



---

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

**WHITE PAPER**  
GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT

## What is the Global Disability Summit?

---

*GDS operates through multi-years cycles that connect agenda-setting, high-level political convening, strategic commitments and follow-up*

The GDS is a global political mechanism designed to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and improve their lives by sustaining momentum for disability inclusion across development, humanitarian and financing systems.

Defined by its cyclical design, the GDS operates through multi-years cycles that connect agenda-setting, high-level political convening, strategic commitments and follow-up. The Summit itself is a milestone within this cycle, rather than its endpoint. By aligning national priorities, international cooperation, and financing frameworks, the GDS helps ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are translated into practical implementation across systems, particularly in low and low-middle income countries.



## The Challenge

The rights of persons with disabilities are clearly recognized in international frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, translating commitments into coordinated policy, financing and implementation remains uneven.

### Key structural challenges include:



Political attention can shift rapidly in response to global crisis.



Development and humanitarian systems do not consistently integrate disability inclusion into funding and program design.



Disability inclusion is viewed as a cross-cutting issue without clear institutional ownership.

***The GDS addresses this gap by sustaining political prioritization and accountability across systems.***



## What Makes the GDS Unique?

### Leadership by Persons with Disabilities

Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) shape priorities, commitment design, monitoring and use political outcomes as accountability instruments throughout the GDS cycle.

Pre-GDS Regional Summits and workshops operationalize this leadership by persons with disabilities by ensuring global priorities reflect real implementation challenges.

### A Multi-Stakeholder Partnership

The GDS operates through a model that brings together government, OPDs, development partners, multilateral institutions, humanitarian organizations, private sector actors. Governments retain the primary responsibility of implementing rights of persons with disabilities while partners align support with national priorities.

### Commitments as Political Instruments

Commitments serve as strategic tools that translate political intent into policy reform, financial alignment, institutional change and measurable progress in the implementation of rights of persons with disabilities.

### Cycles, not Events

GDS functions through continuous cycles, ensuring disability inclusion remains a sustained political priority rather than one-time commitment.

This cyclical architecture helps translate political commitments into sustained action across national and international systems.

### A Financing Catalyst

Political commitments require adequate resources to produce real outcomes. The GDS strengthens disability inclusion financing by highlighting national priorities, aligning donor and multilateral support, encouraging resource mobilization and linking commitments to development financing.

While the GDS does not act as a funding institution, it serves as a platform for financing alignment and resource mobilization.



# The GDS is a Continuous Political Mechanism

## LEADERSHIP BY OPDS

The GDS is led by persons with disabilities: organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) set priorities, inform agenda-setting, influence the design of commitments, and participate in monitoring and follow-up across cycles.

## STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Within the GDS cycle, commitments help translate recognition of disability rights into policy reform, budgeting decisions, program design and institutional change.

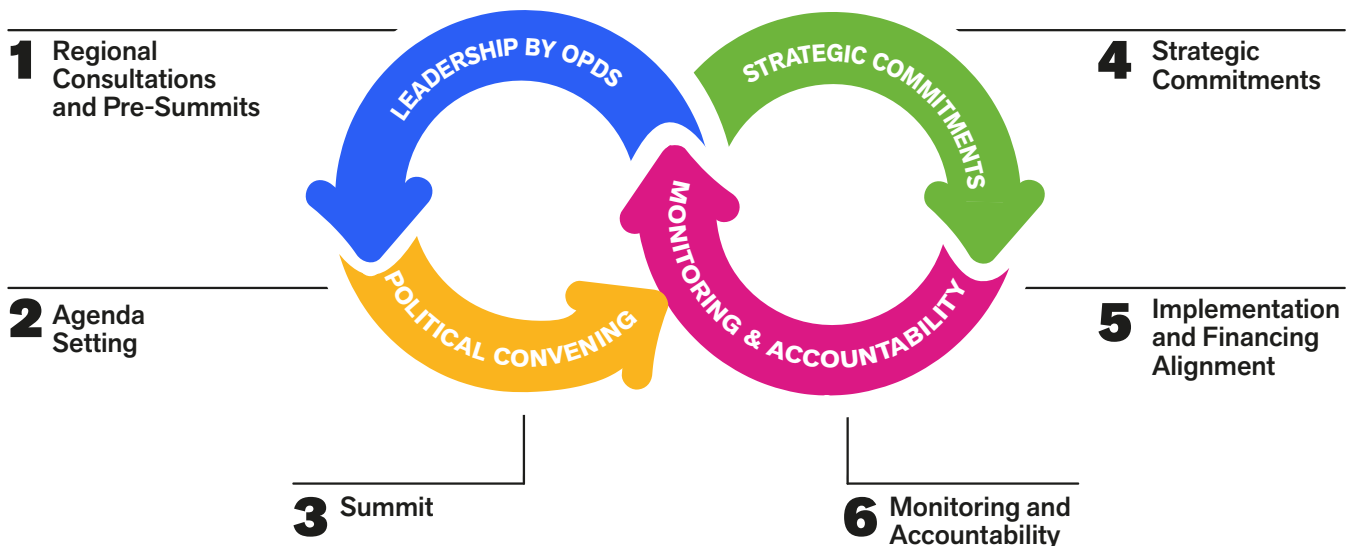
## POLITICAL CONVENING

The GDS is a multi-stakeholder model that brings together governments, OPDs, development partners, multilaterals, humanitarian organizations and the private sector.

## FOLLOW-UP & ACCOUNTABILITY

The GDS helps turn commitments into real, lasting change by drawing attention to disability inclusion and following up between summits.

## The GDS is a Continuous Political Mechanism



## Why the GDS Matters Now

---

*The gap is not recognition, but sustained political prioritization and accountability*

The global systems are under pressure from climate change, conflict, economic instability and shrinking development finance. In such contexts, cross-cutting priorities such as disability inclusion risk being sidelined.

The GDS ensures disability inclusion remains embedded in global decision-making by sustaining political attention, accountability and aligning actors across the system.



## **From Commitment to Sustained Impact**

The GDS has evolved from a periodic convening to a structured political mechanism for advancing disability inclusion. By linking leadership, commitments, financing alignment and accountability across cycles, the GDS helps translate recognition of rights into sustained implementation and tangible improvement in people's lives.



## **The GDS Represents a Collective Commitment to Move:**



*From participation to leadership*



*From fragmentation to coordination*



*From recognition to implementation*



*From commitments to sustained impact*



## FOLLOW US

 [globaldisabilitysummit.org/](https://globaldisabilitysummit.org/)

 [Global Disability Summit](#)

 [GDS\\_Disability](#)

---

This project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

