank you very much and it has been a real pleasure for me to be part of this project.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Andrea. That sounds like a very rich process, and we know yourself as an educator and a trainer, that most communication to be effective is emotional, so you must make the link with people in their lived lives, and it's gratifying to see how that was worked into the fashioning of the package.

The next segment we're going to hear from states and partners and their views as to the potential and usefulness of this package. We begin with ‑‑ I'm sorry, I should explain Ambassador Catalina Devandas regrettably cannot join us and she conveys her apologies, and so we begin with a video message from Ambassador Rui Macieira permanent representative of Portugal. Victoria, if you could run the video. Thank you so much.

>> RUI MACIEIRA(captioned video):

Dear colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great honour that I join you and deliver these opening remarks on behalf of Portugal and Brazil, in our capacity of co-authors of the resolutions on mental health and human rights.

We would like to congratulate and thank OHCHR for preparing this resource package aiming to help States implement the SDG’s in a way compliant with the CRPD. We particularly welcome and support the policy guidance on SDG 3 and its focus on mental health.

Mental health continues to be covered by persisting layers of stigma, violence and discrimination and mental health settings constitute fertile soil for human rights violations and abuses.

Implementing a paradigm shift in mental health is a matter of utmost urgency. The CRPD laid the foundation and the SDG’s created the momentum for this.

Portugal and Brazil are proud to have initiated in 2016 this global call for a paradigm shift towards a human rights-based approach to mental health. Since then, we have been championing this movement, anchored on the 3 resolutions on Mental Health and Human Rights adopted to date by the Human Rights Council – the last this June. We thank again OHCHR and WHO for all the support.

We are very pleased to see that this policy guidance is fully aligned with the messages of the HRC resolutions and with the materials of WHO’s QualityRights Initiative and we call on all States to follow these recommendations.

Like this guidance, the resolutions call upon States to abandon all practices and treatments that fail to respect the rights, autonomy, will and preferences of all persons on an equal basis with others, and that lead to power imbalances, stigma, discrimination, harm and human rights violations and abuses in mental health settings.

It is high time to invest in and provide inclusive models of care that respect human rights; are based in the community; and ensure psychosocial peer-support services. This approach will help overcome the traditional mental health models based on the dominance of biomedical interventions, coercion, medicalization and institutionalization.

Ladies and gentlemen, this guidance also addresses the issue of reform of legislation and policy to eradicate discrimination, stigma, violence, coercion and abuse in mental health services.

Being aware that the harmonization of national laws, policies and practices relating to mental health with the norms of the CRPD, including abandoning involuntary or forced measures and the respect for legal capacity, is possibly the greatest challenge, Portugal and Brazil proposed the realization of an open consultation on this topic.

This request to the High Commissioner was adopted by the Human Rights Council on resolution 43/13 and the consultation shall take place next May. You are all invited to attend.

I thank you; wish you all a fruitful discussion, and a very happy 2021!

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Ambassador. I think the intervention on behalf of the Ambassador from Portugal and Brazil reminds us that the SDGs gives us a unique opportunity and new space to really not just imagine what a post‑coercion world would look like in mental health but how we can actually build it up, and it's very, very gratifying to hear of your support for that paradigm shift.

So, now we move on to the representative of the EU Project Bridging the Gap II. Federico ‑‑ I'm sorry if I get this wrong. I have your name here somewhere with me. Sincere apologies, we're deeply grateful to the project and the support and without further ado over to you.

>> FRANCESCO LUCIANI: Okay. Thank you. First of all, I would like to apologize for Director Henriette Geiger not being able to be present and deliver this concluding remarks. She would have liked to be here with us, but unfortunately, she couldn't make it for a last‑minute conflicting commitment, and so I'm pleased to deliver this concluding remarks on her behalf. I'm Francesco lose Anna Head of Cooperation with Partner Countries on disabilities matter, and I would like to thank all the speakers before me for all of the excellent presentations they made.

It was truly a very enlightening event on what we all heard today, and I'm sure that you can agree with me that we know ‑‑ we now have news as a result of the Bridge the Gap Project, a Resource Package that is truly unique. Never before have we had so many tools that are complementary at the same time to guide us in ensuring inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The package we have now available to us opens many doors and provides many entry points to get things right. Let me mention some of them. For instance, in international cooperation, this package helps better framing and monitoring projects. In research, this package directs us to invest in research which promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities where more expertise and information is required, such as climate action or security.

It can also direct us to use it as driver of inclusion, and this package is direct to participatory research, research to be inclusive of persons with disabilities and also for persons with disabilities to be included in research statement in cross‑cutting.

The resources, the resources we have facilitate also better accountability on how are we making progress toward the SDGs or the implementation of the Convention or other human rights instruments to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The progress made with the creation of this package is very important because before then, before the project, we used to have so many disparate force, many relevant force on which we could build, but nevertheless they were disparate and not necessarily complementing with each other.

Now with these resource packages, different actors are finally brought on the same page, policymakers, statisticians, development actors, national human rights institutions, persons with disabilities themselves, organizations of persons with disabilities, and Civil Society organizations, converge their force and build momentum and movement to the same end which is the inclusion of the persons with disabilities.

The time to act is now. 2030, the ultimate goal for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals we set in the Agenda for Development is not too far and will realize more quickly than we expect, but at the same time, we are still in 2020 ‑‑ at the end of 2020, so 9 years are still ahead of us, and this is enough time, I would say, to get our action together guided by the resources effective.

Within the European Union, the European Commission will make sure that this resource package is made fully available and used by all EU colleagues working in our EU delegations and their headquarters to be sure that they're used across different sectors and also to ensure that our development cooperation actions become more inclusive.

I would like to use this opportunity at the end to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Commissioner herself Michelle Bachelet, and her team of Mr. Chavez and Victoria Lee and others Civil Society, partners, tremendous work for hours of consultation and drafting and fine‑tuning the indicators and resources. The work has been really well done and I really thank all of you, and this is in any case just ‑‑ it's not the end. This is just the beginning of another workstream that we will continue all together. Many thanks for your attention.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you very much, Francisco and apologies, again. It's one of the risks of living in a Zoom or WebEx society, and I think your reference to participatory action and research is really the way to go, and I was very gratified to hear of the European Union's involvement in this project and I do intend parenthetically as Special Rapporteur shining a light on the role of regional organizations into the future, so I'm sure we'll have further conversations.

Let me now move on to Federico Martire that I skipped and I apologize and then Danlami and, so Frederico, apologizing for skipping you, you have the floor.

>> FEDERICO MARTIRE: No problem, Special Rapporteur. Thank you very much. Good morning, hello, everyone. I am Federico Martire I represent here the Spanish Cooperation and I thank you first and foremost for allowing me to take the little two minutes to explain for a minute the joint work we have conducted with OHCHR for the implementation of Bridge the Gap. So the OHCHR's work in the frame of Bridging the Gap has been privilege to our Bridge the Gap II component and using thematic knowledge to the CRPD and CRPD‑informed SDGs.

Over these years, however, together we have done much more than merely exchanging expertise and know‑how, but we have actually worked to turn OHCHR's work in Bridging the Gap into reality, so to turn the effort of your team into reality, laying the foundation for the concrete use of the resources.

We have made advancements and steps forward in many shapes and forms, but allow me here to highlight and emphasize in particular the experience that we have conducted jointly in Paraguay with the government and Civil Society organizations of this country.

In Paraguay, as a matter of fact, we have worked for the elaboration of the set of indicators of the 17 axis of the national plan of human rights for persons with disabilities, and indicators that were entirely informed by Bridging the Gap I. Eventually, together, this product was validated by the Cabinet of Ministers of Paraguay and it followed a very long participatory process that involved Civil Society of the country, international DPOs, international experts, and of course OHCHR.

Well, eventually, this product together with others will allow on the one hand, the Government of Paraguay to plan and monitor public policies for inclusion connected in particular to the system which allows governments to follow up and track progress towards implementation of UN treaty bodies and in this particular case, of course, of the CRPD.

And on the other hand, these products will also allow the Civil Society and DPOs to bring forth evidence‑based advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities, and so yes we are now looking forward to the elaboration on the first baselines for the indicators and should in either process supposed to self‑sustain over time and also with the help of the policy guidelines and training package materials that have been elaborated by OHCHR. This is just one of the examples of the work we have conducted together and I personally think it's the most significant, the most meaningful, and one that can give wings to other initiatives and opportunities in the future, and I was happy to hearing right before me, Director Luciani saying this is not the beginning of the process but hopefully the beginning of a longer path. So, yes, for Bridging the Gap II we added our little bridges to this bridge to Bridge the Gap in the implementation of the CRPD and CRPD‑informed SDGs, and we have benefited very much with the work of OHCHR and I am particularly grateful to each one of the team members and staff that have worked with us, but in particular let me highlight and thanks very much Facundo and Victoria because you've been pivotal to Bridge the Gap II and look forward to working together. Thank you for your time again, thank you for the opportunity, and I look forward to more and better in the future. Over to you again, Gerard.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Federico and it's really gratifying to learn of the impact that the work is having and that the process begun four years ago is already bearing fruit. The Paraguay example is almost a model to a lot of other governments, and I also heard you speak about evidence‑based advocacy because these tools will drive that into the future. And thank you very much, Federico and apologies for the wrong order. Now we're going to hear some closing remarks from the Chairperson of the UN CRPD Committee, Danlami, and I'm sure Danlami you heard a lot in the past hour and a half and you have your other perspective to add. So without further ado, Danlami, over to you, you have the floor.

>> DANLAMI BASHARU: Thank you very much, Chairperson. I'm very delighted to be with you all. I'm really happy to hear all the very important things you've said. I want to thank first Ms. Bachelet and the European Union and several other persons who contributed to this event.

The Committee welcomes the Resource Package developed by OHCHR. The set of indicators and guidelines are extremely helpful for State Parties, and the convention to develop, implement, and have processes that are CRPD compliant. We will discuss in the Committee how we can make use of all of these resources in our interaction with state's parties. We'll do ourselves well by inviting the newest of the different data that come into force to date, and we welcome the data source on Article 29 on Political and Public Life as well as that of Article 31 on Data.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which came into force in 2008 as provided for the full inclusion of rights of persons with disabilities, and this treaty calls for a partnership from understanding of disability to a human rights model of disability. This generation of human rights treaty serves as the development tool for implementation into policies and practices. The CRPD leverages on the SDGs in order to serve implementation by providing a nice perspective to the inclusion of persons with disabilities through assuring that no one is left behind.

Similarly, in terms the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which puts forward 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets and these negotiations were carried out with the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, and as such the 2030 Agenda for the rights of persons with disabilities throughout the world, and this is a far cry from the development rules which did not consider persons with disabilities in any way, and the SDGs call on the international community to leaving no one behind and reaching the further behind first to address the situation of those most excluded from development and to implement policies to combat discrimination entrenched in extreme systems.

It's important to note data sources for outcome indicators on Article 29 on participation of public life, and we would also welcome data on different types of regions. We welcome Article 31 as first standalone provision in a human rights treaty, and to date the CRPD is the only one with such a provision, calling for the collection and disaggregation of data. Data is most important for persons with disabilities in achieving laws and policies that implement and improve the development, access, and exercise of their lives on an equal basis with others.

The number of countries using the Washington Group questions, and recommendation by the United Nations, States and others has been growing significantly. Despite the limitations, the Washington Group short set of questions on disability has been widely endorsed by the CRPD Committee, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, OHCHR, and other United Nations agencies, the World Bank, Civil Society, Inclusion International, and Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium and many states, and we will do well by making full use of these resources. Thank you very much.

>> GERARD QUINN: Thank you, Danlami. It's been wonderful to watch the UN CRPD Committee, not just recently but over the last two or three years, reinforce many of the conclusions under the CRPD by reference to the UN SDGs. That's entirely appropriate, and I think it enriches the quality of your own internal deliberations. I think you're quite right to point out that the CRPD has its own paradigm shift, but also the SDGs had a huge paradigm shift with respect to persons with disabilities and what we're watching now really are the two paradigm shifts coming together.

In conclusion, the Bridging the Gap has to do with bringing both instruments together but also linking both instruments to the small places where people live to make sure that change can happen from the ground up on evidence‑based and so forth. I think it's very, very important to grasp that this shift, that these new tools don't just aid the legitimacy of the process of change but they also aid the efficiency of the process of change. It's in governments' interest to use these tools and use them quite extensively.

Thank you, Danlami, for pointing out the Washington Group's approach and the CRPD Committee's response. It only remains for me to thank all of the speakers. I think it's been a very enriching afternoon, the UN Conference Services that are highly efficient, our international sign interpreters and captioners, thank you very much. I know it's a lot of work. As well as everybody that tuned in to listen, and hopefully learn and take some important messages away.

I was asked at the end of this to ask the panelists, at least, to turn on your video so that Victoria and her colleagues can take a snapshot picture of the event. So if you wouldn't mind doing that, and I will stop talking here. Thank you very much.

I think I'm beginning to recognize everybody's living rooms at this stage. Thank you.

(session completed at 10:36 a.m. CST)

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