



ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2025

co-hosted by



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INTRODUCTION

Why we created this toolkit

This advocacy toolkit has been designed to be a comprehensive resource for anyone who wants to support and amplify the mission of the Global Disability Summit (GDS) 2025. Our goal is to offer a tool to be used to raise awareness about GDS 2025, secure new commitments, renew existing ones, and drive increased funding for disability inclusion.

How to use this toolkit

Whether you're an Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD), an advocate, a policymaker, or a stakeholder in the disability rights movement, this provides guidance on how to promote the goals of the GDS 2025, push for new commitments, and ensure the follow-through on existing pledges. With this toolkit, interested parties can shape advocacy efforts at both national and regional levels, build support, and drive the conversation toward increasing investments in disability-inclusive initiatives.

Through this toolkit, we want to ensure that the Global Disability Summit is seen as not just a two-day event—but as a continuous cycle of advocacy. OPDs play a crucial role in driving this process, ensuring that disability rights remain a priority year-round. This toolkit reinforces the pivotal role of OPDs in engaging stakeholders, leading the advocacy charge, and holding governments accountable for the commitments they make.



ABOUT THE GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT

The Global Disability Summit (GDS) aims to galvanize global efforts for disability inclusion worldwide. It serves as a mechanism to unite diverse high-level stakeholders—including governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), multilateral agencies, the private sector, academia, and civil society organizations to discuss progress and challenges in this area.

Started in 2017, GDS focuses on improving the lives of persons with disabilities, particularly in the Global South. The summit brings together global, regional, and national stakeholders who share a vision for disability-inclusive development and humanitarian action. By bridging the gap between disability inclusion and development cooperation, GDS transcends a bi-annual event; it embodies a continuous cycle of advocacy and mobilization of the disability rights movement. This collaborative effort is reflected in the partnership between member states and OPDs, and through the co-hosting agreements, with IDA as the permanent co-host.

History

The first Global Disability Summit in **2018** was co-hosted by the UK's Department for International Development (now FCDO), the Government of Kenya, and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) in London, attracting around 1,200 delegates. The second summit in **2022**, was hosted virtually due to the ongoing global pandemic of COVID-19. Co-hosted by Norway and Ghana with IDA in Oslo, the Summit saw over 7,000 participants join remotely from across the globe, demonstrating a strong commitment to disability inclusion.

The first two Summits were gamechangers in the disability movement, leading to significant commitments and actions from governments, organizations, and civil society. These have resulted in concrete changes on the ground, such as the adoption of new policies, increased funding for disability-inclusive programs, and enhanced collaboration between stakeholders.

The third Global Disability Summit in 2025, co-hosted by Germany and Jordan alongside IDA, will take place on April 2-3 in Berlin. It aims to build on the achievements of previous summits and further advance global dialogue and action on disability inclusion.

What is different in GDS 2025?

GDS 2025 is poised to be a transformative force in advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities worldwide. Recognizing the groundbreaking force that the first Global Disability Summit in 2018 represented, and wanting to build on the progress achieved since then and through 2022, this Summit seeks to use its convening force to amplify and build efforts towards inclusive and sustainable development cooperation and humanitarian action.

GDS 2025 wants to create opportunities for collaboration among OPDs, governments, civil society, and the private sector. By facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues, the summit aims to foster a unified approach to advocacy for disability inclusion. To achieve this objective, in the lead-up to the Berlin Summit, we will focus on forging powerful partnerships through regional events, cultivating joint commitments, and sharing innovative practices that demonstrate what is possible. Our mission is unequivocal: to make disability inclusion an urgent global priority and ensure that every individual with a disability can fully engage and thrive in society. GDS 2025 is not merely a continuation; it is a bold leap forward in our collective quest for a more just and inclusive world.

To achieve this vision, we are focusing on:

- **"Nothing About Us Without Us":** GDS 2025 reaffirms the commitment to placing persons with disabilities at the heart of the summit. This principle will be translated into action by strengthening the role of OPDs in shaping the GDS themes and priorities through meaningful consultations and in urging for the submission of joint commitments. **This approach builds on the foundations laid by previous summits, ensuring that the priorities of persons with disabilities are recognized and addressed.**

- **Focus on implementation:** GDS 2025 is dedicated to showcasing actionable outcomes. The summit will highlight effective and innovative practices to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, employing actionable methods to share lived experiences. By emphasizing implementation, **GDS 2025 aims to turn commitments into real, transformative actions that positively impact our communities.**
- **Rights-based approach:** GDS 2025 will spotlight the ongoing discrimination against persons with disabilities as a human rights violation. The summit will advocate for commitments that uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), ensuring that these principles guide discussions and policies. This rights-focused approach **aims to solidify the advancements achieved in previous summits and promote the fulfilment of our rights.**
- **National ownership:** GDS 2025 emphasizes the importance of national responsibility in achieving disability inclusion. The summit is encouraging countries to submit commitments outlining national plans that effectively address financial and legislative challenges to disability inclusion. By promoting national ownership, **GDS 2025 seeks to ensure that disability rights are recognized as a political priority across all levels of government.**
- **Bridging disability and development:** GDS 2025 aims to integrate disability inclusion into broader development cooperation agendas. The summit will advocate for specific commitments that ensure our rights are embedded in development initiatives. This effort seeks to use the GDS momentum to generate strong political traction and urge donor countries uphold their obligations under Article 32 and ensure that all their development assistance is disability inclusive.
- **Addressing funding gaps:** GDS 2025 will call attention to the urgent need for dedicated resources for disability inclusion. The summit will explore innovative financial mechanisms, such as a Global Disability Fund, to support effective advocacy and action.

This focus on funding aims to ensure that adequate resources are available to make sustainable and impactful progress in disability inclusion.

- **Focus on data and evidence:** GDS 2025 will prioritize the collection of disaggregated data to inform policy and practice. The summit aims to utilize tools like the Global Disability Inclusion Report to highlight the realities faced by persons with disabilities, ensuring that evidence drives advocacy efforts. **This emphasis on data seeks to urge stakeholders to make informed decisions that address our needs effectively.**

You can build your advocacy messages based on our focus areas. We have also added messages for advocacy and lobbying in the [Annex](#) of this toolkit.

Regional Pre Summits

Regional Pre-Summits are organized to entrench the GDS mechanism at a regional level through channels such as the Arab League, the African Union, and the European Union. These events provide an opportunity to tailor the GDS themes and objectives to the specific realities of each region, facilitate the submission of relevant commitments, and foster valuable synergies and collaborations.

The African Regional Pre-Summit took place on 5 September in Nairobi, while the Regional Pre-Summit for the Arab Region is scheduled for 13 and 14 November in Amman, followed by the Regional Disability Summit for Europe on 6 December in Berlin and the Regional Pre-Summit for Latin America on 11 and 12 December in Rio de Janeiro.

The Regional Summit contribute uniquely to the efforts undertaken by the co-hosts, through regionally – specific call to actions.

You can read more about the Regional Summits [here](#).

Civil Society Forum

The Civil Society Forum is organized to give space to the disability community to unify their voice, share experience and create partnerships ahead of the Summit. It leverages the occurrence of the Global Disability Summit to amplify the voice and participation of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, and to highlight current issues relevant to the global disability movement. The next Civil Society Forum will be held on 1 April 2025 in Berlin, as a precursor to the GDS 2025.

The Civil Society Forum is organized by the Civil Society Reference Group (CSRG). The aim of the Civil Society Reference Group is to ensure the meaningful participation of OPDs and civil society, in all their diversity, in the build-up to the Summit, the GDS itself and its follow-up. The CSRG's membership comprises representatives of civil society from the global south and the global north.

GDS commitments mechanism

The GDS commitments mechanism is central to driving real change through the Global Disability Summit. It is a platform for governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and OPDs to make formal, actionable commitments toward advancing disability inclusion. These commitments, whether financial, policy-driven, or programmatic, are not symbolic gestures—they are tangible actions driven by the goal to ensure full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Why do we need Commitments?

Disability inclusion is still not enough of a priority in most countries of the world. It is time for change—it is time to recognize that disability inclusion is not a matter of charity act, but a fundamental human right!

The first two Summits have shown the potential of the commitments in advancing disability-inclusive development. GDS 2025 aims to take the commitments mechanism further by increasing the significance of commitments and the monitoring of their progress.

These commitments are the major instrument to translate legal obligations and political will into concrete action. The enhanced focus on commitments wants to ensure that stakeholders are held accountable and that progress towards disability inclusion is measurable and impactful. By fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement, GDS 2025 strives to create lasting change and improve the lives of persons with disabilities worldwide.

In an effort to gather more substantial commitments, the GDS 2025 co-hosts have developed a [Guidance Note for commitment submission \(PDF, EN\)](#), outlining key aspects of what a commitment needs to look like to be accepted, and will screen the submission of commitments before they are “accepted” as official GDS commitments. For 2025, we have a new platform for commitments submission, which will enable stakeholders to interact with one another, understand what different partners are working on, and look for partners to submit joint commitments.

Click here to go to the commitments portal: <https://gds.idata.tools/home>
[Link to FAQs on making commitments](#)
[Link to the Guidance Note in Spanish](#)

ADVOCACY GOALS FOR GDS 2025

For GDS 2025, we aim to:

- **Increase investments in disability inclusion:** Advocate for increased financial resources from governments and the private sector to support initiatives that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Emphasize the economic and social benefits of investing in accessibility, education, employment, and health services for individuals with disabilities.

- **Secure commitments from governments and multilateral agencies:** Encourage governments to make concrete, actionable commitments. Highlight the importance of aligning national policies with international obligations and ensuring that disability rights are prioritized in development agendas.
- **Enhance the capacity of OPDs:** Strengthen the capacity of OPDs and other representative groups to effectively advocate for their rights. Provide resources, training, and support to empower these organizations to engage in meaningful dialogue with stakeholders and influence policy decisions.
- **Engage the private sector:** Foster partnerships with businesses to promote disability inclusion in the workplace and community. Advocate for commitments that enhance accessibility, equal opportunities, and support for employees with disabilities, thereby creating a more inclusive economy.
- **Promote inclusive development practices:** Advocate for the integration of disability inclusion in all development initiatives, ensuring that humanitarian and development actions consider the needs and rights of persons with disabilities. Emphasize the importance of a twin-track approach that combines mainstreaming with targeted interventions.
- **Strengthen data collection and evidence-based advocacy:** Promote the need for disaggregated data on disability to inform policy and advocacy efforts. Encourage stakeholders to use data-driven approaches to identify gaps, assess impact, and enhance the effectiveness of interventions for persons with disabilities.



HOW CAN GOVERNMENTS ENGAGE WITH THE GDS?

1. **National ownership:** It is imperative for governments to take ownership of disability inclusion efforts, ensuring that policies reflect the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.
2. **Concrete commitments:** GDS 2025 provides an opportunity for governments to make meaningful commitments that translate into actionable policies and funding for disability inclusion.
3. **Accountability and transparency:** Establish mechanisms to track and report on progress related to commitments made at GDS, ensuring accountability to the disability community.
4. **Strengthening partnerships:** Collaborate with OPDs and civil society organizations to create inclusive policies that are informed by the experiences of persons with disabilities.

KEY MESSAGES TO USE WHEN ENGAGING GOVERNMENTS IN THE GDS AND PROMOTING COMMITMENTS

- **Disability inclusion is a Human Rights imperative:** Governments have a legal and moral obligation to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Disability inclusion is not an option but a fundamental right that must be integrated into national policies and international cooperation.
- **Strengthening national ownership:** Sustainable change begins with national ownership. Governments must make disability inclusion a political priority by embedding it across all sectors—education, employment, health, and more. GDS 2025 provides a platform for governments to showcase leadership through concrete commitments.

- **Disability inclusion is a Human Rights imperative:** Governments have a legal and moral obligation to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Disability inclusion is not an option but a fundamental right that must be integrated into national policies and international cooperation.
- **Strengthening national ownership:** Sustainable change begins with national ownership. Governments must make disability inclusion a political priority by embedding it across all sectors—education, employment, health, and more. GDS 2025 provides a platform for governments to showcase leadership through concrete commitments.
- **Involving OPDs at every step of policymaking:** OPDs are not just stakeholders—they are rights-holders whose participation is essential for inclusive, just, and effective policymaking. OPDs must be at the heart of policy design, monitoring, and implementation, by offering expertise that is crucial for creating inclusive and effective policies. By involving OPDs, we ensure that policies are not only compliant with international frameworks like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), but are also more sustainable and practical in addressing real-world barriers and challenges. Active involvement of OPDs fosters accountability, transparency, and a rights-based approach, ultimately driving more equitable outcomes for all.
- **Turning commitments into action:** The commitments made at GDS are not symbolic; they must be actionable pledges that reflect and address gaps, and that require follow-through. Governments must ensure that commitments made in previous GDS cycles are implemented, tracked, and strengthened to deliver real impact.

- **Investing in disability-inclusive development:** Inclusive development benefits everyone. Governments must invest in programs that promote disability inclusion and ensure that national development strategies, as well as international cooperation efforts, leave no one behind. GDS 2025 will be an opportunity to highlight innovative solutions and scale up investments.
- **Cross-sectoral collaboration for impact:** Disability inclusion cannot be achieved by a single actor alone. Governments must foster meaningful partnerships with OPDs, civil society, the private sector, and international agencies to address barriers and promote inclusive policies. GDS 2025 offers a platform to build these alliances and enhance collaboration.
- **Accountability and transparency:** Governments must ensure that disability-inclusive policies are backed by financial resources and accountability mechanisms. GDS 2025 will focus on enhancing the monitoring of commitments, allowing governments to demonstrate transparency and results in disability inclusion efforts.
- **Global leadership in disability inclusion:** Governments can use GDS 2025 to take a leading role on the global stage by committing to bold, ambitious goals for disability rights. By participating in the GDS, governments can contribute to a global movement advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and influence international development agendas.



KEY MESSAGES TO USE WHEN ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE GDS AND PROMOTING COMMITMENTS

WHY SHOULD BUSINESSES FOCUS ON INCLUSION?

- **Economic loss:** Excluding persons with disabilities from the workforce results in significant economic losses. The World Bank estimates that failing to include Persons with Disabilities can cost economies up to \$1 trillion annually in lost productivity. This is a crucial consideration for businesses aiming for sustainable growth. By engaging with GDS 2025, businesses can address these losses and seize the opportunity to implement inclusive practices that enhance their workforce.
- **Diverse talent pool:** By not hiring persons with disabilities, businesses miss out on a diverse talent pool. Persons with disabilities bring unique perspectives, problem-solving skills, and creativity, which can drive innovation and improve business outcomes.
- **Understanding the disability market:** Participation in conversations surrounding GDS provides insights into the substantial and growing disability market. This knowledge helps businesses better serve this demographic, improving customer satisfaction and ultimately boosting sales.
- **Workplace culture:** Fostering an inclusive environment benefits all employees, creating a culture of respect and collaboration that enhances team dynamics and productivity. Inclusive workplaces tend to have higher employee satisfaction and retention rates. By valuing diversity, companies can create a more engaged workforce, reducing turnover costs.
- **Long-term value creation:** Engaging with GDS is an opportunity to create tangible and lasting change through commitments. Businesses that invest in disability inclusion position themselves for long-term success, adapt to changing demographics, and drive sustainable growth.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

As we approach the Global Disability Summit 2025, now is the time to take action and ensure that your voice and the voice of your community, and your country, is heard. The Summit is a powerful opportunity to drive meaningful change for persons with disabilities, and your ministry's involvement is crucial to this process. By participating, you can contribute to shaping national commitments that align with global standards, helping to advance disability rights and inclusion both locally and internationally.

Below are a few key steps to help you engage with the GDS, ensuring that your country is fully represented and actively driving the disability inclusion agenda forward.

1. Identify key ministries: Determine which ministries in your country are involved, or should be involved, in the Global Disability Summit. If you're unsure who is responsible, reach out to the ministry handling disability affairs, the CRPD, the SDGs, or international cooperation.

2. Reach out for support: If needed, contact the GDS secretariat for assistance in locating the appropriate ministry or officials within your government. You can reach us at summit@ida-secretariat.org

3. Request consultation: Once you've identified the relevant officials or ministers, promptly request a meeting. Use the provided letter template (see Annex) to present your recommendations and priorities for the commitments you want to see from your government. More details can be found in our document for [Guidance on Formulating Commitments \(English, pdf\)](#).

4. Collaborate with other groups: Connect with other advocacy groups, including those representing different disabilities, women, children, etc., to join forces ahead of the Summits. Presenting a unified strategy during your meetings can be highly impactful. Ensure to align on a shared approach before engaging with your government

5. **Engage with parliamentarians:** Contact members of your national parliament who have an interest in disability rights and international cooperation. Their involvement could help influence your government to engage in the Summits and make strong commitments.

6. **Reference existing obligations and commitments:** Refer to your country's obligations under the UN CRPD and SDGs, and how participating in the Summits helps fulfil these commitments effectively. You can track the existing commitments made by your country on our [commitments portal](#).

7. **Stay updated:** Stay informed about the latest developments by visiting the [GDS website](#) and [subscribing to our monthly newsletter](#).

Call to action

The Global Disability Summit isn't just a two-day event—it's a global movement for lasting change. Get involved by joining pre-summit events, webinars, and regional dialogues. Share your ideas, connect with others, and help shape the future of disability inclusion.

Here is how you can engage with the GDS - before, during, and long after the summit

1. **Commit to disability inclusion:** Urge stakeholders to make or renew their commitments. OPDs are highly encouraged to submit individual or joint pledges with government and/or private stakeholders.

2. **Join our Advocacy 2.0 efforts:** Be a part of the conversation and share your views with the world through our communication channels. Write to summit@ida-secretariat.org to register your interest.

What to do if you want to host an event featuring the GDS team or talking about the GDS:

1. Use this toolkit as your guidance note for messaging and branding of the event.
2. If you want to use the trademarked GDS logo, or would like a member of the GDS Secretariat to help you with the shaping of your event, reach out to summit@ida-secretariat.org
3. Ask us in case you would like us to speak at your event or provide you with content and material

RESOURCES

Social Media Toolkit

We will soon be launching a social media toolkit with ready to use posters and templates. All resources will be added to [this link](#).

Handles to tag:

LinkedIn:

[Global Disability Summit](#)

[International Disability Alliance](#)

[German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation \(BMZ\)](#)

[Higher Council of Persons with Disabilities \(HCD\), Jordan](#)

X (Twitter):

GDS: @GDS_Disability

IDA: @IDA_CRPD_Forum

BMZ (Germany): @BMZ_Bund

GIZ (Germany) @GP_Inclusion

Reference Documents

[UN CRPD](#)

[GDS 2022 Progress Report on Commitments](#)

[GDS 2018 +2 Year Progress Report on Commitments](#)

[GDS 2018 Summary Report](#)

[Global Disability Summit 2018 Charter for Change](#)

PPT Templates

[GDS 2025 Style Guide](#)

Contact

For any feedback, questions, or accessibility concerns, please reach out to us at summit@ida-secretariat.org

ANNEX

Template letter for government stakeholders

Subject: Invitation for Your Ministry's Involvement in the Global Disability Summit 2025

Dear Ministers,

I am writing to request your ministry's active participation in the upcoming Global Disability Summit (GDS), which will be held on 2-3 April 2025 in Berlin. This summit presents a critical opportunity for our country to demonstrate its commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and promoting disability inclusion in both national policies and international cooperation.

The first Global Disability Summit in 2018 marked a turning point for disability inclusion, generating over 968 commitments from governments and stakeholders. The 2022 Summit expanded global participation, with over 7,000 attendees. Together, these events have laid a strong foundation for global action on disability rights.

The Global Disability Summit 2025, co-hosted by the Governments of Germany, Jordan, and the International Disability Alliance (IDA), aims to build on this momentum. It is designed to accelerate the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our country's involvement in GDS 2025 is essential to showcase leadership in disability inclusion and demonstrate that we are committed to building an inclusive society where no one is left behind. Your ministry plays a key role in ensuring that disability inclusion is integrated across policies and programs at both the national and international levels.

Ahead of the GDS, there will be several regional consultations and events aimed at gathering commitments and fostering international cooperation, ensuring that disability inclusion remains a priority for governments worldwide. We would like to request a meeting to discuss how your ministry can be involved in these critical discussions and ensure that your commitments align with the aspirations and priorities of persons with disabilities.

We believe that with your leadership, our country can make a meaningful contribution to the Global Disability Summit and be part of the global effort to drive forward disability-inclusive development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Key messages for OPDs to lobby for GDS 2025

How can you advocate with stakeholders for the GDS? Use these messages based on our focus areas to amplify our mission:

- **Emphasizing "Nothing About Us Without Us":** It is essential that persons with disabilities are central to all discussions and decisions at GDS 2025. We demand that our priorities shape commitments and policies, ensuring our voices are not only heard but also acted upon. GDS 2025 aims to strengthen OPDs' involvement in consultations, ensuring our views are front and center during the summit.
- **Call for focus on implementation:** We urge decision-makers to showcase both successful practices and the harsh realities faced by persons with disabilities. It is critical that commitments made at GDS translate into actionable policies that address discrimination and uphold our human rights. GDS 2025 will present inspiring best practices and real-life challenges through creative methods to foster understanding and accountability.
- **Advocacy for rights-based policies:** Discrimination against persons with disabilities is a violation of our human rights. We call on governments to prioritize the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in their policies, making implementation a non-negotiable obligation rather than a voluntary act. GDS 2025 aims to reaffirm the binding nature of the UN CRPD, pushing for concrete commitments that ensure our rights are respected and fulfilled.
- **Demanding national ownership:** We insist that governments take full responsibility for disability inclusion at all political levels. This means allocating necessary resources and ensuring that Organizations of Persons with Disabilities are included in all decision-making processes that affect our lives. GDS 2025 will emphasize national ownership and the need for comprehensive commitments from states to prioritize disability rights in their policies.

- **Integrating disability into development:** We advocate for a clear commitment to disability-inclusive development in all global agendas. Disability perspectives must be mainstreamed into development cooperation, ensuring that our needs are addressed in every initiative. GDS 2025 seeks to bridge the gap between disability inclusion and development cooperation, promoting specific commitments that integrate our rights into all development strategies.
- **Highlighting the need for funding:** We call attention to the critical funding gaps for disability inclusion. It is essential that governments and organizations commit to increasing financial resources dedicated to our rights and support mechanisms like a Global Disability Fund to close these gaps. GDS 2025 will advocate for new financial pledges and innovative funding mechanisms to ensure adequate resources for disability inclusion.
- **Demanding data for change:** Accurate, disaggregated data is vital for informed advocacy. We urge stakeholders to invest in data collection that highlights the realities of persons with disabilities, allowing us to craft effective, evidence-based policies that meet our needs. GDS 2025 will support initiatives like the Global Disability Inclusion Report to provide crucial data that informs policy and practice.
- **Building collaborative advocacy:** We believe in the power of collective action. It is crucial for OPDs to partner with governments, civil society, and the private sector to advocate for systemic change that benefits all persons with disabilities. Together, we can create a strong, unified front for our rights. GDS 2025 aims to facilitate multi-stakeholder collaborations that enhance our advocacy efforts and drive meaningful and lasting change in disability inclusion.

GDS 2025 ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Prepared by the GDS Secretariat



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