

# Global Disability Summit Regional and National Consultations



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*“ There is an urgent need that must be addressed: we must make an effort to encourage the key players within the government to also attend the event. The GDS22 is the first global platform in the pandemic era that is expected to give opportunities to stakeholders to share their experiences and learn the lessons to strengthen their dedication to realising inclusive development programmes for persons with disabilities. ”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, March 2021*



# Contents

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<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>2. Reaching the farthest first and ensuring diversity</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>3. Taking stock of GDS18 Commitments:</b> .....	<b>14</b>
a. Regional and National Consultations .....	14
i. Regional experience.....	15
ii. Country specific experiences.....	16
<b>4. Monitoring GDS18 Commitments</b> .....	<b>18</b>
a. Eliminate Stigma and Discrimination.....	18
iii. Inclusive Education.....	20
iv. Routes to Economic Empowerment.....	21
v. Harnessing Technology and Innovation.....	23
vi. Data disaggregation .....	23
vii. Women and Girls with Disabilities.....	24
viii. Conflict and Humanitarian Contexts .....	25
<b>5. Emerging trends and issues from the consultations</b> .....	<b>25</b>
a. Living independently and being included in the community.....	25
b. Health .....	27
c. International cooperation and disability-inclusive development.....	28
d. Accountability mechanisms .....	29
<b>6. Looking ahead: GDS22</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>7. Recommendations</b> .....	<b>32</b>
a. Breathing life into the GDS18 Commitments.....	32
i. Women and Girls with Disabilities .....	32
ii. Full and meaningful participation.....	32
iii. Data Disaggregation .....	32
iv. International Cooperation and Disability-Inclusive Development.....	32
v. Inclusive Vaccination Process.....	33
vi. Living Independently and being Included in the Community.....	33
vii. GDS Related.....	33
b. Structure of GDS22: Ensuring no one is left offline.....	34
<b>8. Next steps: Upcoming national GDS consultation workshops</b> .....	<b>35</b>



## Executive Summary

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Persons with disabilities represent approximately one billion of the world's population, the majority of whom live in low-income and middle-income countries. Despite this, historically, persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (OPDs) have been excluded from decision-making processes and in the development of programmes that affect them.

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006, the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in decision-making processes has become a guiding principle for guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities. This principle reaffirms that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations must be at the forefront of every decision-making process and they must inform every agenda related to designing and implementing their rights.

In 2015, this principle was further reaffirmed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 'Leave no one behind' which acts as the central promise in the implementation of development programmes and specific references to persons with disabilities in the various goals and indicators. This is also seen from the inclusion of persons with disabilities in frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the active participation of women with disabilities in Beijing +20 discussions.

Therefore, the CRPD, the SDGs, and other related frameworks reinforce each other to ensure that development should be an incubation process, one that guarantees the direct and meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations as key partners in every plan related to them.

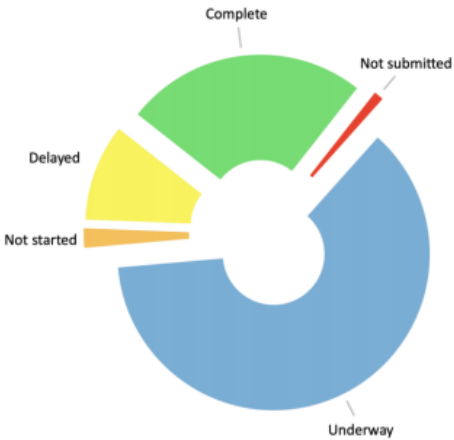
The Global Disability Summit (GDS) was conceived to reinforce the existing frameworks and provide a platform where persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, along with key stakeholders including governments, civil society, agencies of the United Nations (UN), and the private sector, can reflect on disability-inclusive development. The Summit was meant to be held every two years to take stock of what has been achieved, highlight existing gaps and seek commitments from these stakeholders towards accelerating the implementation of disability-inclusive development.

On 24 July 2018, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the International Disability Alliance (IDA), and the Government of Kenya hosted the first GDS

in London, the United Kingdom. The GDS18 was a historical moment for persons with disabilities and a significant step towards disability-inclusive development.

Through this platform, 171 national governments, multilateral agencies, donors, foundations, private sector companies, and civil society organisations made 968 individual commitments anchored on seven central themes of the GDS18 – ensuring dignity and respect for all, inclusive education, routes to economic empowerment, harnessing technology and innovation, as well as two cross-cutting themes (women and girls with disabilities, conflict and humanitarian contexts). After this monumental event, the focus shifted to implementation. The translation of the Commitments guided the government’s priorities and development plans into tangible targets.

The last three years have been a litmus test. Positive strides have been made towards the implementation of the GDS18 Commitments. Indeed, [GDS+2 Years Report](#) indicates that as of 2020, 25% of all GDS18 Commitments had been fully implemented while the majority (62%) of the remaining GDS18 Commitments are still underway and on track.



Those developments demonstrate the impact of GDS and its complementary aspect to both the CRPD and the Agenda 2030.

The GDS consultations were strategically linked with other workshops and training (such as on CRPD and SDGs reporting, the rights of women, youth and indigenous with disabilities, as well as other underrepresented groups, etc.) rather than singling them out as one-off focused events. The commitments from the GDS are being integrated as an additional tool among accountability mechanisms that OPDs can use. Recommendations have emerged from each of the consultations, in particular related to the GDS commitments made within countries. Through the consultations, OPDs identified thematic areas they would like to see prioritised including, education, employment and economic empowerment, health, citizenship and participation, overcoming stigma and discrimination, and disability and COVID-19.

As we look towards GDS22, we must reflect on the past, what has been achieved, what can be improved and lessons for the future.



The role of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in these different phases is critical. In the spirit of the GDS Charter for Change, persons with disabilities must be at the front and centre of the change.

**GDS Consultations - October 2020 to April 2021**

- 06 months
- 27 national & 1 regional consultations
- 26 countries covered
- 23 languages
- 840 participants
- 56% women
- 23% indigenous
- 38% underrepresented groups

Against this backdrop, the GDS Secretariat, IDA, representative organisations of persons with disabilities worldwide and partners ensure a robust consultation process capable of collecting information in different languages, across geographies and involving the most marginalised groups of persons with disabilities.

This report analyses issues highlighted and deliberated by and with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations at the regional and national consultations held between October 2020 and April 2021. It also aims to inform the priorities and set the agenda onwards and beyond the GDS22.

The consultations involved representatives from Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia. Consultations in Ecuador, Nicaragua, Uganda and Kenya took place twice and specifically involved underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities, including youth, women indigenous persons with disabilities, and people with deafblindness, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. Those were facilitated in English, French, Spanish, Bengali, Portuguese, Arabic, Amharic, Bahasa and Nepali, as well as in national Sign Languages.



The consultations indicate a positive impact of the GDS process. Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) also reported that, for the first time, governments are having a constructive dialogue on disability-inclusive development with persons with disabilities and planning together ahead of the GDS22. For those who could not follow the 2018 discussions, these consultations present an opportunity to learn and identify ways of engaging in future GDS. The report also documents proposed priorities for GDS22, including, but not limited to, access to communication and information, access to justice, accessible transportation system, active citizenship, and political participation, among others.

Despite these positive milestones, the implementation phase has faced several challenges. COVID-19 has adversely affected the gains made in the last two years, with governments and other stakeholders reallocating funds to manage the pandemic. The pandemic has also impacted the inclusion of persons with disabilities and enjoyment of other several socio-economic rights, including access to education, health care, employment, and exacerbated violence against women and girls with disabilities. Therefore, post COVID-19, recovery strategies must prioritise persons with disabilities.

Consultations carried out by IDA and its members between 2020 and 2021 per country, number of participants, involved partners and type of event.

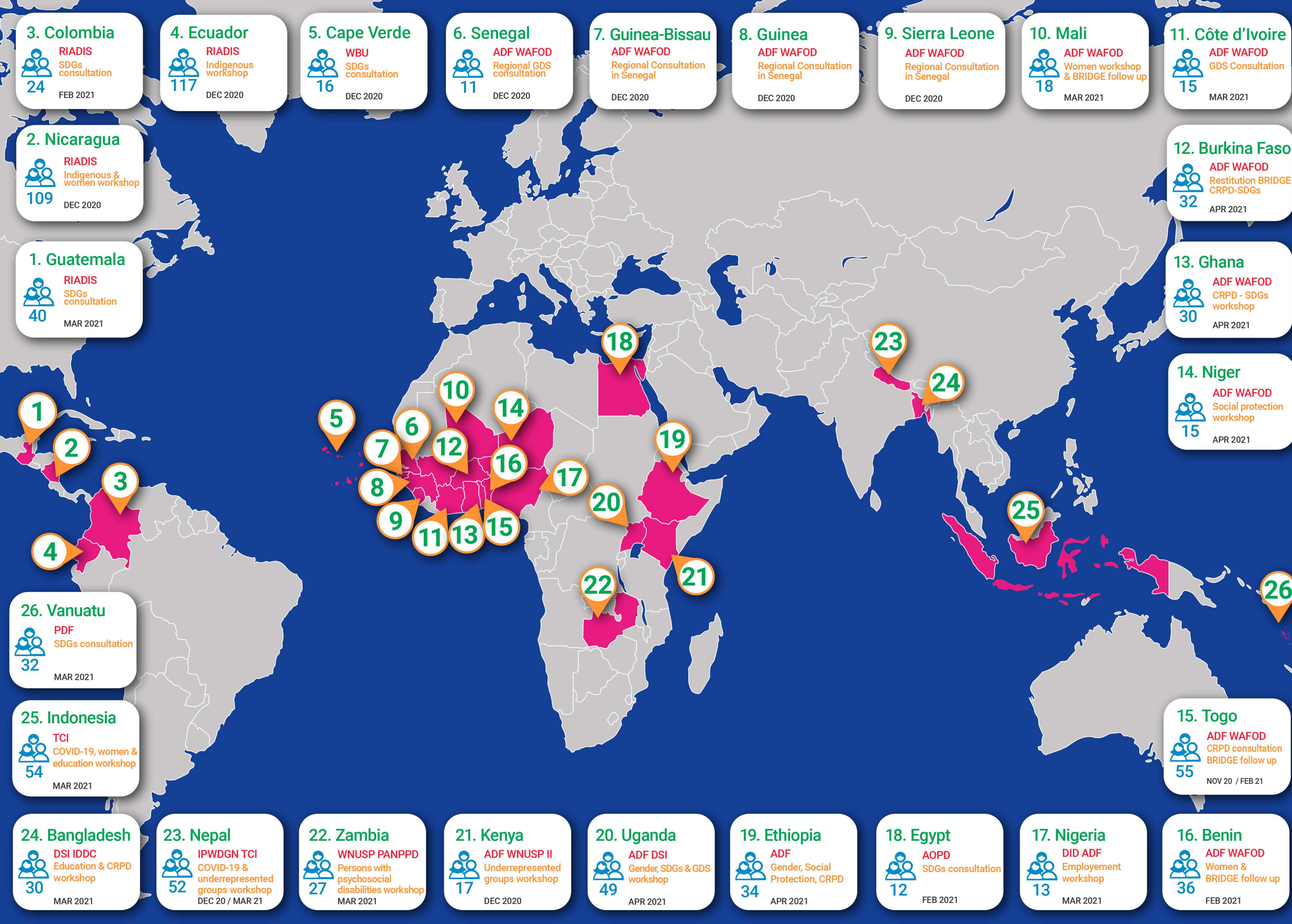
**26**  
countries

**28**  
events

**14**  
national sign  
languages

**9**  
spoken  
languages

**838**  
participants



# 1. Introduction

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The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is anchored on the principle of active and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in all decision processes. As such, the backbone of the Global Disability Summit (GDS) participatory character is the consultation process that engages persons with disabilities and their representative organisations from around the world before the main event.

The consultation process brought together governments, multilateral agencies, international organisations, representative organisations of persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders to dialogue about and commit towards concrete goals that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in global development. The Commitments include a timeframe for their completion and constitute the pillar of the GDS accountability mechanism.

The consultation process also promoted ownership of the GDS process among persons with disabilities and their representative organisations by considering the multidimensional challenges that have historically left out critical groups of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, particularly in the Global South.

Communities of persons with disabilities worldwide are encouraged to seize the GDS as an opportunity to shape development priorities and advance disability inclusion in their countries and globally. National and regional consultations are a crucial basis for elaborating the GDS agenda; hence it reflects the priorities, aspirations and concerns of persons with disabilities in different parts of the world, from the very grassroots.

In 2018, during the first GDS in London, an impressive nine hundred sixty-eight (968) individual commitments were made by 171 governments, representative organisations of persons with disabilities, international agencies and companies from the private sector, around seven central themes<sup>1</sup> of the Summit. A [Charter for Change](#) was elaborated and is at the heart of the GDS18, inspiring countries and organisations to deliver ambitious global and national commitments on disability inclusion.

The Commitments are currently hosted on [IDA's website](#). They will soon be available on a website dedicated to the GDS under development, along with updates on progress

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<sup>1</sup> The seven central themes were: Eliminate stigma and discrimination, Inclusive Education, Routes to Economic Empowerment, Harnessing Technology and Innovation, Data Disaggregation, Women and girls with disabilities, and Conflict and Humanitarian contexts,

made towards the commitments. IDA also compiled country-specific Commitments into fact sheets utilised during the consultations to guide persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in monitoring and holding governments accountable.

To date, over 300 governments, representative organisations of persons with disabilities, international agencies, civil society organisations and companies from the private sector have signed the charter for change, openly committing to working together and stepping up the ambition for disability inclusion.

## 2. Reaching the farthest first and ensuring diversity

*“ Within the communities or governing bodies of their indigenous peoples and nationalities, the participation of persons with disabilities is often not allowed, many of them are relegated and not taken into account; and even more so when it comes to underrepresented groups, such as or people with intellectual disabilities or deaf people who do not have an interpreter to support them with communication (it should be noted that there are no sign language interpreters who know Kichwa), they are simply not taken into account ”*

*-Consultation Ecuador, December 2020*

The consultations considered that persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. To ensure diversity, the selection of participants was based on the Bridge CRPD-SDGs quality criteria, which calls for gender balance and the participation of underrepresented groups,<sup>2</sup> including those living in rural areas. Organisers were also encouraged to invite representatives from governments and international NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), UN agencies and development agencies whose commitments and priorities should be established in line with persons with disabilities.

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<sup>2</sup> The International Disability Alliance understands the term “under-represented groups” to be those among persons with disabilities who enjoy less visibility in decision making processes. The disability movement, like other social movements, is not homogenous. There are some groups that have traditionally been less included in participatory processes, or harder to reach, or face higher barriers to participation such as: persons who are deafblind, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with autism or deaf people. It can also include those who may be less engaged in decision making such as women, children, older people and indigenous persons, as well as people from diverse faith, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual orientation or gender identity minorities. This understanding may differ in different countries, culture and contexts.

In countries, such as Ecuador, Nepal, and Indonesia, participants from indigenous groups with disabilities were recorded. In Uganda, Colombia, Kenya, Ecuador, Indonesia and Nepal, youth with disabilities were observed. Moreover, many people from remote and rural areas were welcome in Ecuador, Indonesia, and Nicaragua. In Kenya, Uganda, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ghana, and Colombia, many participants with intellectual disabilities were scored.

Also, in Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Senegal, numerous people with psychosocial disabilities participated. Finally, in Nepal, Uganda, Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Colombia and Cape Verde, a critical discussion of cross-disability groups brought a vital balance of gender and diversity among participants.

*“ There is a huge gap in understanding the issues, concerns and rights related to disability, indigenous, women and intersectionality at the national and local levels.”*

*-Consultation Nepal, December 2020*



## 3. Taking stock of GDS18 Commitments:

### a. Regional and National Consultations

Between October 2020 and April 2021, IDA, its members together with local and regional partners, organised and coordinated one regional and 27 national GDS consultations, covering twenty-six (26) countries in Africa, Asia, Latina America, Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific.<sup>3</sup> The consultations brought together more than 840 people; 56% were women, 23% were indigenous, and 38% were from the most underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities. The consultations were facilitated in nine national spoken languages and 14 national sign languages.

The sessions initially explored the history of the GDS process, and, through a rich interaction, participants reviewed the implementation of the 2018 Commitments and identified priorities for GDS22.

At the beginning of each consultation, central messages by the co-hosts of the GDS22 were presented. Through pre-recorded video, IDA's Executive Director stressed the importance of the national and regional consultations ahead of the GDS22, while the Norwegian Minister of International Development underscored the importance of GDS22 and the role of persons with disabilities in shaping the agenda for GDS22.



<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia,

## i. Regional experience

Regional consultations present an opportunity for diverse dialogue. On 9 December 2020, the West African GDS consultation, organised by the West African Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (WAFOD), the African Disability Forum (ADF) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) brought together representatives from 11 National Federations representing organisations of persons with disabilities from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The consultation considered language diversity to reach out to the leaders of these national federations strategically. Eight French, two English, and one Portuguese speaking representatives attended and participated in the consultation.

The representatives from the West African Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (WAFOD) reflected strategic issues affecting persons with disabilities within the region. They stressed the need for capacity building of organisations of persons with disabilities and stakeholders' staff to enhance their skills ahead of GDS22. Additional significant messages included a call to governments to ensure:

- Access to communication and information,
- Access to an inclusive and quality educational system,
- Access to justice, and recognition of the legal capacity,
- Accessible transportation system,
- COVID- 19 related measures and vaccination,
- Data collection,
- Empowerment of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations,
- Fight against violence against women and girls with disabilities,
- Inclusive budgeting, among others.



## ii. Country specific experiences

*“Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs (PMK) is ready to coordinate with all ministries and institutions as well as domestic and foreign organisations, so that the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities can be done properly. Collaboration from all sectors and stakeholders is important in this matter.”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, March 2021*

### Accelerating implementation

The national consultations created a platform for participants to deliberate on the implementation of the GDS18's Commitments, identifying country-specific priorities, various focus thematic for GDS22, and gaps that need to be filled to ensure full, effective, and accelerated implementation of present and future GDS Commitments. In Ghana, for instance, participants expressed concerns with the implementation process, noting that realisation of the Commitments was taking too long. The participants resolved to prioritise monitoring and collaboration with government agencies to ensure full, effective and accelerated implementation of the GDS18 Commitments.



Norway is hosting the next GDS in 2022, and I'm thrilled that DPOs are sharing their knowledge in national workshops that can contribute to the dialogue between national authorities, NGOs and DPOs towards an inclusive implementation of the SDGs in order to leave no one behind. Your inputs are key to achieving our ultimate goal ensuring that all people are included in the global social, economic and social development.

**DAG INGE ULSTEIN**  
Minister of International Development, Norwegian Ministry

## Constructive dialogue

Regarding constructive dialogue between persons with disabilities, their representative organisations and government agencies, the consultation offered a platform for government agencies to hold discussions on efforts made towards implementation of the GDS18 Commitments and the plans of GDS22. For instance, in Indonesia, government officials participated in a dialogue about the GDS for the first time. This national consultation provided a platform to take stock of the 2018 Commitments, encourage active participation during the GDS22, and enhance relationships with representative organisations of persons with disabilities.

## International and private actors

In Ethiopia, participants emphasised the need for the government to review discriminatory laws that continue to perpetuate stigma towards persons with disabilities, provide support to persons with disabilities to live independently and support advocacy efforts through funding. The participants further underscored international organisations' role in promoting inclusive development and called upon them to ensure women and children with disabilities in all their programs. The participants also recognised the role of the private sector in promoting inclusive services, particularly the financial institutions, and highlighted the need for banks to provide accessible services to persons with disabilities.

## Leaving no one behind

The consultations brought together very diverse persons with disabilities. In Kenya, for instance, a significant number of participants were persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

The deliberations culminated into a declaration focusing on a wide range of issues, including:

- Access to employment,
- Data disaggregation,
- Participation of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, including youth and children with disabilities,
- Review discriminatory legislative framework,
- Social protection.

In some countries, such as Colombia, Ecuador and Cape Verde, there were no Commitments from the GDS18. In these cases, the consultations used Commitments made to other states using their language, namely, Spanish and Portuguese.



## 4. Monitoring GDS18 Commitments

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The uniqueness of these six months of national consultations was the ability to assess the implementation of the GDS18 Commitments, identify country-specific priorities corresponding to the global issues relevant, and ensure that persons with disabilities were at the very front of inclusive development discussions.

During the consultations, persons with disabilities and their representative organisations evaluated the implementation process, identifying the milestones that had been achieved in the realisation of the Commitments and the areas that needed more collaboration and investments to ensure accelerated and full implementation.

### a. Eliminate Stigma and Discrimination

*“ Stigma and discrimination are ingrained vis-à-vis indigenous people with disabilities. We are seen as ignorant, dirty, beggars and, many times, we feel excluded from society. In our communities, there are no efforts that promote our rights in all areas of life. We are considered useless. ”*

*-Consultation Ecuador, December 2020*

Several years after the CRPD came into force, persons with disabilities are still stigmatised and discriminated against on the basis of disability. During the GDS18, several governments and non-governmental organisations committed to working with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to end stigma and discrimination. Despite these commitments, the consultations revealed stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities remain pervasive. This is attributed to:

- Lack of awareness on rights of persons with disabilities,
- Discriminatory laws, especially those that still use derogatory references to persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities such as 'mentally unfit', and
- Misinformation on persons with disabilities.

*“ The National Council for Persons with Disabilities should, with the Federation of Kenya Employers, raise awareness about tax rebates provided in the Persons with Disability Act, 2003, to avoid using terms such as 'person physically and mentally fit' during job advertisements, and establish an employment bureau that will act as a go-between job seekers and employers. ”*

*-Building back better the Nairobi Declaration, Consultation Kenya, December 2020*

Consultations also reported that the mass media mainly use derogatory language or practices, for instance, the negativity of television shows on children with disabilities as some portray persons with disabilities in a deprecating way, or by the total invisibility of persons with disabilities in the audio-visual media.

Consultations also revealed that several persons with disabilities are stigmatised and discriminated against due to their other identities. This discrimination includes those who identify as LGBTIQ+, indigenous, and women with disabilities. The discrimination has had an adverse effect on the mental health and well-being of these groups.

*“...due to discrimination against their identities (as a woman, LGBT, indigenous people, mainly related to those who identify themselves as homosexual, gay, bisexual, or transgender), persons with disabilities are suffering from depression and suicidal thoughts. This is also true for women with disabilities belonging to a particular tribe who ‘lost their honour because of their impairment’ due to the stigma and burden imposed by patriarchal culture.”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, December 2021*



### **iii. Inclusive Education**

The 2018 Commitments outlined various ways through which governments can guarantee an inclusive education for learners with disabilities. The key elements included allocation of resources for implementation, review of policy standards and regulations, partnerships to enhance the implementation process and capacity building of teachers to implement inclusive education programmes.

While implementing these elements is integral to inclusive education, feedback from the consultations indicates that several governments have not fully implemented these elements. Key concerns included inequalities in access to inclusive education by learners with disabilities primarily due to the rural-urban divide, lack of reasonable accommodation, lack of access to technology, denial of entry in schools, and lack of inclusive schools within the communities forcing parents to take their children to schools far away.

*“ In some cases, indigenous children with disabilities have been denied enrolment as the schools do not consider themselves in a position to teach children with disabilities. ”*

*-Consultation Ecuador, December 2021*

The impact of COVID-19 on access to education was also highlighted, with participants stressing the delays caused by national lockdowns and the exclusion of children with disabilities in distance/online learning programming.

#### **iv. Routes to Economic Empowerment**

*“ One of the greatest lessons to be learned from COVID-19 and its impact on people with disabilities was most certainly the vulnerability and weakness of social protection systems in developing countries. All countries will need to strengthen the social protection system and improve access to information for people with disabilities. ”*

*-Regional consultation, Senegal, December 2020*

Participants stressed that access to employment and adequate social protection systems are essential to empowerment and independent living. The consultations revealed that while efforts are being made to ensure access to inclusive employment and effective social protection systems, there are still several barriers to gainful employment and implementation of social protection.

*“ The government must adopt a non-discriminatory policy in the provision of support services in the public sector by ensuring that persons with disabilities, particularly people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, can access the appropriate accommodations in work and employment, on an equal basis with others, as outlined in the policy by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission. ”*

*-Consultation Kenya, December 2020*

Non-compliance with national employment law, lack of reasonable accommodation at the workplace and lack of implementation of affirmative action in employment, such as the quota system, were stressed as critical barriers to inclusive livelihoods of persons with disabilities.

Thus, participants called upon governments to prioritise and invest in employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, ensuring that reasonable accommodation is legally recognised, skills are enhanced through vocational training, access to employment opportunities are enhanced through placement in public service, as well as ensuring access to simplified financing to own a business, and that where affirmative action is recognised within the national law, it is fully implemented.

*“ Most banks do not give credit for businesses to people with disabilities since they do not have a formal job they do not have asset guarantees. ”*

*-Consultation Ecuador, December 2020*

*“ Make employers aware that when working on aspects of inclusion such as accessibility, tools for equalising productivity and organisational culture, it is important to stress that persons with disabilities also present the expected results. Furthermore, persons with disabilities may generate positive behaviour among work peers. ”*

*-Consultation Cabo Verde, March 2021*

Additionally, participants recommended that governments should implement effective social protection programmes and ensure that such systems are inclusive and responsive to the needs of underrepresented persons with disabilities.

*“ Ensure that social protection programs and other economic recovery programs are inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. This includes access to the current government affordable housing program (Boma Yangu). This program needs to be accessible to persons with disabilities, including people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. ”*

*-Consultation Kenya, December 2020*

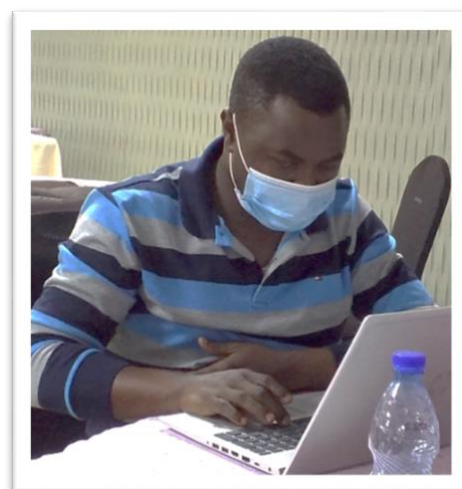
## v. Harnessing Technology and Innovation

The GDS18 reinforced the fundamental role technology plays in ensuring that persons with disabilities live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. Stakeholders committed to a broader range of actions to guarantee persons with disabilities access to technology and innovation, including developing and reviewing existing policy frameworks and investments to enable access to assistive technology.

Consultations revealed that efforts had been made towards a more inclusive policy framework. However, there is still a considerable gap in the provision of assistive technologies. This is further exacerbated by a lack of information in accessible formats.

*“ Often, we do not have access to information in accessible formats or modes of state support to assistive technologies and are unaware of technical and digital aids that may promote our participation and full inclusion and improve our quality of life. ”*

*-Consultation Ecuador, December 2021*



## vi. Data Disaggregation

Participants noted that previous commitments referred to data disaggregation and the use of the Washington Group Short Set of Questions. However, the persistent gap in data disaggregation was also observed and, therefore, a need to revisit this Commitment and ensure full implementation.

*“ Data availability should be the basis of our discussions in preparation for the next Global Disability Summit. ”*

*-Regional consultation, Senegal December 2020*

Data disaggregation are vital in ensuring inclusive development and implementation of national policies. Furthermore, it reflects the priority issues and needs of persons with disabilities in all their diversities. To this end, participants called on governments to avail comprehensive and accurate data on persons with disabilities, including through disability data tracking systems.



## vii. Women and Girls with Disabilities

The GDS18 adopted women and girls with disabilities as a cross-cutting theme, given the multiple and intersectional discrimination that women and girls with disabilities face. This approach would ensure that governments apply a gender lens in the implementation of programmes.

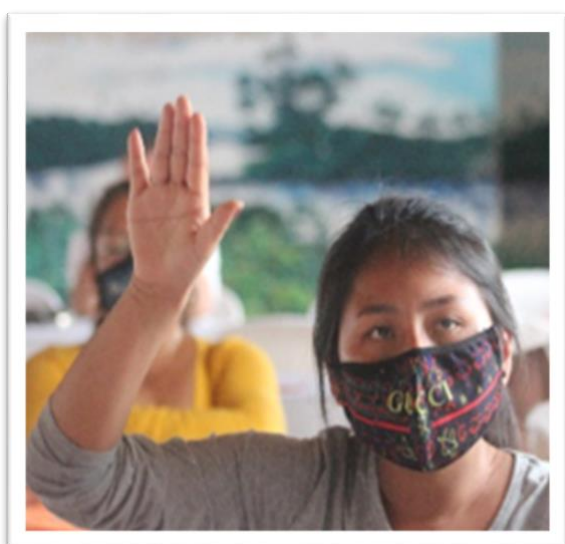
The consultations revealed that a holistic approach is still missing despite efforts to avail information to women with disabilities. Women and girls with disabilities continue to face multiple discrimination. This discrimination is compounded by increased gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, especially during the pandemic.

The consultations called for governments and other relevant stakeholders to take adequate measures to end violence against women and girls with disabilities and devise programs to protect women and girls with disabilities.

*“ ... Alone, I got harassed, touched inappropriately during the lockdown. ”*

*-Consultation Nepal, December 2020*

The consultations further stressed the need for cross-movement discussions, joint advocacy and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the women’s rights movement agenda.



*“ Women’s movement, in general, must be made aware that disability is also a part of women’s issues so that women in general and women with disability can join forces in terms of advocacy. ”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, March 2021*

### viii. Conflict and Humanitarian Contexts

Despite the 82 commitments made during the GDS18, only consultations from Nigeria, Uganda, and Ecuador highlighted concerns on conflict situations and humanitarian contexts. This powerfully demonstrates a lack of meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in planning, designing, and implementing programmes in humanitarian settings.

Humanitarian actors must make practical efforts to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (OPDs) in conflict and humanitarian contexts. OPDs must be financially and technically supported in their grassroots work related to conflict and humanitarian contexts.

## 5. Emerging trends and issues from the consultations

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Besides the seven key pillars of Commitments, the consultations also identified emerging trends and areas of attention that can inform the upcoming GDS22. They are detailed below:

### a. Living independently and being included in the community

The impact of COVID-19 has been felt in all aspects of life. While the health aspect has been underscored in several discussions, the chilling effect of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities and their ability to live independently within a community remains untold. The consultations revealed that some of the COVID-19 containment measures promoted segregation and impacted the inclusion of persons with disabilities within communities, especially those with psychosocial disabilities.

*“ The programme was launched in Biratnagar, and people were shifted to a home (ashram) indicated for persons with mental illnesses; tomorrow, anyone could be placed here. Two hundred people were placed in the same place, all from different country regions. ”*

*-Consultations Nepal, December 2020*

The consultations also revealed that people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities continue to be confined in institutions in several countries. The most significant concern was that while governments are improving access to services for persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, the investments are not CRPD compliant and mainly promote forced institutionalisation and segregation.

*“ We note with a lot of concern the current move on ‘Renovating existing mental health institutions and building ‘modern psychiatric institutions’ and retaliation to the need to eliminate segregated psychiatric institutions that reflect the historical legacy of social exclusion and disempowerment stigma and discrimination. ”*

*-Consultation, Kenya, December 2020*

*“ All relevant stakeholders and duty bearers should take steps to close psychiatric centres and support persons with disabilities in their communities in a way respectful of our human rights. ”*

*-Consultation, Guatemala, 2020*

The consultations called for de-institutionalisation and recommended the government to:

- Facilitate and fund support services including peer support, trauma-informed therapies and halfway homes at the community level to facilitate the transition from institutions to community-based living,
- Raise awareness on the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities to live independently and be included in their communities,
- For those persons with psychosocial disabilities who are currently institutionalised, invest in skill development and building their capacities to facilitate re-integration in the community,
- Raise awareness among families and communities when persons with psychosocial disabilities are being restored to the community.

## b. Health

Access to quality and affordable health care is a prerequisite to a productive society. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, several health services were adversely affected, and access remained a challenge to many- especially the marginalised and people from a lower economic status. For persons with disabilities, these challenges were exacerbated by the historical inequalities and failed health care systems that do not prioritise persons with disabilities.

*“ Participants in the consultations stated that due to the mobility restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, they could not leave their houses for fear of the virus. None of them has been consulted in designing or implementing the action plans and response to the COVID-19 emergency. Furthermore, there was a lack of accessible information on how to protect themselves from the virus. Their cases of infection were treated with ancestral medicine since they did not have access to medical services, treatments or medicines.*

*-Consultation Ecuador, December 2021*

During the consultations, participants outlined several challenges that persons with disabilities were going through during the pandemic, including lack of accurate and accessible information on COVID-19, the impacts of lockdown on mobility and support, and lack of meaningful engagement in the planning and execution of COVID-19 programmes and action plans.

To mitigate these challenges and ensure better health outcomes, participants strongly advocated for:

- Affordable and accessible health services,
- Adequate, trained, and inclusive health personnel in mental health, particularly during the COVID-19 period, and
- Targeted campaigns on COVID-19 accessible to persons with disabilities.

Further, with the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, participants called on governments to prioritise persons with disabilities and ensure accurate and comprehensive information on COVID -19 be made available and accessible to persons with disabilities.

## c. International cooperation and disability-inclusive development

*“ The support from allies for OPDs to exercise full and effective participation is critical. ”*

*-Consultation Kenya, December 2020*



*“ Coordinating Indonesian Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs is ready to coordinate with all ministries and institutions as well as domestic and foreign organisations so that the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities can be done properly. Collaboration from all sectors and stakeholders is important in this matter. ”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, March 2021*

The critical role of development assistance in implementing the 2018 GDS Commitments was stressed throughout the consultations. Participants noted that funding and capacity gaps are crucial barriers to full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the GDS18 Commitments.

To this end, several recommendations were made calling upon development partners to support national governments towards implementing the GDS Commitments through funding and offering technical support.

*“ The government of Nepal and some agencies, including UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organisations, and civil society organisations, are starting to include disability, indigenous peoples and women in their policies, plans and programmes. ”*

*-Consultation Nepal, March 2021*

Furthermore, the consultations underscored the need for development partners and international non-governmental organisations to involve persons with disabilities in designing, implementing, and monitoring programmes at the national and grassroots levels.

*“ Often, INGOs rely on OPDs to support them in implementing their activities, but they do not engage with us during the design or monitoring of the activities. ”*

*-Consultation Bangladesh, March 2021*

#### **d. Accountability mechanisms**

*“ There have been small efforts made to implement the Commitments. As representatives of OPDs, we will further focus on the monitoring and support for their implementation. ”*

*-Consultation Ghana, February 2021*

Participants noted that while it was important for countries to identify and prioritise various issues affecting persons with disabilities, the change would only be achieved through full and effective implementation of these Commitments.

Three years since the GDS18, most of these Commitments are yet to be implemented. Indeed, the [Global Disability Summit +2 Years Report](#) indicates that whereas there have been positive efforts to implement the Commitments fully, the implementation of 62% of the Commitments is still underway. Part of the challenge was reported to be weak follow-up and monitoring mechanisms at the national level.

*“ National monitoring mechanisms can ensure persons with disabilities as designated focal points for the CRPD implementation.”*

*-Consultation Kenya, December 2020*

Thus, some consultations made a call to establish a national framework to monitor the implementation of Commitments. This framework would monitor application and support national efforts to popularise past and future GDS Commitments.

Structurally, the framework would consider the role of representative organisations of persons with disabilities and NHRIs as articulated under Article 33 of the CRPD. The framework would also provide periodic reporting of the implementation of Commitments, including preparing alternative reports.

*“ NHRIs play a vital role in reinforcing the law and providing legal counselling and could be instrumental in the GDS monitoring.”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, March 2021*

## 6. Looking ahead: GDS22

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*“ We welcome the upcoming GDS22. The event is important to make disabilities common issues that can be resolved globally. We had experiences when MDGs did not involve disabilities, they failed indeed. Now with the SDGs, the global Commitment to disabilities has been increased. We hope that through GDS the global community will increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation to achieve the synergy between the members to support the implementation of joint policies and make sure that no one will be left behind in the future.”*

*-Consultation Indonesia, March 2021*



The GDS18 was anchored on seven major thematic areas. A summary of national consultations indicates that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations prefer the continuity of discussions informed by the 2018 thematic issues. However, consultations also proposed the consideration of additional themes, which include (by alphabetic order):

- Access to communication and information,
- Access to justice,
- Accessible transportation systems,
- Active citizenship and political participation,
- Economic, social and cultural rights,
- Inclusive budgeting,
- Independent living and inclusion in society, particularly with a focus on de-institutionalisation and support with community-based living,
- Legal capacity,
- Involvement of local communities and access to community-based services for the inclusion of children with disabilities,
- Right to land and property,
- Sport and cultural events.

*“ The GDS Summit is key to push forward persons with disabilities’ rights in international and national development agendas. ”*

*-Consultation Ghana, February 2021*



## 7. Recommendations

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### a. Breathing life into the GDS18 Commitments

The consultations revealed that there is still a considerable gap in the implementation of the GDS18 Commitments. To ensure effective and accelerated implementation of these Commitments, the following recommendations were proposed:

#### i. Women and Girls with Disabilities

- a. Sustain gender consultations for better preparation of women with disabilities and their representative organisations to improve their participation in future World Summits on Disability and other substantial continental and global events,
- b. To end violence against women and girls with disabilities, provide legal aid and referrals for victims of gender-based violence.

#### ii. Full and meaningful participation

- c. Take the necessary measures to ensure effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the upcoming Summit. Such efforts include periodic consultations between government and representative organisations of persons with disabilities to better prepare ahead of GDS22,
- d. Support consultations between representative organisations of persons with disabilities and government at the national level and the regional level with both political and human rights bodies,
- e. Guarantee participation of underrepresented groups in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Commitments.

#### iii. Data Disaggregation

- f. Data disaggregation by disability to ensure inclusive planning and development.

#### iv. International Cooperation and Disability-Inclusive Development

- g. Increase development assistance to support national efforts and advocacy for the full implementation of the GDS18 Commitments.

## **v. Inclusive Vaccination Process**

- h. Ensure COVID-19 vaccination is available and accessible for all, particularly for persons with disabilities, and that its administration is through informed consent.

## **vi. Living Independently and being Included in the Community**

- i. Facilitate and fund support services including peer support, trauma-informed therapies and “halfway homes” at the community level to facilitate the transition from institutions to community-based living,
- j. Raise awareness on the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities to live independently and be included in their communities,
- k. Invest in the skill development of people with psychosocial disabilities while they are institutionalised to facilitate re-integration in the community,
- l. Raise awareness among families and communities when persons with psychosocial disabilities are being restored to the community.

## **vii. GDS Related**

- m. Disseminate information related to GDS in accessible formats by both government and non-governmental organisations to address the lack of information and low awareness levels on GDS. This should be done in collaboration with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations,
- n. Ensure that Commitments and the implementation approach are CRPD compliant,
- o. Establish a national framework to monitor the implementation of the GDS Commitments. This framework should take into account the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.

## b. Structure of GDS22: Ensuring no one is left offline

The ongoing pandemic has posed a significant challenge to the organisation and execution of large gatherings. The GDS convenes several stakeholders, and the success and effectiveness of GDS22 depend on how creative and strategic the organisers are to leave no one behind. The GDS22 will be a virtual convening.

To ensure no one is left offline and that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are meaningfully and effectively involved in the process, the consultations should provide the following measures:

- Live transmission of all the meetings of the next Summit on social networks,
- National and regional consultations should be strengthened in preparations of the GDS22, paying particular attention to the inclusion of underrepresented groups and availability in different languages,
- Facilitating inter-organisational meetings at the local level for follow-up and the possibility of transmitting ideas during the Summits,
- Training of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations on video conferencing tools and the various platforms such Zoom, Google Meet.

## 8. Next steps: Upcoming national GDS consultation workshops

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The GDS Secretariat, IDA, their members, and global, regional and national partners are working to incorporate GDS Consultations around the world. In the coming months, subject to the COVID-19 situation in different countries, various online and face-to-face consultations will ensure that persons with disabilities and representative organisations have a platform to express their views and shape the planning and implementation onwards in the GDS22.

*“ Despite the challenging situation due to the pandemic, this was a fantastic opportunity for the indigenous women and youth with disabilities to share their experiences and learn from the experts in the related fields of indigenous peoples’ rights, women rights and disability rights. This consultation was essential to minimise the gap between the indigenous women and youth with disabilities at the national and local levels, mainly focusing on intersectionality and international mechanisms, instruments and forums, national and local acts, policies, plans and programmes. ”*

*-Consultation Nepal, December 2020.*

For further information, contact the [GDS Secretariat](#).

