



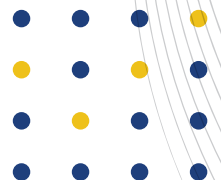
International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities

REPORT ON

International
Day of Persons
with Disabilities

Seminar 2023

2 December 2023





International Day of Persons with Disabilities

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International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introductory Speech	2
Speech	3
Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario <i>Country Director, Sightsavers</i> <i>Convener, Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh</i>	
Joint Keynote Presentation	4
Mr. Aminul Arifeen <i>National Project Manager, SPPS, UNDP</i>	
Mr. Ayon Debnath <i>Campaign Adviser, Sightsavers Bangladesh</i>	
Panel Discussion	9
Ms. Nahiyah Bushra <i>Research Assistant, Bonshikha</i>	
Mr. Amjad Hosen <i>Officer, Call Centre BRAC Bank Ltd</i>	
Ms. Ruma Akhter <i>Member, B-Scan</i>	
Speech from the Chief Guest	11
Md. Akhter Hossain <i>Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs), Prime Minister's Office</i>	
Panel Discussion	13
Ms. Nasima Akter	
Mr. AHM Noman Khan	
Dr. Rajib Hasan	
Panel Discussion	16
Mr. Md. Osman Bhuiyan, <i>Joint Secretary Disability Ministry of Social Welfare</i>	
Ms. Shirin Akhter, <i>Chairperson, Women with Disability Development Foundation (WDDF)</i>	
Ms. Aziza Ahmed, <i>Head of Operation, Bangladesh Business and Disability Network</i>	
Mr. Md. Saidul Haque, <i>Executive Director, BERDO</i>	



CONTENTS

Panel Discussion	18
Ms. Gwyn Lewis <i>United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh</i>	
Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen <i>ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh</i>	
Ms. Gitanjali Singh <i>Country Representative, UN Women</i>	
Ms. Natalie McCauley <i>Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF</i>	
Open Discussion	21
Panel Discussion	23
Mr. Monirul Islam <i>Additional Secretary, SDG Affairs Coordinator office at the Prime Minister's Office</i>	
Ms. Zuena Aziz <i>Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office</i>	
Vote of Thanks by Chair	24
Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam <i>Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability</i>	
End of Event	25
Recommendations	26
Media Mentions	29
Participants	41
Programme Schedule	47
Glimpses of the Event	50

Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) SSPS Programme, UNPPRD, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA, ILO, Australian Aid & Sightsavers have called on the government of Bangladesh for effective implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act and the National Action Plan on Disability to ensure people with disabilities can have their equal rights and opportunities.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the SSPS Programme, Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh, UNPPRD, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA, ILO, Australian Aid & Sightsavers have made this appeal to the government in a national seminar titled with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) theme being “United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons of disabilities,” organized on Saturday 02 December 2023 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka.

Mr. Md. Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) Prime Minister’s Office, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh attended the seminar as the Chief Guest whereas Ms. Zuena Aziz, Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) Prime Minister’s Office, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, graced the occasion as the Special Guest.

The keynote paper was jointly presented by Mr. Aminul Arifeen, National Project Manager of the SSPS Programme at UNDP and Mr. Ayon Debnath, Campaign Adviser at Sightsavers, discussed a comparison between the monumental SDGs with the previous MDGs. He described the evaluation of the different framework in which Rights to persons with disabilities has been addressed over the years. He further highlighted the SDGs’ transformed approach to disability rights across its comprehensive framework. Mr. Arifeen, emphasized on the need to ensure rights, inclusion, and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Bangladesh. He presented an overview of policy advancements through progressive measures including the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disability Act of 2013 and the monthly allowance schemes for persons with disabilities (PWDs). However, Mr. Arifeen also highlighted enduring gaps in monitoring and localized execution that constrain the on-ground impact of legal provisions introduced for promoting disability welfare. While the policy ecosystem denotes progress, more focused efforts to enhance compliance and optimize outcomes across administrative tiers remain vital for furthering the effectiveness of disability-centric interventions under the ambit of SDGs. Strengthening last-mile service delivery for intended persons with disabilities (PWDs) beneficiaries constitutes an integral priority. Mr. Aminul Arifeen also gave an overview of suggested reforms in the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) and its’ Action Plan.

Mr. Ayon Debnath spoke on Disability in the 8th Five Year Plan 2021-25, Disability Social Protection in National Budget, Rights enshrined in the constitution and legal instruments. He also mentioned the **Somotar Bangladesh** campaign which includes OPDs, & the Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh for implementing the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disability Act.

The keynote address ended with challenges, ways forward and lastly the future, *smart Bangladesh*.

The event was a success with a total of 153 participants in attendance where a total of 65 persons with disabilities (33 male participants and 32 female participants) took part in the event.

Ms. Farjana Reza, National Programme Officer, ILO, conducted the programme as the Master of Ceremony. She asked all the audiences to take their seats including the sign language, Bangla and English language interpreters as well.

Assimilating the theme '**United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with, and by the persons with disabilities,**' the host, began, by thanking all those who came and especially mentioned the Chief Guest from the Prime Minister's Office, **Mr. Md. Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs)**.

Ms. Farjana Reza added that since 1992, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities has been celebrated after the United Nations declaration and based on this, from 1999, Bangladesh has been observing the National Day of Persons with Disabilities. The main objective of celebrating the day is twofold: the first one being to understand disability in all its aspects, and the second one is to disseminate awareness about disability inclusion throughout the nation. She further added Australian Aid, all UN agencies and Sightsavers Bangladesh jointly organized this event to share their common goal of disability inclusion and practices for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Bangladesh. The event will aim to communicate to all the relevant stakeholders, i.e. persons with disabilities, different benevolent organizations working on disabilities, respective government authorities, private sector, civil society representatives, youth and media at the same table to discuss to find ways on how all stakeholders can work together for the betterment of persons with disabilities in all aspects. In addition, she focused that media can play a vital role and invited **Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario, Country Director, Sightsavers & Convener, Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh**, on the stage.

Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario

Country Director, Sightsavers & Convener, Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh

I, wholeheartedly express my gratitude and immense pleasure to the Chief Guest from the Prime Minister's Office, Mr. Md. Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs), the special guests, the OPDs, and all other distinguished guests for joining the event today. I believe your esteemed presence and unparalleled fathom will help to achieve the events' objective. I also express my gratitude to Ms. Gwyn Lewis, UN Resident Coordinator; Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO-Country Director in Bangladesh; Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women; Mr. Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP and Ms. Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF. I would also like to thank the development partners that are present here. Your presence demonstrates our collective spirit which is necessary to address the challenges of persons with disabilities are facing. Once again thank you for inviting me to this event. This year, we are celebrating the 32nd International and 25th National Day of Persons with Disabilities.



This year, the theme is "United in Action to Rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with, and by persons with disabilities." The objective of celebrating the day is to ensure the rights and respect of persons with disabilities and to help enhance the living standards of this community. Amid the concurrent global crises, experts doubt if achieving the SDG goals is possible within 2030, as a lot has already been hampered. The spirit and enthusiasm we had in 2015 remains, with the government taking different initiatives, despite that goals may slow down. This means that already vulnerable groups of people worldwide are prone to crises. From the preliminary report on UN Disability and Development 2023, we can see that persons with disabilities are lagging in the SDGs indicators globally. So, we must work for their rights. It would not be wrong if I say that, persons with disabilities cannot contribute to the economy. Still this mindset exists which is discriminatory.

Our experience shows that if we provide proper assistance and support to persons with disabilities, they can equally contribute to society and economy as well. I believe that from today's discussions, we will get some guidelines for improving their living standards and ensuring the fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities.

We believe in joint efforts to materialize the dream of an inclusive world. It is imperative to mention that Sightsavers, an international organization working in more than 30 countries, is leading the Disability Alliance and conducting a mission known as 'Equal World.' In Bangladesh, it is known as 'Somotar Bangladesh.' I would also like to believe that today's discussion will consider the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013. Finally, I end my speech with the commitment that we all will work together to ensure an equal world for persons with disabilities so that they can live their lives like the other citizens. Let's work jointly! Thank you all.

Mr. Aminul Arifeen

Project Manager, SSPS Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

I welcome all other distinguished guests to today's event. If we focus on the theme, we can see that it has been aligned with SDGs for the first time. It means reemphasizing the goal of 'Leaving No One Behind.' If we recall, we have spent quite a long time on the MDGs. The qualitative difference between MDGs and SDGs is that MDGs only focused on developing countries, whereas SDGs included all the countries and peoples of the world. SDGs have highly prioritized the development of persons with disabilities in all aspects. The Beijing Platform of Action was undertaken in 1995. In Japan, it has been widely discussed, as well as in Addis Ababa. All international policies have focused on the issue of a decent living environment for persons with disabilities. There was a movement on disability that stated the theme line "Nothing about us without us" If we focus on the poverty statistics, the percentage of persons with disabilities is relatively higher among the poorer communities.



We see people, prosperity, planet, peace, and partnership as important aspects where inclusion of persons with disabilities needs to be focused. In this slide, I have tried to show that there is no significant difference between the UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disability and the SDGs.

SDG Goals 4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, and 17 specifically address the rights and development of persons with disabilities.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- **NPT 13** Ensure the proportion of schools by 100% with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for the child/ students with disability (SDG Indicator 4.a.1)

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

- **NPT 21** Increase annual growth rate of GDP to 10% (SDG Indicator 8.1.1)
- **NPT 22** Reduce unemployment rate below 3% (SDG Indicator 8.5.2)

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

- **10.2.1** Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, disaggregated by age, sex and persons with disabilities.

SDG: 11 advocates for sustainable cities and communities. Similarly, the CRPD advocates for enabling situations during risky and humanitarian emergencies.

- **11.2.1** Proportion of the population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities.
- **11.7.1** Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities.
- **11.7.2** Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- **NPT 32** Reduce the number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters to 1500 per 100,000 population (SDG Indicator 13.1.1)
- **CRPD Article 11:** Humanitarian situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- **NPT 32** Reduce the number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters to 1500 per 100,000 population (SDG Indicator 13.1.1)
- **CRPD Article 11:** Humanitarian situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

- **NPT 36** Increase the proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority to 100% (SDG Indicator 16.9.1)
- **NPT 37** Increase the proportion of complaint Settlement against cognizance of cases by National Human Rights Commission to 60%
- **16.7.1** Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups.

By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to significantly increase the availability of high- quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

SDG: 17 – Global Partnership To help in gaining MIC status, there should be ways of collaboration between private public partnership.

SDG: 17.18 – By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to significantly increase the availability of high- quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships have an important role in the realization of the SDGs for persons with disabilities. Such partnerships may involve Member States; United Nations agencies; development, humanitarian, and human rights actors; peace and security actors; local authorities and communities; the private sector; and civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. These partners can collectively ensure that development activities and programmes include perspectives and consider comprehensively the needs of persons with disabilities.

The event we are hosting today has goals. There are focal points in every country under the UN Secretary. All UN bodies that have joined here today are also focal points, and Sightsavers is leading the Disability Alliance. As all the focal points from the regional to the national level are present here; we learn from you all and gather expert opinions, that will be reported for the further development of Bangladesh. We see this as a participatory effort, and this will continue. We will launch two things today: one, the Joint UN to prepare the Disability Framework in Bangladesh, and the second, the Reporters Forum for advisory aspects promoting awareness. Again, I convey my humble gratitude in being here today.

Let's look at the statistics: One in every seven people in the world is a person with disabilities, so we must focus on their well-being urgently. According to World Health (WHO) statistics, the percentage is fifteen, but we say it is nine. In Bangladesh, we have so we need to focus on disability inclusion. Among women in Bangladesh, one in every five faces a disability once in their lifetime. One child among every ten children has a kind of disability. So, now we must focus on why they are being excluded. We also need to focus on accessibility. To make Bangladesh smart and sustainable, according to the SDG goals, we must work in collaboration with the SDG coordinator's office in Bangladesh. The existing data on poverty shows that persons with disabilities are more disadvantaged compared to the non-disabled person. If we have proper disability segregated data and research, that will help us to revisit our policy effectively. Now, I would request all of you to focus on what the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) that stresses on the development of persons with disability.

One initiative that I want to point out is the universal pension scheme for all which has already been introduced in Bangladesh. The strategy also focusses on human and social empowerment by capacity building.

The 8th Five-year plans seem to be highly aligned with the goals, as you can see in the following slides. As we have the 2026 and 2030 agendas, if we do not plan now, it will be difficult to sustain in this competitive world, especially for persons with disabilities. The following slide focuses on the budget; as you can see, the budget has been increased from 0.5 percent to around 2 percent, which is a significant change. Now, Mr. Ayon Debnath will speak on the advancement of the policy level over the years.

Mr. Ayon Debnath

Campaign Adviser, Sightsavers Bangladesh

I will briefly focus on the policy aspect, moreover, the rest of the things we can learn from the panel discussions. Our constitution says equal rights for all. Apart from the constitution, many initiatives have already been taken in the last ten years. No matter what we have done, today we will discuss what persons of disabilities facing challenges for their development. It is worth mentioning that previously we have the Welfare Act, now we have the Rights & Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013 that is advocating their rights and awareness has already been disseminated amongst the masses. In Bangladesh, every ministry is sensible about the rights of persons with disabilities. Parallely, there are so many non-government organisations are working on disability development issues but recent challenge is the funds for such organizations are decreasing.

Nowadays, it's true that persons with disabilities are more aware of their rights than before.

As we see, Bangladesh is about to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend. As Mr. Aminul Arifeen stated that a considerable percentage of youths with disabilities still exist in Bangladesh. As our dream Bangladesh will be SMART and Digital Bangladesh and we have ratified the UNCRPD in 2007. As we have ratified, our roles and responsibilities of different ministries have already been decided and still our ministries are trying a lot, but there is still room for further improvement.

At the Global Summit 2022, Bangladesh obtained 11 commitments. One of those was the joint effort to implement the National Action Plan. Also, inclusive education, health, accessibility, and communication was discussed. Though, we have been speaking on accessibility for the last ten years, but still in Bangladesh you will not get fully accessible bus or train transportation facilities. So, we are lacking there. Integration of ICT is imperative. The action plan has also focused on their rights, social protection, and safety during natural disasters, recreation, sports, etc. In line, the Action Plan has accommodated every aspect of the lives of persons with disabilities, but there are limitations when it comes to implementation. So, we need to focus on the challenges that exist.



Last year, we adopted a ‘Somotar Bangladesh,’ policy campaign focusing on all these aspects. We have published a report where we have found that there is a huge scope to work with different ministries to strengthen their capacity. We feel that the Disability Focal Point is an important role and it is required in every ministry who will basically raise the issues for the rights and improvement of persons with disabilities so that they can contribute in the national economy. It is not very common to see persons with disabilities being nominated for the national election. So, if we look after these issues and we believe they will be directly able to raise their issues in parliament.



Ms. Farjana Reza thanked Mr. Aminul Arifeen and Mr. Ayon Debnath.

Ms. Farjana Reza then added that today’s youngsters are the future of the nation. So, there is also a youth panel. For the next panel discussion, there was Mr. Amjad Hosen, Officer, Call Centre BRAC Bank Ltd, Ms. Ruma Akhter, Member B-SCAN and Ms. Nahiyah Bushra, Research Assistant, Bonhshikha. Ms. Nazma Ara Begum Poppy, Project Support Officer, UN Women moderated the session.

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Ms. Nazma Ara Begum Poppy, Project Support Officer, UN Women

Panelists:

- Ms. Nahiyan Bushra, *Research Assistant, Bonshikha*
- Mr. Amjad Hosen, *Officer, Call Centre BRAC Bank Ltd*
- Ms. Ruma Akhter

Moderator: Ms. Nazma Ara Begum Poppy,
Project Support Officer, UN Women

Ms. Nazma Ara Begum Poppy warmly welcomed the honourable discussants to the session 'Life to Lead.' She warmly invited the discussants to share their stories based on their types of disabilities, what they faced in their lives.

Ms. Nahiyan Bushra, *Research Assistant, Bonshikha*, Mr. Amjad Hosen, *Officer, Call Centre BRAC Bank Ltd*, and Ms. Ruma Akhter appeared on the panel. Beginning of the discussion, Ms.

Poppy asked Mr. Hosen what the challenges he faced in an organization like BRAC and how he overcame them? Additionally, she wanted to know which factors needed to be addressed to prepare a person with disability as a competent human resource?



Panelist 1: Mr. Hosen

Thank you everyone. When I started my journey with BRAC. Once I finished my training, I went to the computer desk to work, and I found different applications I needed help with. After days and nights of searching on the internet, somehow, I managed some ways, but that was quite difficult in the first stage but I managed. So everyone should remember and need to be aware if they want to appoint a person with disabilities, they must ensure what assistance they need to smoothen their work life and provide that accordingly. So, it's crucial to introduce a manual focusing on the needs of persons with disabilities based on their disabilities in the workplace.

The Moderator, Ms. Poppy thanked him for his speech. She requested respective authorities to consider all the issues that were raised. Then she invited Ms. Ruma and asked her to share what she faced as a woman with disabilities during her voluntary work for the community.

Panelist 2: Ms. Ruma

When I first met the President of B-Scan, Ms. Sabrina, and the General Secretary, Ms. Salma, I wondered how two ladies sitting in their wheelchairs worked relentlessly for persons with disabilities community, especially for women. I was amazed at seeing them. From that day, I was determined that I would be working for this community too. If I say about the employment issue for persons with disabilities, the barriers come from the working environment, and we face different problems when we go for interviews. That means the problems start from the application and interview process. Safeguarding is a big issue during the interview process. If I say about the issue of confidence, employers still think that we are unable to do the job according to the requirement. Especially visually impaired persons, the technology is not available in every workplace. So, we must work on it.

The moderator, Ms. Poppy, thanked the panelists and called Ms. Nahiyan Bushra, Research Assistant, Bonhshikha. She asked her what initiatives should be undertaken, especially within the government and private sector, regarding the employment issue.

Panelist 3: Ms. Bushra

Thank you for your question. Recently, I completed my master's from the University of Dhaka. As youth, we have a target that after completing our studies, we must join the workforce to ensure a decent living. Several times, we have been talking about different scopes for persons with disabilities, but still there is a gap in opportunities. The government has already abolished the quota for the employment from the country for persons with disabilities. Regarding the private sector, still they need huge awareness on disability inclusion, and if they have this awareness, then we will be able to work together with non-disabled persons.

Ms. Poppy thanked her for her valuable recommendation and confirmed that the quota was abolished from the government employment sector. She added that the Honourable Prime Minister has committed that special initiatives will be taken for persons with disabilities.

Panelist 1: Ms. Bushra

I think we should focus on need-based skills development to join the workforce Bangladesh needs to focus on research for the different disability issues like education, employment as we see hardly any in-depth research on disability.

Ms. Poppy then asked Ms. Ruma Akhter, Member B-SCAN what needs to be done for the implementation of the Act.

Panelist 2- Ms. Ruma

The Act should have criteria/information on the safeguarding issue of women with disabilities. So, as a woman with disabilities, I believe there should be specific guidelines within the Act when they revisit.

Ms. Poppy asked Mr. Amjad Hosen, Officer, Call Centre BRAC Bank Ltd, what his thoughts were regarding this

Panelist 3- Mr. Hosen

I have seen that the Act has mentioned different committees. The committees need to be reformed. Every year, there should be meetings, and also reports should be available for all. There needs to be more monitoring and evaluation based on the reports. The available information will help in the preparation of the next action plans properly. The last thing I would like to add is that an accessibility audit is crucial to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in every sector.

Ms. Poppy thanked all listening to the experiences of the youth cohort. She stated that if all stakeholders work together following the mentioned recommendation, to address the challenges, then an inclusive Bangladesh will be established for all.



Md. Akhter Hossain

Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs), Prime Minister's Office

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim. On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, I extend a warm welcome to the distinguished panellist of today's event, Mr. Khandakar Johurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), and the special guest, Ms Zuena Aziz, Former Chief Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Affairs at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) - Bangladesh. Special guests from the Ministry of Social Welfare, representatives from various international and national organizations, media representatives, ladies, and gentlemen, Assalamualaikum, and a particularly good morning to you all. Thank you for inviting me to today's event.

This year's theme for observing the day is 'United in Action to Rescue and Achieve the SDGs for, with and by the Persons with Disabilities.' December is a significant month for Bangladesh as it marks our Independence. At the beginning of my speech, I recall with deep respect the

Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose birth led to the independence of Bangladesh, liberating the Bengali nation from a thousand years of oppression. I remember the freedom fighters who participated in the liberation war at the call of the Father of the Nation and sacrificed their lives for the independence of Bangladesh. I remember the martyrdom of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa and Sheikh Mujib, along with all those who sacrificed their lives on the dark night of August 15, 1975. I extend my prayers for their souls.

Ladies and gentlemen, the dream of our nation's father was to bring smiles to the faces of the distressed and build a Golden Bengal. Our honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, is tirelessly working to realize the dreams of her father and lead the country towards progress and development. I remember the call of the Father of the Nation to the freedom fighters who participated in the liberation war and sacrificed for the independence of the motherland. I remember the national leaders who embraced martyrdom, and I remember the sacrifice of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa, Sheikh Mujib, and all those who sacrificed their lives in 1975 for independence of Bangladesh. Our honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, is working with determination to realize those dreams and lead the country towards progress and development. Our honourable Prime Minister, in her leadership, has achieved many accolades for successfully implementing the MDG goals, and she has gained international recognition. Using that experience, she has said, "Since we have successfully implemented the MDG goals, we will also implement the SDG goals for the development of Bangladesh." For the implementation of SDG goals, various mechanisms have been created. Various committees have already been formed to implement the SDG goals in Bangladesh.



According to the through immediate, medium-term, and long-term plans, SDG checklists have been prepared, and alignment has been made with SDGs. As you all know, the United Nations Agenda 2030, by all the heads of state of the signatory countries, includes 17 goals and 169 indicators. I believe that the work done by the countries within the targeted time and in the SDG more focussed on human development and persons of disability have already been included in the agenda. Bangladesh has successfully implemented the MDG goals in the past, we are working hard for proper implementation of SDG goals as our honourable Prime Minister has huge experience on the implementation of achieving MDG goals successfully. For the implementation of the SDG goals, various initiatives have already been taken. As you all know, the 17 goals of the United Nations SDGs are categorized into five Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. The main idea is to bring about changes in the lives of people, ensure their well-being, and transform the fate of those who are left behind. "Leave no one behind" is the fundamental principle of the United Nations, and the focus is on those who are most behind.

The United Nations Agenda has been effectively implemented in Bangladesh, and a robust mechanism has been established for the implementation. Bangladesh has aligned itself with a 5-year plan for implementation of SDG goals. The country has been performing well in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the assessment conducted in 2017, Bangladesh ranked 101st globally, outperforming India (112th) and Pakistan (128th). Over the past seven years, Bangladesh has made considerable progress in the implementation of the SDGs, advancing through 19 stages. Addressing the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, I would like to acknowledge that persons with disabilities facing unique challenges that make their lives more difficult. In our country, significant developments have taken place over the last 15 years, with positive progress reflected in various sectors. If we consider each sector, we can observe a three to fourfold increase or a 15 to 20 times growth in each indicator. For persons with disabilities, social protection measures such as old-age pensions, widow allowances, and other benefits have increased by 37% of the total budget. In all areas, efforts are being made by the government to provide a life of happiness, convenience, and resolution of problems for the people. For persons with disabilities, the government is working to ensure their well-being and provide solutions to their challenges. Speaking about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, I have heard diverse accounts of difficulties that they face. If we look at the situation 15 years ago, the benefits for persons with disabilities were less compared to what they are now. The government is dedicated to promoting a life of happiness and convenience for its citizens, addressing their problems.

The education we receive from educational institutions, family, and society is critical. I believe that persons with disabilities need to be skilled, according to their needs and abilities. As I know that twelve types of disabilities are now recognized. As a child with disabilities, he or she do not know what their ambition, so it is necessary to provide them with an accurate guidelines and assistance from their childhood. Many persons with disabilities face challenges as they are unskilled, but these can be overcome through skills development training. This is not an issue in this day and age. If they can acquire skills alongside their education, they can manage their employment themselves, it could be self-employment or wage employment. The government has enacted several laws for their protection and support, such as the "The Rights & Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013," "Rules of the Act 2015," "Persons with Neuro-developmental Disability Trust Act, 2013," "Mental Health Act, 2018," "Bangladesh Rehabilitation Council Act, 2018,".

We can see how SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) are related to persons with disabilities. Among the 17 goals, the first is poverty, followed by education, employment, inequality, urbanization, governance, and partnership. All these goals contribute to the protection of persons with disabilities. Bangladesh has achieved success in these areas, and our honourable Prime Minister has always been compassionate and supportive.

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee, National Consultant, a2i

Panelists:

- Ms. Nasima Akter
- Mr. AHM Noman Khan
- Dr. Rajib Hasan



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities

Moderator: Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee,
National Consultant, a2i

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee: Good morning. Everyone, please applaud. In this century, we have obtained one of the best laws for persons with disabilities. I want to emphasize three commitments of the current government. Number 1 is political commitment. Number 2 is legal commitment. We have achieved the Disability Rights and Protection Act in 2013, which ensures the government's commitment to persons with disabilities. Number 3 is global



commitment. With these three commitments, we envisioned an inclusive Bangladesh. I would like to first go to Ms. Nasima Akter. Ms. Nasima, how are you? The law for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities that the government has advocated for, what difficulties have we faced in its implementation?

Panellist 1 : Ms. Nasima Akter

I am well, thank you Mr. Bhattacharjee and thanks the honour. I am working as the President of the National Council for Disabled Women. I want to express my gratitude to the government of Bangladesh. If we talk about evidence-based matters, I consider the Disability Rights and Protection Act of 2013 to be particularly important. The law specifies how rights will be ensured directly and indirectly for persons with disabilities. I would like to talk regarding advocacy initiatives for proper implementation of persons with disability related activities, public transportation system, education system, still need to revisit these issues though Bangladesh Government already working on some of these mentioned issues. I

I also proud to inform that Bangladesh has a law for the persons with disabilities, without the law a substantial portion of the population would have been neglected and unable to assert their rights strongly. The law identified 11 types of persons with disabilities, and because of the existence of this law, we can talk about it.

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee

Thank you, Ms. Nasima. We may face difficulties in implementation, but we have the power within ourselves as we have a law, and we feel empowered. I would like to go to Mr. AHM Noman Khan. We know that almost 14,000 people were consulted on the law and the drafting. However, after 10 years, what is the reason for the lack of proper implementation of the law until now? What are the shortcomings or mistakes? Can you reflect on this matter?

Panellist 2: Mr. AHM Noman Khan

Thank you for inviting to such an event. The question that has been asked is, if I speak from my experience, it was a concerted effort that Bangladesh's law for persons with disabilities has formulated. From 1996, when our honourable Prime Minister assumed office, her initiative was highly commendable. We have some failures, and I will talk about that and how we can overcome these failures. The honourable Prime Minister's desire has been there since that time that there should be a law for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. Since then, she has worked with all of us and from that time and the Ministry of Social Welfare has been trying to ensure that the law becomes a reality. Many persons with disabilities were involved at various times to help with this.

But one thing I would like to mention still we are struggling to implement the Disability Act in Bangladesh just because of lack of awareness in every sector. After ratifying UNCRPD, Bangladesh has taken lots of initiatives, but the implementation is slow. We need to look at this issue. Thank to all.

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee:

Mr. Noman, you have spelt out some important issues here. Now, I would like to ask Mr. Rajib Hasan from JPUF to share his thoughts on this matter.

Panellist 3: Dr. Rajib Hasan

Firstly, I would like to greet Ms. Zuena Aziz, the respected Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Country Director, as well as all those who have come from donor organizations, NGOs, directors, and administrators.

The question is about the gaps or achievements in the law initiated for persons with disabilities in 2013. I am working with the Jatiyo Pratibondhi Unnoyon Foundation. As per my understanding, the Ministry of Social Welfare should help the Disability focused Organization in a specific way according to their allocated responsibilities. It has been clearly stated from Section 1 to 10 that the Ministry of Social Welfare will look after education, training, and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities, not the Ministry of Health. So, the Ministry of Social Welfare must ensure specific assistance to the Disability focused organization. Under the Ministry of Social Welfare, we have provided therapy and rehabilitation services to more than 50 lakh people in the last 10 years. Mr. Vashkar asked about gaps and achievements. The place of achievement is not less, but when something is created, an evaluation is done. We have established 103 service centers, but more service centres need to be established so that, we can serve more persons with disabilities according to their needs. It is very hopeful that within the coming year, 211 service centres will gradually increase.

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee

Thank you. I would like to make a request to you, that we still have the UNCRPD for the protection of the rights of the disabled community. We have the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. We want to achieve the SDGs. We want to live in a society based on rights. I would like to request everyone, on behalf of all persons with disabilities, that we do not want anyone's help. We want to have our own rights ensured. I want to say that we have achieved Digital Bangladesh. I have a humble request for you. What kind of work has your foundation done that has left a slight touch on my life as a disabled citizen and student in my digital life? I want to ask Ms. Nasima about her hopes. What do you think about Bangladesh in 2041? Will we ever have to talk about discrimination? How do you see Bangladesh in 2041?

Panellist 1: Ms. Nasima Akter

We want to see Bangladesh in 2041 through the lens of our laws, policies, and SDGs. However, the way we present myself on stage or in public places the journey for persons with disabilities is not easy. First, I want to see myself as a woman with a disability sitting in a wheelchair. When I leave for my work, at first, I have to think about what will be my transportation is accessible for me? The programme where I will participate is the stage accessible for me? Is there any accessible washroom for me? But I face difficulties. I would like to mention that many of our persons with disabilities not yet been integrated into the mainstream development. For the success of 2041, we need to develop and advocate awareness events for disability inclusion. Another thing I want to highlight here is that the government needs to increase the allocation of budget for disability inclusion.

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee

Thank you, Ms. Nasima for your valuable speech. We have shared stories of triumph, but we have a lot to say. Every student from the first to the tenth grade now has access to multimedia talking books and accessible e-books. Over 290,000 disabled people are receiving disability allowances. Over 100,000 disabled individuals are receiving scholarships. We have developed digital guidelines, and accessible books and so on. I will ask Mr. Noman to know about his dreams for Bangladesh in 2041.

Panellist 2 : Mr. AHM Noman Khan

Thank you. I will speak keeping in line with the previous questions. Our existing laws act as a foundation for us, but there are shortcomings in the practical implementation. We have Ms. Zuena Aziz here, and she has been directly involved in formulating these laws and related activities. We need to be aware of the existing gaps. We have a National Coordination Council and a National Executive Council, but their role needs to be revisited and strengthened. We need to think about these issues within the committees at the district level and require a commission like the one in India which directly involves persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the decision-making process.

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee

Let us all say, "We want a Commission for Persons with Disabilities Community like the Human Rights Commission." This is our demand. I will visit Mr. Noman to hear what dreams he has for Bangladesh in 2041.

Panellist 2: Mr. AHM Noman Khan

Thank you. Our representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare are here. Former Chief Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Affairs at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Ms. Zuena Aziz worked very skillfully as a secretary. The processes we have in place, the evaluations of the last 10 years, we are sitting on a solid foundation. "Leaving no one behind," and we want that no person with a disability should be left behind from this development process.

The Bangladesh Rehabilitation Council Act of 2018 governs these services. We have seen progress over the years, and we are on track. I'll bring up these issues with the Secretary. Due to the steps taken by the Honourable Prime Minister, we are now providing rehabilitation services for the betterment of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee

Thank you, sir. We all want to be hopeful.



The host, Ms. Farjana Reza, thanked all the panelists and the moderator for concluding this discussion.

Ms. Farjana Reza, then invited the next panelists and the moderator to come on stage. This panel discussion includes Mr. Md. Osman Bhuiyan, Joint Secretary Disability Ministry of Social Welfare, Ms. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, Women with Disability Development Foundation (WDDF); Ms. Aziza Ahmed, Head of Operation, Bangladesh Business and Disability Network; and Mr. Md. Saidul Haque, Executive Director, BERDO. The session was moderated by Mr. Albert Mollah, Executive Director, Access Bangladesh Foundation.

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Albert Mollah, Executive Director, Access Bangladesh Foundation

Panelists:

- Mr. Md. Osman Bhuiyan, *Joint Secretary Disability Ministry of Social Welfare*
- Ms. Shirin Akhter, *Chairperson, Women with Disability Development Foundation (WDDF)*
- Ms. Aziza Ahmed, *Head of Operation, Bangladesh Business and Disability Network*
- Mr. Md. Saidul Haque, *Executive Director, BERDO*



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities

Moderator: Mr. Albert Mollah, Executive Director, Access Bangladesh Foundation

The moderator, Mr. Albert Mollah, first invited Mr. Saidul Haque to share his experience.

Panelist 1: Mr. Saidul Haque

“I sought a nomination this year. But I did not get it. I believe that if I were allowed to become a political representative, I could have better raised the challenges and barriers my community is facing.”



Panelist 2: Mr. Manik Mahmud

I would like to express my opinion by saying that Smart Bangladesh has more collaboration and networking. A report of Sightsavers and some other organization provides information on the rights, challenges, and potential of people with disabilities, through collaboration, workshops, dialogues, research, challenges will be addressed these events. Government and private funding could fuel a global initiative that will benefit everyone. An international summit can be a powerful demonstration to have the perfect information of what is happening across the world. That will also help us to learn from them.

Mr. Ayon Debnath, Sigt Savers

Let me clarify one thing, we all include UN agencies, personnel from the Social Welfare Ministry and Ms. Zuena Aziz are with us. We are all listening carefully to the discussions, so, we came together for further discussion and initiative.

In the past hour, we were engaged in an open discussion, extending heartfelt thanks to Mr. Manik. It's inspiring to witness the dedication of Smart Bangladesh to the cause of persons with disabilities. Mr. Manik, I'd love to hear your thoughts on how the concept of persons with disabilities integrates into the broader Smart Bangladesh initiative.

Panelist 2: Mr. Manik Mahmud

The a2i work emphasizes technology and innovation. The role of technology in breaking barriers for persons with disabilities is paramount, and in this regard, a2i is at the forefront for driving positive change in the country. The Bangladesh government's establishment of Smart Bangladesh Network is a noteworthy initiative aimed at fostering collaboration among the private & business sector, and all relevant stakeholders.

Government can take initiative to collect global funding. Also, I would like to add few things, UNDP can work to identify the core potential available in persons with disabilities. Even, how technology can play a pivotal role, to utilize their potentialities according to their unique needs and rights also this will help to reduce the digital divide among this community. This can be followed by sectoral challenges that exist in Bangladesh for persons with disabilities. This Seed funding can be a potential source for the issue of climate change that are faced by persons with disabilities. Finally, we can arrange an international summit together for showcasing success, progress, challenges and learning etc.. We will talk about things which will be very beneficial for this community.

I would like to emphasize the existence of five key councils under the Rights and Protection Act of 2013. These councils include the Executive Council, National Council, District Council, Upazila Council, and Union Council. Each council

plays a crucial role in the governance and implementation of social welfare initiatives, contributing significantly to our collective efforts in constructing a more inclusive and supportive society.

I would like to emphasize the existence of five key councils under the Rights and Protection Act of 2013. These councils include the Executive Council, National Council, District Council, Upazila Council, and Union Council. Each council plays a crucial role in the governance and implementation of social welfare initiatives, contributing significantly to our collective efforts in constructing a more inclusive and supportive society.



Ms. Farjana Reza

Thank you Mr. Ayon Debnath for conducting the session. We know in this era of technology it is very difficult to focus our attention for a long time, we have reached the very last segment of our event. We know we have had lots of success and challenges in the last 10 years. I am reiterating what Ms. Shirin pointed out that we have a UNCRPD for the rights of persons with disability. Recently, all UN agencies took initiatives to work together to resolve their issues. I would like to call our colleagues from UN, *Ms. Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh, Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women* and *Ms. Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF* to come to the stage to present your one UN approach. We have an audio-visual message from the UNDP Resident Coordinator who could not join us in person. I am pleased to highlight that each UN agency holds a distinct vision on approaching disability inclusion. This could be a question for this session. I would like to know how all UN agencies will coordinate their activities of disability inclusion under the same umbrella.

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Ms. Farjana Reza, National Programme Officer, ILO

Panelists:

- Ms. Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh
- Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh
- Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women
- Ms. Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities

Moderator: Ms. Farjana Reza
National Programme Officer, ILO

Panelist 1: Ms. Natalie McCauley

Good afternoon, everyone, thank you for inviting me. I think you all will be able to see how much the United Nations is dedicated to disability inclusion. We are working very hard to ensure that children with disabilities are included too. We have 16 days of activism, women and children with disability are nearly four times more vulnerable than the general population. So, this is quite a significant issue. So, for I know the

percentage of persons with disability in Bangladesh, very high. I have heard some commentary from the Ministry of Social Welfare. UNICEF is Working closely with MoSW particularly in developing the social welfare system. To work with women and children and one of the areas is we need more investment to identify the specific assistance for the persons with disability. The people who are here just to remind you all that we need to work together to include persons with disabilities.



Ms. Farjana Reza

Many thanks to Ms. Natalia for addressing the question. We will now go to Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UN Women, to know how UN Women is working in addressing discrimination for the women with disabilities. In addition, if we go for the one UN approach to work on disability inclusion, how UN Women is contributing and coordinating to this work.

Panelist 2: Ms. Gitanjali Singh

Good afternoon, very pleased to join you all at this event. UN Women is actively engaged in working with UNICEF and ILO as part of the joint programme to advance disability inclusion. I would like highlight in the previous session that for gender inclusion we are taking forward an analysis to make recommendations to see how the law could be more gender responsive as mentioned in the CRPD. Data is another issue that comes up. Lack of disability-segregated data and with Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) we are looking into this. Also with climate vulnerable areas, I will mention that we are commemorating the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. Women and girls with disabilities continuously face stigma, harassment, violence and especially in marginalized areas. We are also launching this issue with MoWCA to ensure these issues are highlighted and access to services is critical. Livelihood opportunities is another area where we are keen to advance our activities. Looking outwards, then it is more important we investigate inwards within the UN family. We are looking at advancing the disability inclusion within our organization as well. My colleague Ms. Poppy was here, she was moderating the session, and we are looking at disability inclusion and intersectionality and expanding the awareness within the UN family.

Ms. Farjana Reza

The UNDP Resident Representative could not be present among us but he had left one video message for all of us so I would like to request the team to play the words for Stefan Liller, Resident Representative of UNDP.

Panelist 3: Mr. Stefan Liller

As we celebrate the International Day for Digital Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, it is important to recognize how far we have come in terms of including all people, both in the physical and digital worlds. But also, how much effort is left to do. I remember in a previous office where I worked, I received a message that disability inclusion is very general. You will realize how difficult it was to bring the government to meetings, and the ups and downs, of coming to our office the following day. At the end, two of our colleagues traveled to see how difficult it was to accommodate everybody. After that, we put appropriate markings on the door so that everybody could be included. I think that shows how much we must do in our offices and with our counterparts in terms of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the digital world and global context. Bangladesh has also done a lot in this context as one of the early signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, having approved various laws, policies, and regulations to ensure disability rights are considered. Still, there is a lot more to be done and I will ask you what you are doing in your country, your community, your city and even within your family to ensure everybody has access to participate. These are my words to you, to see how you are contributing to that.

Ms. Farjana Reza

Now I would like to invite Mr. Tuomo who has a very specific question for him. We have heard that skills and employment rate are very low in persons with disability, so the question is, what you think about the person with disability with the world of work, how is ILO contributing to include persons with disabilities in the skills and employment sector?

Panelist 4: Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen

Thank you for the question. A key issue we have heard today is that the entire UN system needs to do much more when it comes to inclusiveness. There is a wide range of UN entities working on health and education services that must coordinate better to address the needs of persons with disabilities in a more impactful manner. It is specifically our collective mandate to collaborate with all of you and ensure work opportunities are made accessible for persons with disabilities – and not just any work, but skilled, dignified, and productive work. So, that thing is the mandate of ILO. You have heard from some of the organizations here, particularly Bangladesh, all sectors need to work coordinately. The public sector or government is being very proactive in facilitating access but working with the government like MoSW, the continuity is very important as we have a lot of variety in terms of access to training especially to work with the private sector. So, it is time for the private sector to step up and ensure they can engage Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) into the workforce. A lot of lessons are learnt in terms of how the private sector can effectively employ Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). There are lots of persons with disabilities working in management, industries, service sector, etc. and their needs and concerns need to be brought under our attention. So, if we don't know the needs of young people or anybody in terms of accessing work, we would not be able to employ them effectively. It is crucial to draw attention to the voice of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Understanding their challenges and barriers is very important.

Ms. Farjana Reza

I would like to go to our Resident Coordinator, Ms. Gwyn, for a very specific question on how we would like to promote a one UN approach in the context of Bangladesh if we go for disability inclusion.

Panelist 5: Ms. Gwyn Lewis

Thank you so much for answering the question. I would like to thank you all for the insightful comments and recommendations made today not just with passion but with also concrete actions in mind. I think we collectively want to

do much more when it comes to inclusion of persons with disabilities. Progress requires harmonizing our work based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that Bangladesh seeks to fully implement by 2026. Together, we pledge to refocus efforts on synchronizing our strategies, laws, and action plans to align with the Convention. The government needs to undertake significant policy reform, ground-level awareness drives and establish redress mechanisms for deprived and marginalized disabled groups. By 2025, Bangladesh aims for substantial shifts across disability welfare indicators by grounding conventions ratified into law and implementing associated action plans. Another crucial synchronized aspect is disability budgeting and allowances calculated based on cost of living to ensure fairness. Key areas like health, sanitation, childcare, social protection, and education require dedicated focus and intensity of efforts. Collaborative partnerships play a pivotal role in facilitating well-informed on-ground decisions and adaptive strategies. To enable comprehensive inclusion, we emphasize synchronized efforts to include persons with disabilities proactively in the workforce. This requires concerted planning, environment building and measures to enable active participation and contribution of individuals with disabilities.



Concluding Segment of the programme

Ms. Farjana Reza

Respected audience, now we are at the final stage. Now, I have the honour to request our esteemed special guests Ms. Zuena Aziz, Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, Mr. Monirul Islam, Additional Secretary, SDG Affairs Coordinator office at the Prime Minister's Office to come to the stage. I would also request the convenor of today's event, Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability, to join us.

Open Discussion



International
Day of
**Persons with
Disabilities**

Ms. Farjana Reza

Now, as we move forward, I am inviting Mr. Aminul Arifeen, Project Manager, Social Security Policy Support Programme (SSPS).

Mr. Aminul Arifeen

I would like to make two important announcements that warrants your attention. First, today's event was organized in just one week. We came to an agreement on roles and responsibilities amongst ourselves. We have gathered here today with 153 dedicated stakeholders to contribute to the success of this event. By working together, we can achieve our shared goals. To that end, we are establishing a joint UN platform - a collaborative space enabling the United Nations, international organizations, and our government to work together seamlessly towards our unified objectives. In a critical meeting held last Thursday, I highlighted to the Cabinet Secretary, the lack of disability inclusion programmes in Bangladesh over the past decade. We are taking guidance in this effort from the SDG coordination affairs and gratefully acknowledge the presence of the Joint Secretary, MoSW here today. We stand committed to developing a National Framework for Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) by 2025, with two key synchronization objectives in mind. Firstly, the current National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) is set to expire in 2025. Secondly, while the upcoming 9th Five Year Plan makes mention of certain allowances, a proper overarching framework is yet absent. Keeping in mind the ambitious SDG 2030 targets, our NSSS framework approach come 2026 will stay focused on poverty reduction among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and alignment with SDG disability inclusion goals. We aim to present a draft of this National Framework for stakeholder review by December 2024.

Our second key announcement is the launch of a media/journalist platform under Sightsavers' banner called the Reporters' Forum, dedicated to driving advocacy and awareness for disability inclusion and welfare within our systems and society. With an understanding of the critical role the media plays in shaping public opinions and perceptions, this platform envisages effecting real change through policy advocacy campaigns, mass nationwide awareness drives, and operating across national, grassroots, and international media spheres. This collective approach aims at driving positive change for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) empowerment and upliftment in Bangladesh. We welcome constructive ideas and proposals from the media fraternity on this inclusive forum.

Journalists' representative (Mr. Kamal)

Assalamualaikum, I am Kamal, representative from reporter's forum, Somoy TV and I think that there is a lack of awareness about disability inclusion among journalists. I would like to suggest organizing scheduled training or awareness session for the reporters on disability-related issues. Also, it's important to have a data centre to get resources on disability issues, and I believe that regular interaction with the stakeholders might help change our current situation.

Mr. Aminul Arifeen

Thank you, I want to highlight ILO's existing training programmes that could be leveraged further. Extending quality training to journalists and media professionals will be critical to furthering the goals of the Reporters' Forum, so I appreciate for understanding this situation.

Journalists' representative – Mr. Mostafa

I think it is important to arrange training for journalists throughout the year. If the training can be arranged using an online portal, then this would be useful. This collective approach will help to gather more information on disability inclusion and that will impact much to share information with all.

Mr. Aminul Arifeen

Thanks for your recommendation, definitely we will try to organize training and different session on disability inclusion using an online platform.



Panel Discussion

Moderator: Ms. Farjana Reza, National Programme Officer, ILO

Panelists:

- Mr. Monirul Islam, Additional Secretary, SDG Affairs Coordinator office at the Prime Minister's Office
- Ms. Zuena Aziz, Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office

Ms. Farjana Reza

Respected audience, it is now my honour to invite our special guest, Mr. Monirul Islam, Additional Secretary and SDG Affairs Coordinator at the Prime Minister's Office, to deliver his address.

Panelist 1 – Mr. Monirul Islam

Assalamwalaikum. I am from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). I would like to highlight that our national SDG coordination architecture has 42 secretaries from all key ministries integrated as members, operationally synchronized from central divisional to district and union levels. Harkening back to Bangabandhu's 1974 UN speech, his vision centered on people's empowerment, a peace-centric development model, and crucially, inclusion of marginalized groups – principles still resonating today and aligned with the SDGs. Thus, disability inclusion is a non-negotiable priority for us. I am proud that strong national ownership and political commitment has translated this vision into reality at the highest government levels.

These concerted efforts have ensured Bangladesh ranks 101 in 2023 for SDG implementation, up from 123 in 2019, securing the top spot among progressed nations. While challenges exist, our perspective plan emphasizes inclusion of all excluded groups. Disability is a crucial aspect covered in all reports submitted by us to UN bodies. By 2025, we aim to fully comprehend existing barriers and challenges to disability inclusion, hence reinforce resource synchronization at district levels in terms of a resource pool. I have keenly listened to all your demands and acknowledge the coordinated platform by UN agencies on this issue. Let me assure you that disability priorities flagged today will be addressed at all national coordination forums and councils. This concludes my remarks. Thank you.



Ms. Farjana Reza

Respected audience, now I have the honour to request our esteemed special guest Ms. Zuena Aziz, Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, to provide her speech.

Panelist 2: Ms. Zuena Aziz

Assalamwalaikum, I think we have comprehended our way forward from the two presentations delivered at the beginning and today's discussion was very fruitful and spontaneous. I want to highlight the integral role of addressing disability issues in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is imperative that action plans for disability status are diligently monitored by the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW). I emphasize the continuous and active involvement of all committees, recognizing the significance of disability-related matters, especially for women with disabilities.

One positive aspect I would like to highlight here, is the collective presence of all UN agencies, which serves as a testament to the government's unwavering commitment to disability inclusion. In this context, I also urge MoSW to extend its support for the sports for persons with disabilities. According to today's discussion, it came out that the gap

lies at the implementation level and under the umbrella of MoSW, so I would like to bring attention the MoSW to acknowledge the issue and take proper plan to monitor activities related to disability issues though they have different plans. I want to conclude by saying thank you for your support and cooperation.

Ms. Farjana Reza

Respected audience, we are here today to observe the 32nd International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the 25th National Disabled Day-2023 under the theme "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities." I would now like to invite the Convener of today's event, Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability, to offer a vote of thanks.



Vote of Thanks by Chair

Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam
Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability

Thanks to everyone, I would like to direct our attention to the themes underpinning this year's disability inclusion observance, the theme is "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities." Considering this, I encourage the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) to emphasize the rescue theme, considering today's discussion on its efforts in disability inclusion. I appeal to the MoSW to initiate regular coordinating meetings among ministries, ensuring that the action plan sees the light of day and permeates all relevant ministries. This proactive approach is pivotal for the effective realization of our commitments in the realm of disability inclusion.





Ms. Farjana Reza

Many thanks to the esteemed guests present on the stage and a heartfelt thank you to all the valuable programme participants, including the Resident Coordinator (RCO), UN staff, representatives from OPDs, and our esteemed government officials. It is my honour to officially bring today's event to a close. Before we part ways, I would like to gently remind everyone about the ongoing UNPRPD campaign. Your continued support and engagement are truly invaluable. As a special concluding activity, I warmly invite each of you to join in taking a photo. Hold up a banner with a message that echoes our shared commitment: "Joint investment for disability inclusion works!" Let's create a visual impact together and don't forget to use the hashtag #UNPRPDImpact. Once again, my sincere appreciation for your active participation and unwavering dedication to this vital cause. From my perspective, it is a call for collaborative efforts between government bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, and citizen platforms. This synergy is indispensable to translate legal provisions into tangible improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities across social, economic, and political dimensions. We will lead the way towards disability inclusion with all UN approaches.

Recommendations



International
Day of
**Persons with
Disabilities**

From the discussion, it is currently seen that, Bangladesh ranks 101st among 166 countries in the SDG index, with a score of 65.9 out of 100 as per the Sustainable Development Report 2023. (Source: Business Standard 2023)

Bangladesh is ahead of India (112th), Pakistan (128th), and Afghanistan (158th) in South Asia. (The Business Standard, 21 June 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/sdg-index-2023-bangladesh-ahead-india-pakistan-654006>)

Bangladesh ranked 46th with a score of 97.8 on the Spillover Index, indicating the country has significantly more positive and fewer negative impacts on other countries in achieving their sustainable development goals.

The SDG dashboard indicates that Bangladesh has already achieved two goals – responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), and climate action (SDG 13).

The discussions during the day centred on visually impaired and severe persons with disabilities, severely lag and nondisabled persons due to the mindset of different stakeholders like employers, higher education due to lack of accessibility. Within this, women and children with disabilities are considered even more vulnerable.

Awareness of disability inclusion is important. It should begin within the family and then spread across the nation.

Since policies/guidelines/action plan/strategies relating to persons with disability, was developed many years ago, it was felt that it's high time to revisit and review it.

The government of Bangladesh has been working to empower women with disabilities. However, achieving an inclusive and disability-friendly society needs focused efforts and initiatives. Sadly, according to the report, the country is stagnant in its position for four goals and moving backward with respect to three goals.

However, there is room for further improvement. These recommendations were collected throughout the workshop:

Women Empowerment and Needs based and Inclusive Skills Development and Employment

In Bangladesh, women with disabilities are emerging as powerful agents of change, breaking down social barriers and advancing empowerment. These resilient women are actively participating in various fields. The Bangladesh government is working relentlessly on the above recommendations. From the discussion, it has come to light, that the empowerment of disabled women is not only reshaping perceptions, but also fostering a sense of community and support. If all opportunities can be ensured, women with disabilities will increasingly act as leaders, advocates, and catalysts for change in Bangladesh.

It is essential to create more opportunities for women with disabilities in Bangladesh to advance in education, skill development, employment, and community engagement. By providing need-based and easily accessible education initiatives, vocational training programmes, and employment opportunities, women with disabilities can acquire the necessary skills, become more independent, and contribute to the economy of their country. Also, it is important to create huge awareness initiative for private and business sector employers.

Overall, it was recommended that irrespective of gender, ensuring quality education and needs based skills development and employment is essential for the empowerment and economic development of persons with disabilities.

Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility is essential to guarantee that everyone, especially individuals with disabilities, can access online information effortlessly. It is crucial to uphold the rights of all individuals by embracing digitalization with inclusivity in mind. To achieve this, we need to design websites, applications, and accessible digital content that cater to diverse needs.

Monitoring

It is crucial for government and non-government organizations to closely monitor activities that support persons with disabilities. This requires strengthening the monitoring system and framework to ensure better tracking of the progress of disability-related projects and programmes. By doing so, all parties can improve the support provided to persons with disabilities and make a positive impact.

Safeguarding rights of persons with disabilities

Ensuring the safety and security of persons with disabilities is a major concern that limits their ability to move independently. It is crucial to address this issue in all sectors to ensure that persons with disabilities have the freedom to move and work without any hindrance. Though the government and non-government organizations are working on this issue. There is still much scope of work in this regard. To achieve this, it is necessary to review policies and conduct extensive awareness programmes as required.

Research and Data

In conducting surveys, especially for persons with disabilities, it is crucial to integrate the Washington Group of Questionnaires and related indicators to address specific needs. It will support the development of a well-structured plan that respects individual rights. Additionally, the collection of disability-segregated data is essential for developing advocacy efforts rooted in data and evidence. Furthermore, specific information helps in reassessing various activities and plans, serving as a guide for the inclusion and support of persons with disabilities. It is imperative to boost research on persons with disabilities to better understand their unique needs and challenges. Increasing research in this field can also help to create more effective inclusive policies, support networks, and initiatives.

In addition, research not only enhances understanding but also opens the door to a more inclusive society. It is also a step towards creating a world where everyone, regardless of ability, can contribute to their fullest potential.

Information portal

Journalists and others believed that there should be an online portal that will have various types of information, research, etc. on disability issues to raise awareness, which would increase their sensitivity and greatly assist in reporting on disability issues.

Accessible Infrastructure

During the discussion, it was discovered that most buildings in Bangladesh are inaccessible to persons with disabilities. This workshop recommends that schools, offices, colleges, institutions, hospitals, and markets be made accessible to everyone. Our goal is to create a Bangladesh where everyone can navigate freely without facing any difficulties.

Political Representation

One of the speakers said that if he had the opportunity to participate in the election process, he would have been able to better represent their needs and wants, as he is a direct representative of persons with disabilities community.

Revisiting role of National Coordination Council and Executive Council

From the discussion, there was a need to revisit and strengthen the role of these Councils. There was agreement that activities and plans should be begin at the rural level.

Advocacy and awareness platform for journalists

The event recommended for a dedicated advocacy and awareness platform for journalists and media for ensuring disability inclusion in all aspects.

A series of workshops are required to get specific and oriented information for the betterment of persons with disabilities so that their stories can be shared and disseminated, leaving no one behind in the pursuit of a smart Bangladesh.

As we echo the words of Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, *“The United Nations is leveraging the power of technology and innovation so that persons with disabilities can have a say in their futures -- towards a more inclusive, accessible world for all.”*





Media Mentions

PRESS RELEASE (English)

For Immediate Release

Dhaka, Bangladesh

United in Action: International Day of Persons with Disabilities Celebrated in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh – December 2, 2023

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), UN agencies, Sightsavers, and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) gathered at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to underscore the theme of this year: "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities."

The distinguished Chief Guest for the event was Mr. Md. Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, while the Special Guest was Ms. Zuena Aziz, Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office.

The event opened with a warm welcome from Sightsavers Country Director, Amrita Rejina Rozario, emphasising the necessity of a collaborative approach to advance disability rights and inclusion in Bangladesh. UN officials attended as Guests of Honour and shared their perspectives on the promotion of disability rights globally and in Bangladesh. The esteemed speakers included Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh, Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women, Stefan Liller, Resident Representative, UNDP (virtually present), and Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF. The UN representatives collectively highlighted the imperative for increased efforts to promote disability rights, calling for a stronger commitment to inclusivity.

Chief Guest Md. Akhter Hossain emphasised the need for stronger alignment between national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and disability inclusion. The event, chaired by Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services, and Information on Disability, featured keynotes from Aminul Arifeen from UNDP and Ayon Debnath for Sightsavers. Both stressed the urgency of reinforcing the implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities, even a decade after its enactment.

People with disabilities and representatives from various disability organisations brought attention to crucial areas, including the revitalisation of disability committees, increased budget allocation for the National Action Plan on Disability, appointment of disability focal points, enhancement of disability allowances, monitoring and accountability of government disability activities, and consultation of organisations of OPDs in the development process.

The event featured two panel discussions covering various thematic areas, and a journalists' forum on disability was introduced, providing a platform for media engagement and awareness.

The collaboration between UN agencies, Sightsavers, and disability organisations underscored a unified commitment to advancing the rights, inclusion, and well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh and globally. The event served as a catalyst for renewed efforts and partnerships to achieve the ambitious goals set forth in the theme "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities."

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সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সমন্বিত পদক্ষেপ নেয়ার প্রত্যয় নিয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের দিবস উদযাপন

ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ - ২ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৩ - আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের দিবস উপলক্ষে, জাতিসংঘের সংস্থাসমূহ তথা বাংলাদেশে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারি অফিস, ইউএনডিপি, আইএলও, ইউএনওমেন, ইউনিসেফ, ইউএনএফপিএ, সাইটসেভার্স, এবং প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সংগঠন ঢাকায় বঙ্গবন্ধু আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলন কেন্দ্রে একটি জাতীয় সেমিনারের আয়োজন করে যার মূল প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয় ছিল “প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সাথে সম্মিলিত অংশগ্রহণ; নিশ্চিত করবে এসডিজি অর্জন।”

প্রতিবছর ডিসেম্বর মাসের ৩ তারিখ আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস পালন করা হয়ে থাকে। তারই ধারাবাহিকতায় এই বছর ৩২তম আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস এবং ২৫তম জাতীয় প্রতিবন্ধী দিবসে এই উদযাপন অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়।

অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী মোঃ আক্তার হোসেন, এবং বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক সাবেক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী জুয়েনা আজিজ।

কর্মশালায় মূল প্রবন্ধ যৌথভাবে উপস্থাপন করেন যথাক্রমে ইউএনডিপি-এর আমিনুল আরিফিন এবং সাইটসেভার্স-এর অয়ন দেবনাথ। মূল প্রবন্ধ সমতা ভিত্তিক ও প্রবেশগম্য বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক উন্নয়নের উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করে এবং একটি অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক, প্রবেশগম্য ও টেকসই সমতার বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলতে হলে প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের অধিকার ও সুরক্ষা আইন এবং প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার যথাযথ বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা প্রয়োজন তা তুলে ধরে।

সাইটসেভার্স বাংলাদেশের কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর এবং ডিজ্যাবিলিটি এল্যায়ন্স অন এসডিজিস বাংলাদেশ এর আহ্বায়ক অমৃতা রেজিনা রোজারিও অনুষ্ঠানে বলেন, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এবং এই লক্ষ্যে সরকারের সাথে উন্নয়ন সহযোগীদের একসাথে আরো জোড়ালোভাবে জন্য কাজ করা প্রয়োজন।”

অনুষ্ঠানে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারি গুয়েন লুইস, বাংলাদেশে আইএলও-এর কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর টমো পটিয়ানন, ইউএনওমেন-এর কান্ট্রি রিপ্রেজেন্টেটিভ গীতাঞ্জলী সিং, ইউনিসেফ-এর শিশু সুরক্ষা প্রধান নাতালি ম্যাকলে এবং ইউএনডিপির সহকারি আবাসিক প্রতিনিধী আনোয়রুল হক ভার্চুয়ালি যোগ দেন।

প্রধান অতিথি মোঃ আখতার হোসেন জাতীয় টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা (এসডিজি) সূচক এবং প্রতিবন্ধী অন্তর্ভুক্তির মধ্যে শক্তিশালী সারিবদ্ধতার প্রয়োজনীয়তার উপর জোর দেন। সেন্টার ফর সার্ভিসেস অ্যান্ড ইনফরমেশন অন ডিজঅ্যাবিলিটির নিক্শীপরিচালক খন্দকার জহুরুল আলমের অনুষ্ঠানের সভাপতিত্ব করেন।

প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তির এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিবন্ধী সংস্থার প্রতিনিধিরা মুক্ত ও বিষয় ভিত্তিক আলোচনার সেশনে প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক কমিটির পুনরুজ্জীবিতকরণ, জাতীয় কর্ম পরিকল্পনার জন্য বাজেট বরাদ্দ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক নিয়োগ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা ভাতা বৃদ্ধি, সরকারের জবাবদিহিতা সহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ক্ষেত্রগুলির প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষকরেছেন।

শ্রেজ রিলিজ সম্পর্কে আরো জানতে যোগাযোগ: অয়ন দেবনাথ, adebnath@sightsavers.org অথবা +৮৮০১৭১১ ৭৮০৭৯৩

Prothom Alo

সমন্বিত পদক্ষেপ নেওয়ার প্রত্যয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস পালন

নাগরিক ডেস্ক

প্রকাশ: ০৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৩, ১৬: ০৩

প্রতিবছর ডিসেম্বরের ৩ তারিখে আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস পালন করা হয়ে থাকে। এরই ধারাবাহিকতায় এ বছর ৩২তম আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস এবং ২৫তম জাতীয় প্রতিবন্ধী দিবসে নানা অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়। এর মধ্যে জাতিসংঘের সংস্থাগুলো তথা বাংলাদেশে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী অফিস, ইউএনডিপি, আইএলও, ইউএন ওমেন, ইউনিসেফ, ইউএনএফপিএ, সাইটসেভার্স ও প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সংগঠন ঢাকায় বঙ্গবন্ধু আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলন কেন্দ্রে জাতীয় সেমিনারের আয়োজন করে। সেমিনারের মূল প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয় ছিল ‘প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সঙ্গে সম্মিলিত অংশগ্রহণ, নিশ্চিত করবে এসডিজি অর্জন।’

অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি-বিষয়ক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী মো. আক্তার হোসেন এবং বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি-বিষয়ক সাবেক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী জুয়েনা আজিজ।

সেমিনারে মূল প্রবন্ধ যৌথভাবে উপস্থাপন করেন ইউএনডিপির আমিনুল আরিফিন ও সাইটসেভার্সের অয়ন দেবনাথ। মূল প্রবন্ধ সমতাভিত্তিক ও প্রবেশগম্য বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক উন্নয়নের ওপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করে এবং একটি অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক, প্রবেশগম্য ও টেকসই সমতার বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলতে হলে প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের অধিকার ও সুরক্ষা আইন এবং প্রতিবন্ধিতাবিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা প্রয়োজন, তা তুলে ধরে।

সাইটসেভার্স বাংলাদেশের কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর এবং ডিজঅ্যাবিলিটি অ্যালায়েন্স অন এসডিজি বাংলাদেশের আহ্বায়ক অমৃতা রেজিনা রোজারিও বলেন, প্রতিবন্ধিতাবিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এবং এ লক্ষ্যে সরকারের সঙ্গে উন্নয়ন সহযোগীদের একসঙ্গে আরও জোরালোভাবে কাজ করা প্রয়োজন।

অনুষ্ঠানে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী গুয়েন লুইস, বাংলাদেশে আইএলওর কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর টমো পটিয়ানন, ইউএন ওমেনের কান্ট্রি রিপ্রেজেন্টেটিভ গীতাজলি সিং, ইউনিসেফের শিশু সুরক্ষার প্রধান নাতালি ম্যাকলে ও ইউএনডিপির সহকারী আবাসিক প্রতিনিধি আনোয়ারুল হক ভার্চুয়ালি যোগ দেন।

মো. আক্তার হোসেন জাতীয় টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা সূচক এবং প্রতিবন্ধী অন্তর্ভুক্তির মধ্যে শক্তিশালী সীমাবদ্ধতার প্রয়োজনীয়তার ওপর জোর দেন। সেন্টার ফর সার্ভিসেস অ্যান্ড ইনফরমেশন অন ডিজঅ্যাবিলিটির নির্বাহী পরিচালক খন্দকার জহুরুল আলম অনুষ্ঠানে সভাপতিত্ব করেন।

International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated in Dhaka

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), UN agencies, Sightsavers, and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) gathered at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to underscore the theme of this year: "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities."

The distinguished Chief Guest for the event was Md. Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, while the Special Guest was Zuena Aziz, Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office.

The event opened with a warm welcome from Sightsavers Country Director, Amrita Rejina Rozario, emphasising the necessity of a collaborative approach to advance disability rights and inclusion in Bangladesh. UN officials attended as Guests of Honour and shared their perspectives on the promotion of disability rights globally and in Bangladesh. The esteemed speakers included Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh, Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women, Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP (virtually present), and Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF. The UN representatives collectively highlighted the imperative for increased efforts to promote disability rights, calling for a stronger commitment to inclusivity.

Chief Guest Md. Akhter Hossain emphasised the need for stronger alignment between national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and disability inclusion. The event, chaired by Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability, featured keynotes from Aminul Arifeen from UNDP and Ayon Debnath for Sightsavers. Both stressed the urgency of reinforcing the implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities, even a decade after its enactment.

People with disabilities and representatives from various disability organisations brought attention to crucial areas, including the revitalization of disability committees, increased budget allocation for the National Action Plan on Disability, appointment of disability focal points, enhancement of disability allowances, monitoring and accountability of government disability activities, and consultation of organisations of OPDs in the development process. The event featured two panel discussions covering various thematic areas, and a journalists' forum on disability was introduced, providing a platform for media engagement and awareness.

The collaboration between UN agencies, Sightsavers, and disability organisations underscored a unified commitment to advancing the rights, inclusion, and well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh and globally. The event served as a catalyst for renewed efforts and partnerships to achieve the ambitious goals set forth in the theme "*United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities.*"

<https://online.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/press-releases/news/international-day-persons-disabilities-celebrated-dhaka-3485826>

Empowering Persons With Disabilities

A critical focus for achieving SDGs

Jahidul Islam has been working at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as a National Disability Coordinator for over two years. Despite a person with a disability, Jahidul did not want to remain confined at home. "After I completed my MBA, I joined the UNFPA. I have a plan to go abroad to attain PhD degree next year," Jahidul told the Daily Sun. He also achieved the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services Outsourcing Award in 2013, which is a recognition of his talent. "People like me want support to prove themselves and want to contribute to the country's economy. Unfortunately, people like me have to face many challenges in Bangladesh as there is no infrastructure required for our safe movement. Even, there is no separate washroom for us," he said. He said he did not have to face any problems when he was in Australia for two years. He said Bangladesh should implement policies to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.

Experts have also recommended bringing people with disabilities into the mainstream economy by giving them access to education and turning them into manpower so that they can contribute to the economy and help the country achieve SDGs by 2030. Talking to the Daily Sun, Jillur Rahman, associate director of the Research and Policy Integration for Development, said the government has taken a good number of policies for persons with disabilities, but these should be implemented properly. "The government should take special programmes for persons with disabilities to build more entrepreneurs. There are scopes to utilise them in the technology sector as they can have a significant contribution," Jillur Rahman. A separate commission for persons with disabilities demanded Experts from UN agencies, Sightsavers, and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in Dhaka said on Saturday Bangladesh needs to focus on persons with disabilities to attain SDGs by 2030. They also emphasised attention to crucial areas, including the revitalisation of disability committees, increased budget allocation for the National Action Plan on Disability, appointment of disability focal points, enhancement of disability allowances, monitoring and accountability of government disability activities, and consultation of organisations of OPDs in the development process. Since its proclamation in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 47/3, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) has been celebrated annually on 3 December around the world.

According to the keynote paper titled, "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities – Bangladesh context" presented by UNDP's Aminul Arifeen and Sightsavers' Ayon Debnath, non-implementation of laws, accountability and transparency are challenges in the country. Ayon Debnath said the key challenges are stigma and discrimination, inadequate data, lack of awareness about the Disability Act, absence of monitoring, and economic empowerment not disability inclusive in the country. Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office Md Akhter Hossain emphasised the need for stronger alignment between national SDG indicators and disability inclusion. He also stressed the urgency of reinforcing the implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities.

According to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in 2022, 47.42 lakh people were physically or mentally challenged, in other words, persons with disabilities. The survey also showed that some 40.55 % of children with disabilities can go to school while 27.21 % can take part in any economic activity. According to the World Health Organisation, more than one billion out of eight billion people have some form of disability and 80% of them live in developing countries.

<https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/724130>

Collaborative initiatives mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities

- Event comprised two panel discussions
- Amrita Rejina Rozario underscored the necessity of a collaborative approach to propel disability rights

The 32nd International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the 25th National Disabled Day-2023 will be observed in the country on Sunday. Preceding the significant day, a landmark collaborative initiative convened on Saturday UN agencies, Sightsavers, and Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka. The event unfolded under the theme “United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with, and by persons with disabilities,” emphasizing the critical importance of advancing disability rights and inclusion.

Prime Minister’s Principal Coordinator for SDG Affairs, Md Akhter Hossain, and former principal coordinator for SDG affairs, Zuena Aziz, attended the event, reaffirming the high-level commitment to the cause. Akhter Hossain emphasized the need for strengthened alignment between national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and disability inclusion, setting the tone for discussions on advancing these critical goals. In her welcome speech, Sightsavers Country Director, Amrita Rejina Rozario, underscored the necessity of a collaborative approach to propel disability rights and inclusion to the forefront of the national agenda in Bangladesh. UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Gwyn Lewis, and other UN officials shared valuable insights on global and local initiatives aimed at promoting disability rights and fostering inclusion.

Aminul Arifeen, the national project manager of SSPS program at UNDP, and Ayon Debnath, advocacy, communication coordinator & campaign lead at Sightsavers, presented the keynote paper. They stressed the urgency of reinforcing the implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities, even a decade after its enactment. Representatives from various disability organizations and individuals with disabilities addressed crucial areas, including the revitalization of disability committees, increased budget allocation for the National Action Plan on Disability, appointment of disability focal points, enhancement of disability allowances, monitoring and accountability of government disability activities, and the consultation of organizations of OPDs in the development process.

The event comprised two panel discussions covering various thematic areas and introduced a journalists’ forum on disability to enhance media engagement and awareness. The collaboration between UN agencies, Sightsavers, and disability organizations showcased a unified commitment to advancing the rights, inclusion, and well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh and globally. The event served as a catalyst for renewed efforts and partnerships, propelling the ambitious goals set forth in the theme “United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with, and by persons with disabilities.”

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/event/332809/collaborative-initiatives-mark-international-day>

Int'l Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated in Dhaka

UN agencies, Sightsavers, and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) gathered on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka on Saturday.

The event was celebrated with the theme "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities," read a press release. People with disabilities and representatives from various disability organisations brought attention to crucial areas, including the revitalization of disability committees, increased budget allocation for the National Action Plan on Disability, the appointment of disability focal points, enhancement of disability allowances, monitoring and accountability of government disability activities, and consultation of organisations of OPDs in the development process.

The collaboration between UN agencies, Sightsavers, and disability organisations underscored a unified commitment to advancing the rights, inclusion, and well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh and globally. The event catalysed renewed efforts and partnerships to achieve the ambitious goals outlined in the theme "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities." Md Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, was the chief guest for the event, while Zuena Aziz, former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, was the special guest. Sightsavers Country Director, Amrita Rejina Rozario, inaugurated the programme, emphasising the necessity of a collaborative approach to advance disability rights and inclusion in Bangladesh.

UN officials attended as Guests of Honour and shared their perspectives on the promotion of disability rights globally and in Bangladesh. The esteemed speakers included Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh, Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women, Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP (virtually present), and Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF. The UN representatives collectively highlighted the imperative for increased efforts to promote disability rights, calling for a stronger commitment to inclusivity. The event featured two-panel discussions covering various thematic areas, and a journalists' forum on disability was introduced, providing a platform for media engagement and awareness.

Addressing the programme as the Chief Guest, Akhter Hossain emphasised the need for stronger alignment between national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and disability inclusion.

The event, chaired by Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability, featured keynotes from Aminul Arifeen from UNDP and Ayon Debnath for Sightsavers. Both stressed the urgency of reinforcing the implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities, even a decade after its enactment.

<https://businesspostbd.com/national/intl-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-celebrated-in-dhaka>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Sunday Also National Disabled Day-2023

The 32nd International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the 25th National Disabled Day-2023 will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe on Sunday in a befitting manner. Bangladesh along with the other members of the United Nations will observe the international day with the theme "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities." President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion, greeting all people with disabilities, their families and organizations working for them. The government and the different non-governmental and rights organisations have worked out various programmes to mark the day with due respect.

Meanwhile, UN agencies, Sightsavers, and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) gathered to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka on Saturday. The event featured two-panel discussions covering various thematic areas, and a journalists' forum on disability was introduced, providing a platform for media engagement and awareness. People with disabilities and representatives from various disability organisations brought attention to crucial areas, including the revitalization of disability committees, increased budget allocation for the National Action Plan on Disability, the appointment of disability focal points, enhancement of disability allowances, monitoring and accountability of government disability activities, and consultation of organisations of OPDs in the development process. The collaboration between UN agencies, Sightsavers, and disability organisations underscored a unified commitment to advancing the rights, inclusion, and well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh and globally. The event catalysed renewed efforts and partnerships to achieve the ambitious goals outlined in the theme "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities."

Md Akhter Hossain, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, was the chief guest for the event, while Zuena Aziz, former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office, was the special guest. Sightsavers Country Director, Amrita Rejina Rozario, inaugurated the programme, emphasising the necessity of a collaborative approach to advance disability rights and inclusion in Bangladesh.

UN officials attended as Guests of Honour and shared their perspectives on the promotion of disability rights globally and in Bangladesh. The esteemed speakers included Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh, Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women, Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP (virtually present), and Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF.

The UN representatives collectively highlighted the imperative for increased efforts to promote disability rights, calling for a stronger commitment to inclusivity. Addressing the programme as the Chief Guest, Akhter Hossain emphasised the need for stronger alignment between national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and disability inclusion. The event, chaired by Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability, featured keynotes from Aminul Arifeen from UNDP and Ayon Debnath for Sightsavers. Both stressed the urgency of reinforcing the implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities, even a decade after its enactment.

<https://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-on-sunday/126764>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated in Dhaka

The UN Resident Coordinator Office in Bangladesh, UNDP, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA, Sightsavers and entities of persons with disabilities organised a national seminar at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka on Saturday to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event was themed "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with, and by persons with disabilities", according to a press release.

Md Akhtar Hossain, chief coordinator for SDG Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office, attended the event as the chief guest, while Zuena Aziz, former chief coordinator for SDG Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office, was in attendance as the special guest. Mr Hossain emphasised the need for a strong alignment between national Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators and disability inclusion. Amrita Regina Rosario, country director of Sightsavers Bangladesh and convener of the Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh, inaugurated the programme.

She said it is very important to ensure the implementation of the National Action Plan on Disability and for this purpose, the government and development partners need to work more closely together.

Aminul Arifin of UNDP and Ayon Debnath of Sightsavers jointly presented the keynote paper at the event, underscoring the need for ensuring proper implementation of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act and the National Action Plan on Disability to build an inclusive, accessible and sustainable Bangladesh.

UN Resident Coordinator Gwyn Lewis, Bangladesh ILO Country Director Tuomo Poutiainen, UNWOMEN Country Representative Gitanjali Singh, UNICEF Child Protection Chief Natalie McCauley, and UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Anwarul Haque virtually attended the event.

Khandkar Zahurul Alam, executive director of the Center for Services and Information on Disability, presided over the event.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-celebrated-in-dhaka>

২৫তম জাতীয় প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস উদযাপন প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের উন্নয়নে সমন্বিত উদ্যোগ প্রয়োজন

জাতিসংঘের সংস্থাগুলো তথা বাংলাদেশে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী অফিস, ইউএনডিপি, আইএলও, ইউএনওমেন, ইউনিসেফ, ইউএনএফপিএ, সাইটসেভার্স, এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিবন্ধী সংস্থার উদ্যোগে ঢাকায় আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস উপলক্ষে সেমিনারের আয়োজন করা হয়েছে।

শনিবার (২ ডিসেম্বর) রাজধানীর বঙ্গবন্ধু আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলন কেন্দ্রে ৩২তম আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস এবং ২৫তম জাতীয় প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস উদযাপন উপলক্ষে আয়োজিত সেমিনারের মূল প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয় ছিল ‘প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সঙ্গে সম্মিলিত অংশগ্রহণ; নিশ্চিত করবে এসডিজি অর্জন।’

অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী মো. আক্তার হোসেন, এবং বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক সাবেক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী জুয়েনা আজিজ।

কর্মশালায় মূল প্রবন্ধ যৌথভাবে উপস্থাপন করেন যথাক্রমে ইউএনডিপির আমিনুল আরিফিন এবং সাইটসেভার্সের অয়ন দেবনাথ। তারা সমতা ভিত্তিক ও প্রবেশগম্য বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক উন্নয়নের ওপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেন। পাশাপাশি একটি অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক, প্রবেশগম্য ও টেকসই সমতার বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলতে হলে প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের অধিকার ও সুরক্ষা আইন এবং প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার যথাযথ বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা তুলে ধরেন।

সাইটসেভার্স বাংলাদেশের কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর এবং ডিজ্যাবিলিটি এল্যায়ন্স অন এসডিজিস বাংলাদেশের আহ্বায়ক অমৃতা রেজিনা রোজারিও অনুষ্ঠানে বলেন, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এই লক্ষ্যে সরকারের সঙ্গে উন্নয়ন সহযোগীদের আরও জোড়ালোভাবে জন্য কাজ করা প্রয়োজন। অনুষ্ঠানে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী গুয়েন লুইস, বাংলাদেশে আইএলও-এর কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর টমো পটিয়ানন, ইউএনওমেনের কান্ট্রি রিপ্রেজেন্টেটিভ গীতাজলী সিং, ইউনিসেফের শিশু সুরক্ষা প্রধান নাতালি ম্যাকলে এবং ইউএনডিপির সহকারী আবাসিক প্রতিনিধি আনোয়ারুল হক ভারুয়ালি যোগ দেন।

প্রধান অতিথি মো. আখতার হোসেন জাতীয় টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা (এসডিজি) সূচক এবং প্রতিবন্ধী অন্তর্ভুক্তির মধ্যে শক্তিশালী সারিবদ্ধতার প্রয়োজনীয়তার ওপর জোর দেন। সেন্টার ফর সার্ভিসেস অ্যান্ড ইনফরমেশন অন ডিজ্যাবিলিটির নির্বাহী পরিচালক খন্দকার জহুরুল আমের অনুষ্ঠানে সভাপতিত্ব করেন। প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিরা এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিবন্ধী সংস্থার প্রতিনিধিরা মুক্ত ও বিষয় ভিত্তিক আলোচনার সেশনে প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক কমিটির পুনরুজ্জীবিতকরণ, জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার জন্য বাজেট বরাদ্দ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক নিয়োগ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা ভাতা বৃদ্ধি, সরকারের জবাবদিহিতাসহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ক্ষেত্রগুলির প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছেন।

<https://swadeshbangla24.com/details/7416/>

প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের উন্নয়নে সমন্বিত উদ্যোগ প্রয়োজন

জাতিসংঘের সংস্থাগুলো তথা বাংলাদেশে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী অফিস, ইউএনডিপি, আইএলও, ইউএনওমেন, ইউনিসেফ, ইউএনএফপিএ, সাইটসেভার্স, এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিবন্ধী সংস্থার উদ্যোগে ঢাকায় আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস উপলক্ষ্যে সেমিনারের আয়োজন করা হয়েছে।

শনিবার (২ ডিসেম্বর) রাজধানীর বঙ্গবন্ধু আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলন কেন্দ্রে ৩২তম আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস এবং ২৫তম জাতীয় প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস উদযাপন উপলক্ষ্যে আয়োজিত সেমিনারের মূল প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয় ছিল ‘প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সঙ্গে সম্মিলিত অংশগ্রহণ; নিশ্চিত করবে এসডিজি অর্জন।’

অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী মো. আক্তার হোসেন, এবং বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক সাবেক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী জুয়েনা আজিজ।

কর্মশালায় মূল প্রবন্ধ যৌথভাবে উপস্থাপন করেন যথাক্রমে ইউএনডিপির আমিনুল আরিফিন এবং সাইটসেভার্সের অয়ন দেবনাথ। তারা সমতা ভিত্তিক ও প্রবেশগম্য বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক উন্নয়নের ওপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেন। পাশাপাশি একটি অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক, প্রবেশগম্য ও টেকসই সমতার বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলতে হলে প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের অধিকার ও সুরক্ষা আইন এবং প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার যথাযথ বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা তুলে ধরেন।

সাইটসেভার্স বাংলাদেশের কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর এবং ডিজ্যাবিলিটি এলিয়ায়েস অন এসডিজিস বাংলাদেশের আহ্বায়ক অমৃতা রেজিনা রোজারিও অনুষ্ঠানে বলেন, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এই লক্ষ্যে সরকারের সঙ্গে উন্নয়ন সহযোগীদের আরও জোড়ালোভাবে জন্য কাজ করা প্রয়োজন।

অনুষ্ঠানে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী গুয়েন লুইস, বাংলাদেশে আইএলও-এর কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর টমো পটিয়ানন, ইউএনওমেনের কান্ট্রি রিপ্রেজেন্টেটিভ গীতাজ্জলী সিং, ইউনিসেফের শিশু সুরক্ষা প্রধান নাতালি ম্যাকলে এবং ইউএনডিপির সহকারী আবাসিক প্রতিনিধি আনোয়রুল হক ভারুয়ালি যোগ দেন।

প্রধান অতিথি মো. আক্তার হোসেন জাতীয় টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা (এসডিজি) সূচক এবং প্রতিবন্ধী অন্তর্ভুক্তির মধ্যে শক্তিশালী সারিবদ্ধতার প্রয়োজনীয়তার ওপর জোর দেন। সেন্টার ফর সার্ভিসেস অ্যান্ড ইনফরমেশন অন ডিজঅ্যাবিলিটির নির্বাহী পরিচালক খন্দকার জহুরুল আলমের অনুষ্ঠানে সভাপতিত্ব করেন।

প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তির এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিবন্ধী সংস্থার প্রতিনিধিরা মুক্ত ও বিষয় ভিত্তিক আলোচনার সেশনে প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক কমিটির পুনরুজ্জীবিতকরণ, জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার জন্য বাজেট বরাদ্দ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক নিয়োগ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা ভাতা বৃদ্ধি, সরকারের জবাবদিহিতাসহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ক্ষেত্রগুলির প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছেন।

<https://bdsomach->

[ar24.com/%E0%A6%AA%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A7%E0%A7%80-%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AF%E0%A6%95%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%89%E0%A6%A8/](https://bdsomach-ar24.com/%E0%A6%AA%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A7%E0%A7%80-%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AF%E0%A6%95%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%89%E0%A6%A8/)

ঢাকায় আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস পালিত

ঢাকায় আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস পালন করা হয়েছে। দিবসটি উপলক্ষে ‘প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সঙ্গে সম্মিলিত অংশগ্রহণ: নিশ্চিত করবে এসডিজি অর্জন’ শীর্ষক সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে।

বঙ্গবন্ধু আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলন কেন্দ্রে গত শনিবার এই সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। বাংলাদেশে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী অফিস, ইউএনডিপি, আইএলও, ইউএনওমেন, ইউনিসেফ, ইউএনএফপিএ, সাইটসেভার্স এবং প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের সংগঠন সেমিনারের আয়োজন করে।

প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী মো. আক্তার হোসেন এবং বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের এসডিজি বিষয়ক সাবেক প্রধান সমন্বয়কারী জুয়েনা আজিজ। সেন্টার ফর সার্ভিসেস অ্যান্ড ইনফরমেশন অন ডিজঅ্যাবিলিটির নির্বাহী পরিচালক খন্দকার জহুরুল আলম সেমিনারের সভাপতিত্ব করেন। সেমিনারে মূল প্রবন্ধ যৌথভাবে উপস্থাপন করেন ইউএনডিপি’র আমিনুল আরিফিন এবং সাইটসেভার্স’র অয়ন দেবনাথ।

সাইটসেভার্স বাংলাদেশের কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর এবং ডিজ্যাবিলিটি এলগ্যান্স অন এসডিজিস বাংলাদেশের আহ্বায়ক অমৃতা রেজিনা রোজারিও বলেন, ‘প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এবং এই লক্ষ্যে সরকারের সঙ্গে উন্নয়ন সহযোগীদের একসঙ্গে আরও জোরালভাবে কাজ করা প্রয়োজন।’

জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারী গুয়েন লুইস, বাংলাদেশে আইএলও’র কান্ট্রি ডিরেক্টর টমো পটিয়ানন, ইউএনওমেন’র কান্ট্রি রিপ্রেজেন্টেটিভ গীতাঞ্জলী সিং, ইউনিসেফের শিশু সুরক্ষা প্রধান নাতালি ম্যাকলে এবং ইউএনডিপির সহকারী আবাসিক প্রতিনিধি আনোয়ারুল হক ভার্চুয়ালি যোগ দেন।

প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তির এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিবন্ধী সংস্থার প্রতিনিধিরা মুক্ত ও বিষয়ভিত্তিক আলোচনার সেশনে প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক কমিটির পুনরুজ্জীবিতকরণ, জাতীয় কর্মপরিকল্পনার জন্য বাজেট বরাদ্দ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা বিষয়ক নিয়োগ, প্রতিবন্ধিতা ভাতা বৃদ্ধি, সরকারের জবাবদিহিতাসহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ক্ষেত্রগুলোর প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেন।

প্রতিবছর ৩ ডিসেম্বর আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস পালন করা হয়। এরই ধারাবাহিকতায় এ বছর ৩২তম আন্তর্জাতিক দিবস এবং ২৫তম জাতীয় আন্তর্জাতিক দিবস উদযাপনে এ অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়। নির্বাহী পরিচালক খন্দকার জহুরুল আলম সেমিনারের সভাপতিত্ব করেন। সেমিনারে মূল প্রবন্ধ যৌথভাবে উপস্থাপন করেন ইউএনডিপি’র আমিনুল আরিফিন এবং সাইটসেভার্স’র অয়ন দেবনাথ।

<https://www.samakal.com/bangladesh/article/211098//>

Somoy News:

<https://www.somoynews.tv/news/2023-12-02/A3sDvxy8>

Somoy TV:

<https://en.somoynews.tv/news/2023-12-02/int-l-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-celebrated-in-dhaka>

Deepto TV:

<https://youtu.be/ehBZ-iy7uhQ>

DBC News:

<https://youtu.be/gVALXNxyJVI?si=IW7vT24adPN5uC4u>

Observance Of International Day of Persons with Disability

Venue: Carnival Hall, BICC

Date: 2 December 2023

SI	Name	Organization/Designation
1	Sarder A. Razzak	Chairman, DSSB
2	Raiqah R. Walie Khan	Communications Officer, UNDP
3	Mohd. Monirul Islam	Add. Secretary (SDG), PMO
4	Md. Nipun Afridi	UNV Programme Assistant, UNDP
5	Engr. S.G. Roy	Consultant, DPUP
6	Dr. Lucky Roy	Treasurer
7	Madob Chandra Sharkar	DPUP Secretary
8	Poroshi Rani Sharkar	Executive Member
9	Md. Rahat	Office and Publicity Secretary
10	Md. Rasel Rana	Publish Editor, NGDO
11	Uttam Howlader	Executive Director
12	Md. Zihad Hossain	Program Officer
13	Md. Akter Hossen	Senior Program Manager, CSID
14	Amjad	Officer
15	Jahid	Coordinator, UNFPA
16	Zoglul Kamal	News Editor, Somoy TV
17	Kokila	Member
18	Nargis Islam	Chairman
19	Md. Abdul Jalil	General Secretary
20	Ayesha Begum	Assistant
21	Akter	Chairman
22	Merin Akter	Member
23	Morjina Ahmed	ED
24	Mahmuda	ACB
25	Jarir Hossen	Executive Director

26	Masuda Parvin	Member, DDP
27	Zahid Hossain	Human Rights Officer, UNRCO
28	Adhara Das	Bangladesh Campaign Officer, Sightsavers
29	Hafizur Rahman Bullet	Chairman, DCF
30	Priyata Tripura	PC, WDDF
31	Ruma Akter	Member,
32	Bashir Hossain	NGDO
33	Rumi Akter	Sr. Officer, NBD, SCI
34	Tosiba Kashem	Project Coordination Analyst, UN WOMEN
35	Md. Shahidul Islam	Director, Tangail DPOD
36	Md. Jahangir Alam	Chairman, Tangail DPOD
37	Md. Monir Uddin	Finance Secretary, Tangail DPOD
38	Dr. Nafees	Consultant
39	Shahabuddin Ahmed	Teacher
40	Albert Mollah	Executive Director, Access Bangladesh Foundation
41	Sultana Kabery	Intern
42	Mohammad Bellal Hossain	President
43	Afroja Mukta	Sign Language Interpreter
44	Mahfuzul Bari	UNDP
45	Zahirul Islam	Program Officer, YPSA
46	Vashkar Bhattacharjee	National Consultant, (a2i)
47	Saiful Islam	T.O.
48	Kamrus Salam	TS, Sightsavers
49	Khandaker Jahurul Alam	CSID
50	Md. Khalilur Rahim	MDPOD
51	Md. Antaj Ali	MDPOD
52	Sarmin Akther	B-Scan

53	Nasrin Akter	MDPOD
54	Selina	Member
55	Sabrina Tasnim	Asst. Program Officer
56	Rejaul Karim Siddique	IDA
57	Bibi Kulsum	Student, DU
58	Saleh	Interpreter
59	Harun Ur Rashid	Executive Director
60	Md. Bellal Hossain	Member
61	Md. Osman Bhuiyan	Joint Secretary
62	Afrin Islam Happy	Member, DWS
63	Nahiyen Bushra	Student
64	Ruksana Kabir Lorin	Job Seeker
65	Pappu Lal Modak	Head, OSSFD
66	Rafiqul Islam	Executive Director
67	Subir Kumar Saha	Coordinator, GUK
68	Sharmin Akther Dolon	WDDF
69	Syed Habibur Rahman	NGDO
70	Tania Akter	Assistant, ESL
71	Shirin Akhter	Chairman, WDDF
72	Nurun Nahar Sultana	Rusada Foundation
73	Fatema Akhter	Kapasia KUDPDC
74	Laki Akhter	Executive Director, Dhaka DPOD
75	Sharmin Akhter	Research Mobilizer
76	Mohua Paul	Chairperson, Access Bangladesh Foundation
77	Md. Rajib Hasan	Athlete
78	Marzana Akter	Athlete
79	Shakil Azad Monon	Secretary General, ODIR
80	Kohinoor Azad Moly	Chairman, ODIR
81	AD. Dilip KUMar Ghosh	National Disability Forum

82	S.M. Akash	Head of News, Deepto TV
83	Mirza Nayeem Mahmud	Research Associate, UNDP
84	Md. Abdullah	General Member of SDSL
85	Mamunur Rashid	General Member of SDSL
86	Emelda Hossain Dipa	Secretary General (Acting), SWID Bangladesh
87	Mahmudul Hasan	AD, SWID Bangladesh
88	Utpal Mallick	Project Manager, Sightsavers
89	Md. Mamunur Rahman	Finance officer
90	Md. Ashraful Islam	O/A
91	Md. Alauddin	N/A
92	Mir Ashraf Hossain	Acting President
93	Nasima Akter	President, National Council for Disabled Women
94	Rokeya Begum	President
95	Jahirul Islam	Office Assistant
96	Rehana Islam	Community Mobilizer
97	Rohida Nasrin	Program Officer
98	Md. Jahangir Alam	Senior Coordinator, CDD
99	A.H.M. Noman Khan	Executive Director, CDD
100	Jahanara Jahan Lima	Member of SDSL
101	Rakiba Tahmeen	Sightsavers
102	Noushin Shah	NPC, ILO
103	Salma Mahbub	GS, B-SCAN
104	Md. Sofiul Islam	Data Analyst
105	Abu Muhammad Shihab	Deputy General Manager
106	Gitanjali Singh	Representative, UNWOMEN
107	Shantanu Chanda	Communications Associate, UNDP
108	Abdur Rouf	Program Manager
109	Nusrat Zerine	Technical Lead,

		Disability Inclusion Program
110	Nazrana Yesmin Hira	Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)
111	Md. Saidul Huq	E.D, BERDO
112	Maksuda Akter	D.D, BERDO
113	Ayesha Noor	UNDP, SSPS
114	Md. Jahidul Islam	UNWOMEN, TS
115	Afsana Begum	D.C.F.
116	Archy Haque	Staff Reporter, The daily Ajker Patrika
117	Samad Khan	UNFPA
118	Surya Akter	UNDP
119	Salim Rahman	CRP
120	Md. Musherraf Hossain	Advocate, appellate Division
121	Shamsun Nahar	VIPS
122	Ahmed Saifullah Sami	VIPS
123	Md. Liton	President
124	Tahmina Bibi	Editor
125	Aminul Arifeen	National Project Manager, SPPS Program
126	Ahmed Ibn Saleh	Employee
127	Nazma Ara Popi	Project Support Officer
128	Sayeda Munni	Driver
129	Md. Rustom Mia	Admin, DUB
130	Nasrin Jahan	DCF Founder and Executive
131	Shamresh Saha	Lead, Skill Development Program
132	Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen	ILO, Country Director, Bangladesh
133	Rummanul Ferdous	Senior Programme Specialist
134	Shahriar	Journalist, Banijjo Protidin
135	Dr. Rajib Hasan	DD, JPUF
136	Md. Nayem Bhuyan	Programme Officer, SPPS, UNDP
137	Abu Talib	Cameraman
138	Farjana Reza	NPO, ILO

139	Monir	Journalist
140	Anondo Mostafa	Journalist
141	Abir	Journalist
142	Zahid Kabir	UNICEF
143	Tanvir Khondokar	Senior Broadcast Journalist
144	Rafikul Islam	Stuff Reporter, Daily Sun
145	Shereen Akther	Prog. Officer. ED, UNESCO
146	Hasiba Hasan Joya	ED, SDSL
147	Md. KM Hossain	LS
148	Ayon Debnath	Campaign Adviser, Sightsavers
149	Alamgir Hossain	UNRCO
150	Sayed Farzana Zaman Rumpa	UNDP
151	Mosharrof Hossain	Global Inclusion Counselling
152	Arju Afrin Kathy	Research Associate, UNDP
153	Emon Rahman	Staff Reporter, Daily Jugantor

“United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities”.

Saturday 2nd December 2023

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Venue: Carnival Hall, BICC

Time	Activity	
09:00 AM	Registration	Event Management
09:30 AM	Welcome Remarks	Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario Country Director, Sightsavers & Convener, Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh
09:35 AM	Keynote Presentation Mr. Aminul Arifeen , UNDP Mr. Ayon Debnath , Sightsavers	10 years of Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013-2023
09:55 AM	Reflection Moderated by Mr. Vashkar Bhattacharjee , National Consultant, a2i.	1. Dr. Rajib Hasan , JPUF (Jatiyo Pratibondhi Unnoyon Foundation) 2. Mr. AHM Noman Khan , Executive Director of Centre for Disability in Development 3. Ms. Nasima Akter , President, National Council for Disabled Women
10:15 AM	LIFE to LEAD Moderated by Ms. Nazma Ara Begum Poppy , Project	Youth Voice 1. Mr. Amjad Hosen , Officer, Call center BRAC Bank LPC 2. Ms. Ruma Akhter , Member, B-SCAN 3. Ms. Nahiyen Bushra , Research Assistant, Bonhishikha.

	Support Officer, UN WOMEN	
10:45 AM	<p>Thematic Panel Discussion</p> <p>Moderated by</p> <p>Mr. Albert Mollah, Executive Director, Access Bangladesh Foundation</p>	<p>The discussion will be structured around five pillars of sustainable development – People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, Women with Disability Development Foundation (WDDF) 2. Ms. Aziza Ahmed, Head of Operation, Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) 3. Mr. Saidul Haque, Executive Director, BERDO 4. Md. Osman Bhuiyan, Joint Secretary (Disability), Ministry of Social Welfare
11:15 AM	Open Discussion	Moderated by Mr. Ayon Debnath
11:45 PM	<p>Commitment on disability inclusion from UN agencies</p> <p>Moderated by MC</p>	<p>Ms. Gwyn Lewis, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh</p> <p>Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO- Country Director in Bangladesh</p> <p>Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative, UN Women</p> <p>Mr. Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP</p> <p>Ms. Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF</p>
12:20 PM	Speech by Guest of Honour	<p>Representatives of British High Commission</p> <p>Representative from Embassy of State of Qatar</p>

12:40 PM	Speech by Special Guest	<p>Ms. Zuena Aziz Former Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) Prime Minister’s Office Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh</p>
12.45 PM	Speech by Chief Guest	<p>Mr. Md. Akhter Hossain Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) Prime Minister’s Office Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh</p>
12:50 PM	Launching media/ journalist platform for advocating and promoting disability inclusion in the system	Moderated by MC
1:00 PM	Vote of Thanks by Chair	<p>Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam ED, Centre for Services, and Information on Disability</p>
1.05 PM	<p>Photo Challenge:</p> <p>Programme participants including Resident Coordinator (RCO), UN staff, OPDs and governments will be invited to take a photo holding a message on a banner with:</p> <p>Joint investment for disability inclusion works! #UNPRPDImpact</p>	
01.05 – 02:00 PM	Lunch	



Glimpses of The Event











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