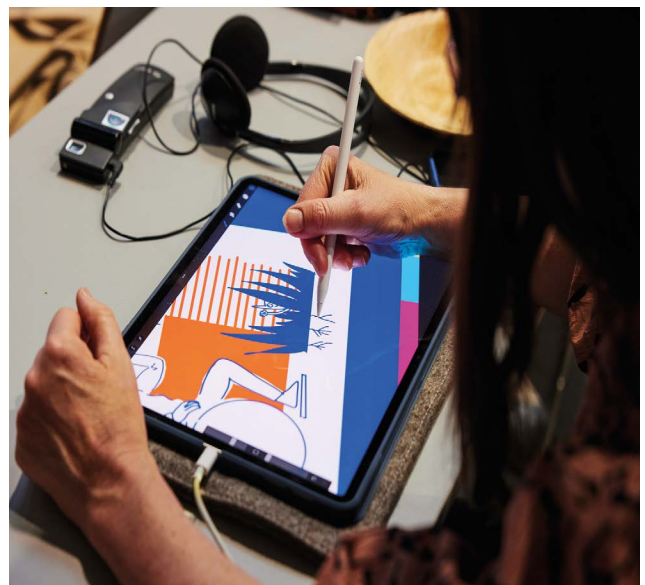


# Global Disability Summit 2025 Report



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# 1. Introduction

The Global Disability Summit (GDS) is a unique international mechanism that drives forward efforts to realise the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. The GDS brings together global, regional and national stakeholders that share the same goal and vision, disability inclusive development and humanitarian action. Grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and focused on implementation of the 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the GDS promotes international cooperation, mobilises commitments, and strengthens accountability for disability inclusion.

The GDS has evolved into an extensive initiative involving continuous advocacy with global disability development stakeholders and the ongoing mobilisation of the disability rights movement and its allies (amplifying the voices of and focus on persons with disabilities). At the heart of the GDS is a recurring three-day Summit (including one day for the Civil Society Forum) that galvanises global action.

The first two Summits, held in 2018 and 2022, inspired unprecedented engagement on disability. Governments, donors, foundations, private sector organisations and civil society organisations made more than 2,300 commitments at the first two Summits that were intended to strengthen disability inclusion in global development and humanitarian action and contribute to disability justice. At the first Summit, over 300 organisations and governments also signed the [Charter for Change](#), a framework for action on implementing the CRPD.

This report focuses on the third Summit (GDS2025), held in Berlin in April 2025 and co-hosted by the International Disability Alliance and governments of Germany and Jordan. GDS2025 provided the opportunity to build on the legacies of the previous two Summits by collecting new, ambitious and impactful commitments that are critical to achieving further and lasting change for persons with disabilities. This report looks at both the preparation for GDS2025 and its outcome; in particular, this report has the following objectives:

- 1. Analyse the commitments collected during GDS2025 based on several key factors, including: the type of stakeholder submitting the commitment(s); their geographical scope; their thematic focus.**
- 2. Examine the broader impact of commitments collected during GDS2025: their influence on policies, normative frameworks and country-level disability inclusion; the scale and scope of resource mobilisation; the application of an intersectional lens; the partnerships and collaboration at the heart of many commitments collected.**

## 2. Global Disability Summit 2025

This section looks at GDS2025 itself, including the commitments made and the broader impact of GDS2025.

### 2.1 GDS2025 in numbers



**4,700 participants**  
from 160 countries

## 2.2 Overarching vision and themes

The GDS2025 White Paper set the overarching vision for the Summit to “build and expand the momentum of the previous two Summits, by amplifying its impact in advancing the rights and inclusion of all persons with disabilities through international cooperation” and to “focus on national ownership, regional leadership, and inclusive international cooperation”.

More specifically, the thematic focus of the GDS2025 agenda reflected common priorities of the disability movement identified through a series of pre-GDS2025 consultations and regional summits. The Summit’s main sessions focused on employment, inclusive cities, health, inclusive infrastructure, education, digital accessibility, public participation, climate action, and humanitarian action; two main sessions also focused on financing (the only issue to be the focus of two main sessions). Of the 24 GDS2025 side-events, the highest number (n.5) focused on political participation, followed by inclusive employment (n.4) and both humanitarian action and financing (n.3). The focus of the remaining side-events included education, health equity, disaster risk reduction and digital accessibility. Of the 24 fireside chats, the greatest focus was on employment (n.3), with two fireside chats also focused on humanitarian action; the remaining fireside chats included discussion on intersectionality, the climate crisis, digital accessibility and deinstitutionalisation. Overall, the GDS2025 agenda appears to have provided a diverse range of topics and focus areas; only employment and humanitarian action were a focus of all three session types (main sessions, side-events and fireside chats).

GDS2025 appears to have retained the strong thematic focus on education and employment that was a feature of both two previous Summits (GDS2018 and GDS2022); for example, 16% and 14.5% of GDS2022 commitments focused on education and employment, respectively. GDS2025 appears also to have returned to thematic areas of focus introduced to the GDS at GDS2022 (namely health and the climate crisis) and further expanded the thematic focus by more explicitly focusing on social protection and digital accessibility as well. GDS provides the opportunity for stakeholders to discuss these themes with organisations they may not count among their traditional partners.

## 2.3 Overview of GDS2025 commitments

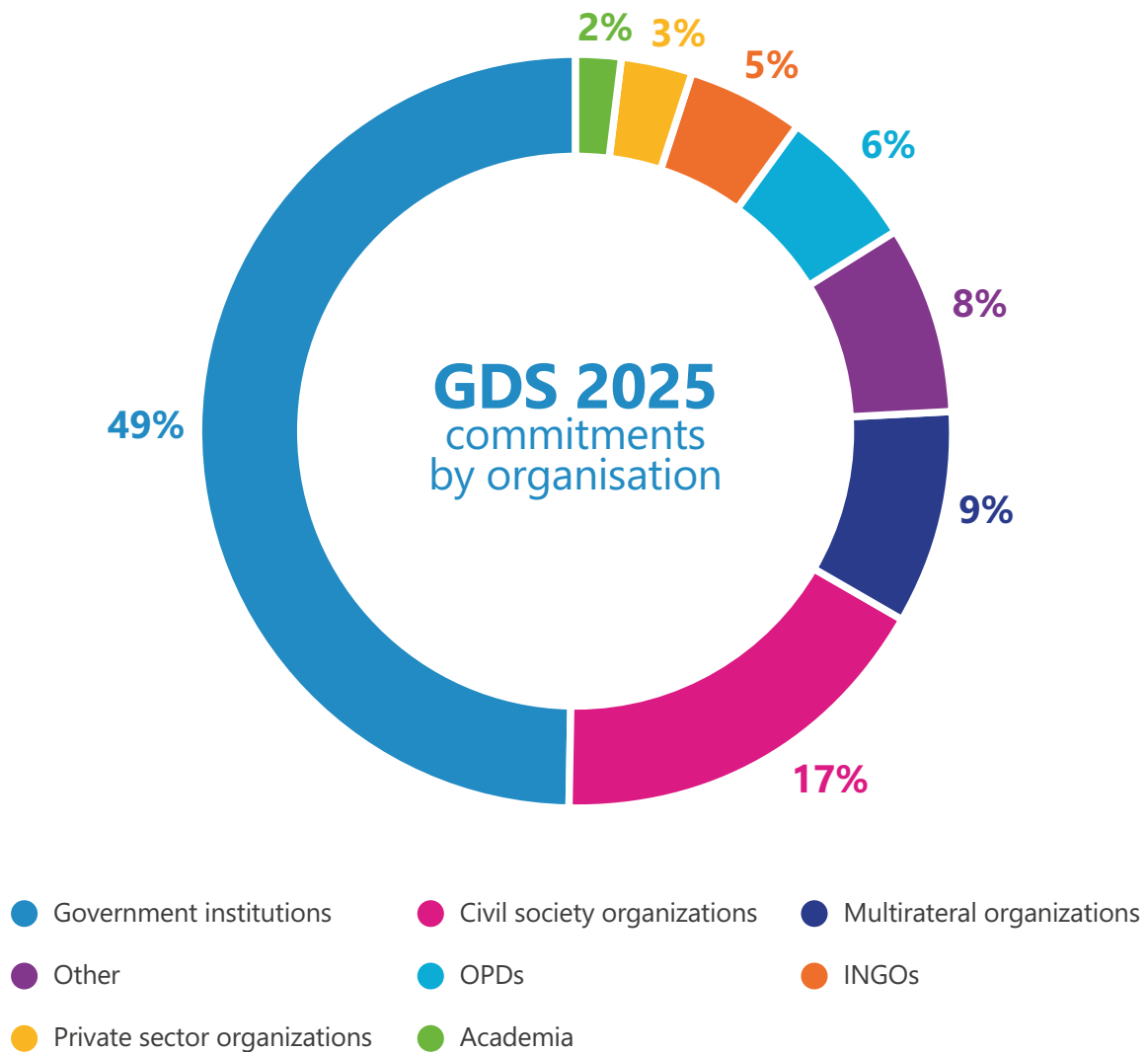
GDS2025 followed in the footsteps of the previous two Summits in being the world’s biggest gathering of global leaders, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and disability rights activists dedicated to strengthening the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide. Across all three Summits, 3,515 commitments have now been made that will contribute to disability inclusion.

Of the 813 GDS2025 commitments, the largest proportion (49%/ n.399) were made by government institutions; this mirrors GDS2018 and GDS2022, where the largest proportion of commitments were also made by government institutions. Three-quarters (n.296) of GDS2025 commitments made by government institutions focused on strengthening disability rights and inclusion domestically. Almost a quarter (n.85) of GDS2025 commitments made by government institutions involved commitments made by governments in the Global North to strengthen disability rights and inclusion in the Global South. The remaining GDS2025 commitments (n.18) by government institutions involved Global South/ Global South



cooperation and commitments by government institutions to strengthen disability rights and inclusion through multilateral organisations. Of the remaining GDS2025 commitments, 17% (n.139) of all commitments were made by civil society organisations, 9% by both multilateral organisations (n.71), 8% by 'other' (n.67) entities, 6% (n.52) by OPDs, 5% (n.40) by INGOs, 3% (n.27) by private sector organisations, and 2% (n.20) by academia. The remaining GDS2025 commitments were made by unclassified organisation types. Figure 2 presents the percentage of GDS2025 commitments by organisation type.

**Figure 2: Percentage of GDS2025 commitments by organisation type**



Comparing the proportion of commitments by organisation type at GDS2025 to the previous Summits, the proportion of commitments made by government institutions has significantly increased (from 33% at GDS2022). The proportion of commitments by private sector organisations has also increased (from 1% in GDS2022). In contrast, the proportion of commitments made by multilateral organisations, civil society organisations and OPDs has decreased; data is not available on the reasons for this fall (e.g. because of resource constraints or challenges regarding civic space).

The thematic focus of GDS2025 (see [Section 2.2](#)) is reflected in the thematic focus of commitments made at the Summit. While the largest proportion (23%) of GDS2025 commitments fell under the 'other' category, the greatest proportion of thematically focused commitments relates to inclusive education (12%), closely followed by accessible infrastructure (10%) and health equity (9%). The thematic focus of GDS2025 differed slightly between local and national level commitments compared to regional level and global level commitments. At the local and national level, the largest proportion of thematically focused commitments relate to accessible infrastructure, inclusive education, inclusive employment and social protection. At the regional and global level, the largest proportion of thematically focused commitments relate to health equity, inclusive humanitarian action and inclusive education.

The thematic focus of GDS2025 commitments partially reflects the thematic focus of commitments at the previous two Summits. At GDS2022, health and education also accounted for a large proportion of commitments. Entirely new to GDS2025 is the explicit focus of some commitments on inclusion in digital information, legal capacity and inclusive tourism. See Figure 3 for more information.

**Figure 3: Breakdown of all GDS2025 commitments by theme**

Thematic area	Local	National	Regional	Global	Sub-total
Accessible infrastructure	19	49	2	14	84
Community inclusion and deinstitutionalisation	6	19	3	19	47
Financing for inclusive development	3	11	5	26	45
Health equity	1	32	8	30	71
Inclusion in digital information	6	25	3	10	44
Inclusive climate action	1	7	0	11	19
Inclusive education	14	48	9	26	97
Inclusive employment	11	38	7	12	68
Inclusive humanitarian action	3	13	4	34	54



Thematic area	Local	National	Regional	Global	Sub-total
Inclusive tourism	1	3	0	1	5
Legal capacity	4	14	3	2	23
Role of private sector	1	7	2	2	12
Social protection	7	40	3	5	55
Other	11	53	17	107	188
Not answered			1		1
Sub-total	88	359	67	299	813

Looking at the geographical focus of GDS2025 commitments, the largest proportion (37%) are globally focused. The largest number of global commitments were made by the following: the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (n.16); Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (n.10); Spain's AECID, DGDPA, FIAP, and ONCE Social Group (n.8); Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the German Federal Government (n.6). GDS2025 happened after the closure of USAID.

Of the remaining GDS2025 commitments: 26% (n.209) are focused on Africa; 24% (n.192) are focused on Asia and the Pacific; 9% (n.70) are focused on Europe; 6% (n.47) are focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. The geographical mix of GDS2025 commitments broadly reflects the geographical mix of commitments at previous Summits, the greatest difference being that GDS2025 commitments included significantly more focus on Asia and the Pacific region than commitments from previous Summits (for example, at GDS2022, 6% of all commitments focused on this region).

In total, 436 (54%) of the 813 GDS2025 commitments are country specific. Country specific commitments tended to be focused on a few specific countries within each region; in four of the five regions, two countries constituted over half of that continent's commitments. In Africa, 24% of commitments focused on Africa targeted Tanzania and Zanzibar, and 18% targeted Nigeria. This data indicates work is required ahead of future Summits to generate equal interest in the GDS and commitments from more countries in all regions.

The five most targeted countries are: Jordan (124 commitments), Tanzania and Zanzibar (43 commitments), Germany (34 commitments), Nigeria (33 commitments), and Uganda (14 commitments). See [Section 2.4.5](#) for more discussion on the commitments from Jordan and Germany.

## 2.4 GDS2025: looking beyond the numbers

Deeper review of the GDS2025 commitments helps underscore the cross-cutting impact of the commitments made and the wider impact of GDS, namely the below.

### 2.4.1 GDS influences policies and normative frameworks

Legislation and policies that protect disability rights are an important measurement of disability inclusion; while the existence of disability legislation and policies does not necessarily translate into or guarantee change, they do formalise a government's intent and provide standards against which to hold governments accountable.

Country-specific commitments to strengthen national legislation and policies feature strongly among the GDS2025 commitments, but perhaps of greater significance is the [Amman-Berlin Declaration on Global Disability Inclusion](#). The Declaration features strong commitments to disability-inclusive development cooperation and humanitarian action, including for all international development programmes to be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities and to ensure that at least 15% of international development programmes implemented at the country-level pursue disability inclusion as an objective. By June 2025, 100 entities had endorsed the Declaration (including national governments, UN agencies and regional development banks).

Alongside their endorsement of the Declaration, numerous organisations participating in GDS2025 also made commitments that reflect the tone and intent of the Declaration. For example, ten organisations (including the German Federal Government and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) made commitments to strengthen their use of the OECD DAC disability marker.

## 2.4.2 GDS prompts resource mobilisation

The importance of funding cannot be overstated. While commitments promise change, actions require resources (including financial resources), and global efforts to progress disability inclusion have not translated into adequate funding. There remains an urgent need for increased and sustained investments; critical gaps in funding for disability inclusion across global development and humanitarian action persist.<sup>1</sup> Less than 1% of bilateral donors' total funding portfolios have disability inclusion as a principal objective; focusing only on bilateral donors that use the OECD DAC disability marker, 0.3% of all funding has disability inclusion as a principal objective.<sup>2</sup> Available data shows that just 10% of all reported bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) was marked as disability inclusive to any extent.<sup>3</sup> Funding for disability inclusion is also low outside of ODA. Between 2011 and 2020, the share of human rights funding from international foundations for disability inclusion did not exceed 4% of total annual funding budgets.<sup>4</sup> Low overall disability funding is reflected in a lack of resources allocated to mainstreaming disability inclusion into areas such as health, education, and crisis preparedness and response.<sup>5</sup>

Financing was a leading thematic focus of GDS2025 (see [Section 2.2](#)). This focus prompted 45 commitments (5.5% of all commitments) that focused on financing for disability inclusive development (including 18 made by governments, 10 made by multilateral organisations and five by 'other' organisations that included funding organisations). The financing-focused commitments are substantial and critical, but financing will need to remain a persistent and ongoing focus for GDS.

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1. United Nations (2024). Disability and development report 2024: accelerating the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities.

2. Global Disability Inclusion Report: Accelerating disability inclusion in a changing and diverse world. Conference Edition (2025). Available at <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/resource/global-disability-inclusion-report/>

3. International Disability Development Consortium, United we stand: Funding and budgeting for disability inclusion in international cooperation (2025)

4. Candid & Human Rights Funding Network (2021), Advancing Human Rights: Annual Review of Global Foundation Grantmaking website <http://humanrightsfunding.org/populations/disabilities/>

5. United Nations (2024). Disability and development report 2024: accelerating the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities.

### 2.4.3 GDS fosters partnerships and collaboration

The UN Disability and Development Report (2019) notes the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships for realising the rights of persons with disabilities;<sup>6</sup> the GDS2025 White Paper also recognised that “well-structured partnerships and cross-sector collaborations are the essential catalysts of change.” GDS2025 subsequently sought to encourage and champion commitments that involved organisations forging partnerships and collaboration. Sixty-five (8%) of the 813 commitments made at GDS2025 were joint commitments, insofar as they were jointly submitted by two or more organisations. More than half (n.34) of the joint commitments were global in scope; more than a third (n.23) of the joint commitments were made by governments.

Central to OPD participation is the Civil Society Forum (CSF), which was held on the first day of GDS2025. The Civil Society Forum is organised by the Civil Society Reference Group (in consultation with relevant partners) to give space to the disability community to unify their voice, share experience and create partnerships ahead of the Summit. The CSF leverages Summits to amplify the voice and participation of OPDs, and to highlight current issues relevant to the global disability movement. The [Civil Society Declaration](#) was adopted at the closing ceremony of the Civil Society Forum 2025; the Declaration recognised that work to strengthen disability rights and inclusion stands at a tipping point and requires not only the safeguarding of existing gains but also new commitments that advance the progress already made.

### 2.4.4 GDS champions an intersectional approach

Persons with disabilities are not one homogenous group; the interaction of health conditions, personal factors, and environmental factors can greatly vary the experiences of people with disabilities. Disability includes people who may be less engaged in decision making, such as women, children, older people and indigenous persons, as well as people from diverse faiths, ethnicities, caste, class, sexual orientation or gender identity minorities. While disability correlates with disadvantage, not all people with disabilities are equally disadvantaged. Some groups have traditionally been less included in participatory processes, harder to reach or face higher barriers to participation, such as persons who are deafblind, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, and persons with autism or hearing impairments.

The focus of commitments on intersectionality has differed across the three Summits. Previous analysis found only two GDS2018 commitments referenced intersectionality, whereas 342 GDS2022 commitments (24% of all GDS2022 commitments) referenced intersectionality.<sup>7</sup> GDS2025 commitments include a strong focus on women with disabilities and children with disabilities, but only 22 of the 813 commitments looked beyond gender or children to more broadly reference an intersectional approach (these commitments related most to health equity, education, protection and data collection).






6. United Nations. (2019). Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities. United Nations.

7. IDA, NORAD, UK FCDO, Global Disability Summit 2022 Report

## 2.4.5 GDS inspires action by hosting country governments

Each Summit to date has been co-hosted by the International Disability Alliance and two country governments: GDS2018 was co-hosted by the UK and Kenyan Governments; GDS2022 was co-hosted by the Norwegian and Ghanaian Governments; GDS2025 was co-hosted by the German and Jordanian Governments. While the UK and Kenyan governments have consistently made commitments at each Summit, data indicate that GDS2022 and GDS2025 inspired the co-hosting governments to strengthen their commitment to disability inclusion. At both GDS2022 and GDS2025, the co-hosting governments made more commitments than they did at any other Summit (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Number of commitments made by host country governments at each Summit**

Number of commitments made by national government			
Country	GDS2018	GDS2022	GDS2025
 <b>UK</b>	16	18	17
 <b>Kenya</b>	4	12	8
 <b>Norway</b>	0	7	5
 <b>Ghana</b>	8	17	0
 <b>Germany</b>	0	0	35
 <b>Jordan</b>	9	0	89

Co-hosting the GDS not only signals a government's commitment to social equity and demonstrates their values by helping to uplift the disability community, co-hosting also appears to help drive national efforts to progress disability rights.

### 3. Conclusions and recommendations

GDS2025 presented an important milestone for disability rights and inclusion, providing a key anchor that disability stakeholders could coalesce around to revitalise efforts to strengthen disability inclusion. GDS2025 also signalled a broad, current and ongoing interest in equity and inclusion at a challenging time for global development.

GDS2025 built upon the legacy of the previous two Summits, bringing the total number of commitments made at all three Summits to 3,515. GDS2025 helped to drive positive change regarding policies and normative frameworks, resource mobilisation and partnerships; the commitments made at GDS2025 will impact disability inclusion at the national, regional and global level.

The next Summit (scheduled for 2028) will fall toward the end of the Sustainable Development Goals, when work will be underway to set new global goals. GDS2028 will play an important role in helping to set a new global agenda that is more focused on disability inclusion and continuing efforts to 'leave no one behind'.

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