



# ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2025

co-hosted by



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# INTRODUCTION

**International Sign video:** [https://youtu.be/a\\_0VyMX9wgo](https://youtu.be/a_0VyMX9wgo)

## **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), advocate, policymaker, or stakeholder, this toolkit offers guidance on promoting GDS 2025, pushing for new commitments, and ensuring follow-through on existing pledges. It supports advocacy efforts at both national and regional levels, building support and driving conversations around increased investments in disability-inclusive initiatives.

Through this toolkit, we want to ensure that GDS is seen as not just a two-day event but a continuous advocacy cycle, with OPDs playing a central role in engaging stakeholders and holding governments accountable for their commitments.



# ABOUT THE GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT

**International Sign video:** <https://youtu.be/cVt0zaZs0pg>

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.

## **What is different in GDS 2025?**

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.

# ADVOCACY GOALS FOR GDS 2025

**International Sign video:** <https://youtu.be/2Xj86cJDEzg>

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.





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

**International Sign video:** <https://youtu.be/2yGRjdVdUVM>

- **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?

**International Sign video:** <https://youtu.be/muwrQfKVXB8>

- **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.
- **Enhanced reputation:** Companies that prioritize inclusion often enjoy a better reputation. This commitment can enhance brand loyalty among consumers who value corporate social responsibility, ultimately benefiting the bottom line.
- **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

**International Sign video:** <https://youtu.be/lj1l-on8tGg>

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.

- **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.
- **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](mailto:summit@ida-secretariat.org)
- **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 [Guidance Note for commitment submission \(PDF, EN\)](#).
- **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.
- **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.

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

### 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](mailto: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

**International Sign video:** <https://youtu.be/4rBGdDDIdaU>

This is your one-stop-shop to communicate all things GDS! Through [this link](#), you have access to our style guide, social media templates, background documents, branding material, letterhead and PPT deck.

## **Contact**

For any feedback, questions, or accessibility concerns, please reach out to us at [summit@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:summit@ida-secretariat.org)

# GDS 2025 ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Prepared by the GDS Secretariat



**Global Disability Summit Secretariat**  
42 Chemin du Pommier, Geneva  
Switzerland

[summit@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:summit@ida-secretariat.org)