

**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities**

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Dear Mr. Foxley,

I have the honor to address you in my capacity as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 26/20. Within my mandate, I am tasked to make concrete recommendations to States and other stakeholders to help them better promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities; including on how to contribute to the realization of internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, how to promote development that is inclusive of and accessible to them, and how to promote their role as both agents and beneficiaries of development.

In this connection, I would like to bring to your kind attention as Chairperson of the Committee on Development Effectiveness the importance of including persons with disabilities in the World Bank's Safeguard Policies, which aim at ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity. Persons with disabilities are often among the most affected by poverty, including in countries where the World Bank funds projects. As the World Bank moves towards a more inclusive model of sustainable development, it must ensure that a disability perspective is systematically integrated into all its operations.

I have been informed that the Committee on Development Effectiveness will meet tomorrow to discuss the second draft of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards. In this regard, I would strongly encourage the Committee to:

- Maintain the explicit references to disability and persons with disabilities that were included in the first draft of the Standards, and strengthen these with additional language stating that all World Bank's assessments of the specific impact of projects must consider persons with disabilities separately and explicitly, rather than as part of a broader category of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups;
- Incorporate persons with disabilities in the proposed definition of "inclusion" and clearly define the term "accessible", in line with the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This would ensure that the World Bank projects are free from barriers to participation that could prevent anyone, including persons with disabilities, from fully benefiting from them;

- Include the principle of universal access not only in Standard no. 4 on “Community Health and Safety”, but into all relevant standards to ensure the full and equal participation by all persons, including those with disabilities, in society.

I stand available to engage further with the Bank in this process and can be reached at [sr.disability@ohchr.org](mailto:sr.disability@ohchr.org) for any comments and views on my letter.

Your response will be made available in a report to be presented to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Catalina Devandas Aguilar  
Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities