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The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, and would like to refer to the letter received regarding the call for inputs on **“The participation of persons with disabilities in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Post-2030 discussions”**. In that regard, the Permanente Mission has the honor to attach herewith contribution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the afore-mentioned request.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the assurance of its highest consideration.



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
The Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities
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This document has been prepared in response to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities about the request for countries interventions and contributions to the preparation of its report on the participation of persons with disabilities in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Post-2030 discussions:

1. Please inform how persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are meaningfully consulted and their participation ensured during the follow up and review processes of the 2030 agenda at the regional, national and sub-national levels.

a. is there a specific mechanism for follow up and review of the implementation of the sustainable development goals in the country? How are persons with disabilities included in this mechanism?

In designing the 2030 Vision of Saudi Arabia, one of the most crucial programs, namely the National Transformation Program (NTP), persons with disabilities (PWDs) and their representative organizations are not only meaningfully consulted and their participation ensured in the design process, but also during the follow up and review processes of the 2030 agenda. For example, one of the initiatives of the NTP was to establish a government branch that ensures PWDs' participation in all sectors, and that is the Authority of People with Disability (APD). The APD was established as one of the national transformation programs, and its Board of Directors includes four independent members, two of whom are PWDs and the other two are family members of PWDs. This ensures PWDs full and effective consultation and participation in the follow up process of the 2030 agenda at all levels because by being in this position, they are allowed to make decisions at the highest level. In addition, on August 27, 2023, the Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was passed by the Royal Decree No. M/27, in which Article (2) states that "This Law aims to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure their access to all services on an equal basis with others, and affirms the following basic principles: (4) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate in the management of their affairs in accordance with governing provisions." This demonstrate that PWDs and their representative organizations are meaningfully consulted, and their participation ensured during the follow up and review processes of the 2030 agenda at the regional, national and sub-national levels.



2. please describe the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in gathering data and producing voluntary national review or voluntary local reviews. Please share good practices in this regard.

a. what steps are being taken to facilitate their participation? are there any awareness- raising campaigns implemented to inform persons with disabilities of these processes?

Saudi Arabia is making efforts to promote the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities through a combination of legal frameworks, accessibility initiatives, awareness campaigns, support services, and collaboration with stakeholders. Feedback of NGOs and non-profit organizations are also involved in the decision-making process through different platforms in systemic process.

To establish a national integrated system for persons with disabilities, the National Disability Registry (NDR) project has come to be a reliable data source for entities that provide services to persons with disabilities under the supervision of APD. This project aims to build a unified system for the NDR which will enable the APD to collect all information about persons with disabilities and their families, without prejudice to privacy laws. This includes personal, social, health, educational, work information, and more. The NDR also aims to achieve the project objectives to be a comprehensive reference for all parties that provide their services under the supervision of APD.

Furthermore, during the work on the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (not approved yet, still going through government credence), the governance model was developed to ensure the participation of PWDs, their representative organizations, and families as an Advisory Committee for the implementation of the national strategy to ensure that input of PWDs is incorporated throughout, along with private and social sectors.

b. Are there any platforms in place for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to contribute to the reporting process? How are they accessible? Is there are reasonable accommodation fund in place to secure the participation of persons with disabilities?



In Saudi Arabia, before passing new legislations, all government agencies are required to publish drafts of new upcoming laws in a specific platform in order to receive all comments from the public and their representative organizations. This platform name is Istitlaa (The Public Consultation Platform). Before approving the Implementing Regulation of the Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, APD has submitted a copy of the regulation and made public announcements via social media platforms using all-inclusive language, including but not limited to sign language, plain text, and e-accessibility.

In addition, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and APD have a number of channels via which PWDs and their representative organizations can communicate their requests and concerns. This allows PWDs to fully participate in all reporting processes by reaching out to public officials and consult on various issues. In terms of accessibility for example, APD's main website is fully E-accessible using the most up to date methodologies, and even when visiting the branch, sign language interpreter is provided when needed.

c. How are the views of persons with disabilities incorporated in these reports?

In the above-mentioned platform, namely Istitlaa, it is required for all government agencies that publish their upcoming new legislation to accurately reflect on all views and feedback received from PWDs. After that, a report shall be issued and submitted in the platform.

3. Is the data gathered for the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development being disaggregated by disability? If so, how is it accessible for persons with disabilities?

Yes, through Vision 2030, national transformation program (NTP) has a KPI called (Percentage of workers among all people with disabilities who can work) which is under the strategic objective (Enable integration of people with disabilities in the labor market). This KPI is published periodically through Official channels.

4. please provide information on whether capacity-building programmes are in place, including specific funding, to allow persons with disabilities to meaningfully engage and participate in the process of follow up and review of



the implementation of the 2030 agenda at the regional, national, and sub-national levels for organizations of persons with disabilities, and organizations working on disability rights:

During the work on the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (not approved yet, still going through government credence), Key sources were utilized and used as inputs for preparing the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities:

1. Study of documents and strategies: Survey and study national laws, strategies, and programs to extract the most important issues that affect people with disabilities in the Kingdom.
2. Benchmark: Study of major standard countries, in addition to studying best practices on specific topics in other countries
3. Public survey: for capturing their opinions of public views regarding disabilities.
4. PWD and their families survey: for capturing their opinions regarding services and challenges that they face.
5. Interviews and focus groups: sessions were conducted around the kingdom to capture their opinions and views of current and future state.
6. Stakeholders' engagement: many entities representing public, private and third sector covering almost all aspects of PWD's life. in addition to collecting and consulting local and international SMEs.

All those inputs were resulting in Strategy approach which is grounded in key dimensions (strategic pillars) of life for People with Disability, in line with global best practice and sustainable development goals, including but not limited to health, education, work and employment, accessibility, social protection and family empowerment, and public life, which takes to develop initiatives to bury the gaps resulting from the list of input sources above. Also, PWDs and Families are included as an Advisory Committee for the national strategy to ensure that input of PWDs is incorporated throughout, along with private and social sectors.

To ensure the implementation of this strategy, APD considered enablers factors such as Integrated Governance, Sustainable & Dedicated Funding, Data & Innovation, Case Management, and Enablement & Awareness.

5. please describe the barriers experienced in participation in the follow- up and review of the 2030 agenda at the international, regional, national and / or sub



national levels. Please share any good practices in participating in these processes and advocating for the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Participation in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be obstructed by lots of challenges and barriers at different levels—international, regional, national, and sub-national.

Globally challenges usually addressed under (legislative, physical, non-physical, and social challenges). These barriers may include the following:

- Lack of Accessibility: either physical accessibility or web accessibility.
- Limited Representation: This can be due to discrimination, stigma, or lack of inclusive policies and practices.
- Communication Barriers: lack of sign language interpretation, alternative formats, or assistive technologies.
- Policy and Legal Barriers: Existing policies and legal frameworks may not sufficiently address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.
- Resource Constraints: Persons with disabilities and organizations representing them may face resource constraints, including financial limitations.

Good practices on another part can facilitate Participation for persons with disability in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development such as:

- Inclusive Policies and Practices: by enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Accessibility and universal design rights and facilitations can count as a huge transformation in the infrastructure of Saudi Arabia towards the participation of persons with disability.

Non-physical best practices are digital transformation, sign language interpretation exams and platform.

- Data Disaggregation: National registry is a solution among the country to sort this challenge.
- Awareness Raising and Sensitization at social level.

6. Please share any experience or barriers encountered related to the participation or involvement in the annual High Level Political Forums, and in



particular the SDG Summit of 2023 and the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for development.

Overall, participating in high-level political forums requires navigating a complex landscape of diverse stakeholders, competing priorities, and logistical challenges. However, these forums also present valuable opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and collective action towards advancing the global development agenda. Some potential experiences and barriers that participants might encounter:

- Networking opportunities.
- Information overload.
- Language barriers.
- Political differences.
- Implementation challenges

7. Describe whether you are currently aware and engaging in the process leading to the Summit for the Future 2024 and its outcome documents and the Social Summit in 2025. Please identify your thematic priorities, if any, when engaging in the processes.

HRC is aware and engaging, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the process of the Summit for the Future 2024, and has provided its inputs along with other relevant government agencies, these inputs were taken into consideration as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia mission amendments.

HRC's priorities are, as its mandate states, protecting and promoting human rights in accordance with international human rights standards, raising awareness of human rights, and contributing to ensure that it is implemented in light of the provisions of Islamic Sharia, as it is the governmental body competent to express opinion and advice regarding human rights issues.

8. In the light of the global crises facing the world, including armed conflicts, natural disasters, and health crises, and the financial implications of these crises, do you find that this has impacted programmers to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in your country? How have your efforts to advocate for the implementation of the sustainable development goals for people with disabilities been affected?



Undoubtedly, the global crises pose significant challenges to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) worldwide. These crises can divert resources, attention, and political will away from sustainable development initiatives, potentially slowing progress towards achieving the SDGs. Prioritization of immediate needs such as emergency response, healthcare, and economic recovery might take precedence over long-term SDGs.

Despite these challenges, it is crucial to recognize that those crises, for example (Covid-19) in Saudi Arabia, did not greatly affect programs for implementing SDGs for persons with disabilities, but they provided opportunities for innovation, cooperation, and resilience through digital transformation in all relevant sectors. For example, efforts made to continue the educational process and enhance job training and professional development for persons with disabilities, which continued through distance training platforms, have also continued. From an economic side, PWDs did not lose their jobs, protection and social security programs continued as planned, and thus the standard of living of persons with disabilities was not affected. In addition, efforts to build infrastructure that supports universal access and considers the needs of persons with disabilities have continued, despite the high cost of these facilities.
