



# PRESS KIT

FOR GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2025

# ABOUT THE GDS

The Global Disability Summit (GDS) 2025 is the leading global platform driving action for disability inclusion. It brings together high-level stakeholders—including governments, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), multilateral agencies, the private sector, academia, and civil society—to assess progress and tackle challenges in disability rights and inclusion.

Since its inception in 2017, GDS has been a catalyst for global change, bridging the gap between disability inclusion and development cooperation. More than just a conference, it is a continuous cycle of advocacy and mobilization.

The first two Summits, in 2018 and 2022, led to concrete commitments from governments and organizations, resulting in policy shifts, increased funding, and strengthened collaboration.

The third Global Disability Summit, co-hosted by the governments of Germany and Jordan alongside the International Disability Alliance (IDA), will take place on April 2-3, 2025, in Berlin. Building on past achievements, it will amplify efforts toward inclusive and sustainable development cooperation and humanitarian action. With disability rights still overlooked in many global policies, GDS 2025 will push for stronger commitments, ensuring that disability inclusion becomes a global priority rather than an afterthought. You can read more about the themes and key messages for this year's Summit in our [advocacy toolkit](#).



# WHY COVER THE GDS?

GDS 2025 is a milestone moment for disability inclusion, setting the agenda for tangible commitments and systemic change. As the world's largest global gathering on disability rights, it provides a rare opportunity to witness high-level decision-making, track progress on past commitments, and report on the future of disability-inclusive policies worldwide.

With the world striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), disability inclusion remains a crucial yet often overlooked area. GDS 2025 aims to shift this by fostering high-level policy discussions, securing financial commitments, and strengthening partnerships to raise the profile of disability in the highest echelons of governments across the world. The Summit will also track progress made since the first two Summits, ensuring that commitments translate into real-world impact. More than 3,000 participants are expected to attend the Summit, including heads of state, CEOs, global activists, donors, and OPDs.

For journalists, GDS 2025 is a rare opportunity to cover news and current developments in disability rights, from high-profile policy shifts to new global commitments. The Summit provides access to world leaders, activists, and experts who are shaping the future of inclusive development. A dedicated media room and interview corner will facilitate news bytes, while a live press conference on Day 1 will highlight major announcements. Beyond policy, GDS 2025 offers a rich narrative of human impact—stories of individuals and communities whose lives have been transformed through disability-inclusive policies and initiatives, of leadership of persons with disabilities to foster change that not just impact their own lives but of those around them. These personal accounts, combined with expert insights, will provide compelling content for news features, documentaries, and in-depth reports.

Through access to high-profile speakers, a wide range of far-reaching policy announcements, and compelling human stories, GDS 2025 presents a unique and timely opportunity for media coverage on a global issue that affects over 1 billion people worldwide.

# SPEAKER SNAPSHOT

GDS 2025 will bring together influential leaders, advocates, and experts driving progress in disability inclusion. Here are some of the key speakers who will be sharing their insights at the Summit.

- His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- HE Olaf Scholz, Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
- HE Amina J Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Dr. Nawaf Kabbara, President of the International Disability Alliance
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Ms Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany
- Rt. Hon. Sir Stephen Timms, Minister for Social Security & Disability, UK
- Mr. Åsmund Grøver Aukrust, Minister of International Development of Norway
- His Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al Hussein
- HE Azmi Mahafzah, Minister of Education, Jordan
- HE Wafa Bani Mustafa, Minister of Social Development, Jordan
- Mr Luc Triangle, Secretary-General of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
- Ms Celeste Drake, Deputy Director-General of International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Mr Omar Abdi, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
- Mr Jagan Chapagain, CEO and Secretary General, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Mr Andrew Parsons, The President of the International Paralympic Committee

For the detailed and most up-to-date list of speakers, please visit the [program page](#) on our website.

# PROGRAM OUTLINE

## Day 1 (2 April 2025)

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Press Conference

12:15 PM – 2.15 | Official Opening Ceremony

2:45 PM – 3:45 PM | Shaping Inclusive Labour Markets and Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities Worldwide

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM |

- Launch of the Resilient and Inclusive Cities Hub (RICH): Advancing Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Urban Development
- Health for All: Transforming Health Systems and Ensuring Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities

5:45 PM – 6:45 PM |

- Building Future-Ready, Inclusive Cities – New Challenges & Local Solutions
- From Gradual Actions to Systems Change: How to Transform Education Systems to be Inclusive and Accessible to All

## Day 2 (3 April 2025)

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM | No Equity Without Investment: The Urgent Need for Disability-Inclusive Financing

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM | Leading the Way: Featuring Commitments for Disability Inclusion in Development Cooperation

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM |

- From Risk Reduction to Recovery: Disability-Inclusive Practices for Disasters and Conflicts
- Building Connections, Bridging the Digital Divide: An Inclusive and Accessible Digital Future for All Persons with Disabilities

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM |

- Votes and Voice: Participation and Representation in Public Life and Decision-Making
- The Road to Inclusive Climate Action: From Berlin to Belém and Beyond

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Unlocking Maximum Available Resources: Inclusive and Innovative Financing to Advance Disability Rights

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM | Finale

8:00 PM onwards | GDS inclusive Club Night ([Brave New World](#))

Click [here](#) for the most up-to-date version and the detailed program agenda.

# CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Before the Global Disability Summit begins, the Civil Society Forum (CSF) sets the stage for a day of dialogue and advocacy. The CSF is a dedicated space for the disability community to come together ahead of the Global Disability Summit 2025. Taking place on 1 April 2025, just one day before the Summit, the Forum will bring together Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), activists, and allies to unify their voices, share experiences, and strengthen partnerships. Leveraging the momentum of the GDS, the Forum will amplify the participation of OPDs and highlight pressing issues shaping the global disability movement.

It is also a key opportunity for journalists to hear directly from persons with disabilities and their representative organizations—ensuring authentic voices and lived experiences are at the forefront of media coverage. Given the current global landscape, this is a crucial moment to highlight the perspectives and priorities of the disability community.

The day will begin with an Opening Ceremony (10:00 – 10:30 AM), setting the stage for a full day of discussions and collaboration.

Throughout the day, four thematic sessions will focus on key issues shaping the global disability movement:

- Inclusive Humanitarian Action (10:30 – 11:45 AM)
- Youth and Children with Disabilities (12:00 – 1:15 PM)
- The Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities (2:15 – 3:30 PM)
- Funding and Budgeting for Disability (4:00 – 5:15 PM)

The day concludes with the Closing Session (5:30 – 6:00 PM), where the Civil Society Declaration will be formally adopted.

A more detailed agenda is available [here](#), and we will update this page soon with information on the speakers.

## IMPACT OF PREVIOUS SUMMITS

The Global Disability Summit has made a significant impact since its inception in 2017, bringing together diverse stakeholders to advance disability inclusion worldwide. The first Summit in 2018, co-hosted by the UK's Department for International Development (now FCDO), the Government of Kenya, and the permanent co-host International Disability Alliance (IDA), welcomed approximately 1,200 participants. The second Summit in 2022, hosted virtually by Norway, Ghana, and IDA, became the world's largest gathering for disability rights, with over 7,000 participants, including more than 100 global leaders and 50 state representatives, such as the UN Secretary-General and the WHO Director-General.

# WHY IS THE GDS FOCUSING ON COMMITMENTS?

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

GDS 2025 aims to take the commitments mechanism further by increasing the significance and tracking of commitments. These commitments are the major instrument to translate legal obligations and political will into concrete action. The enhanced focus on commitments will 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.

## RESOURCES

### Quotes

Looking for key voices on the Global Disability Summit? We've gathered quotes from co-hosts, partners, and OPDs that journalists can reference in their coverage of GDS 2025. These statements highlight the significance of the Summit and the urgent need for action on disability inclusion. Access the full collection [here](#).



## Press Release

Access key information on GDS 2025 through our press releases. The pre-event release outlines what to expect at the GDS and CSF, while the post-event release will cover key highlights, impact, and takeaways. Check back regularly for updates—older releases will be archived in the annex at the bottom of the Google Doc page.

- [Pre-event press release](#)
- [Post-event press release](#)

## Photo Repository

The GDS 2025 Photo Repository will be updated daily with official event photos from 1 to 3 April. Access high-quality images capturing key moments from the Civil Society Forum and the Summit [here](#).

## Important information for Media

Journalists and communicators covering GDS 2025 will have access to key resources to support their reporting:

- For press inquiries, contact [media.gds@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:media.gds@ida-secretariat.org).
- A dedicated media room will be available to work and an interview corner will be available for recording video bytes on first-come-first serve basis.
- Accredited journalists will receive a color-coded media pass for easy identification.
- A press conference will take place on Day 1 of the Summit.

## Other useful resources

- [Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [Guide to Inclusive Coverage](#)
- [Logos](#)
- [Amman Berlin Declaration](#)
- [Outcome Documents from Regional Summits](#)
- [GDS Style Guide](#)
- [Selected Pictures](#)
- [GDS Flyer](#)
- [Press Releases from Partners](#)

## Contact

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