



Time to take bold energy action for people and planet

The energy level is rising. Some 30 Global Champion ministers, major businesses, cities, youth networks and experts are all gearing up to ignite bold energy actions. The ultimate goal is to achieve clean and affordable energy for all and to improve the lives of millions of people around the globe still without access to electricity.

Preparations are intensifying for the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy taking place in September. June will be an important mobilization milestone with the Ministerial Thematic Forums to be held virtually in the week of 21-25 June.

“This year’s Dialogue is the best chance for governments, businesses and other partners to step up their commitments, if the world is to achieve clean, affordable energy for all by the 2030 deadline,” said Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the Dialogue.

At the Forums in June, governments, businesses, cities and civil society organizations are expected to start presenting their “Energy Compacts” – voluntary commitments and actions pledged to achieve the 2030 and 2050 targets.

The Energy Compacts and the preparations are tackling twin challenges. One is the transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy needed to limit emissions and warming to the 1.5 degree-level according to the Paris Agreement and the other is the nearly 800 million people who still lack access to electricity and all the benefits it brings — for healthcare, education, business and a higher standard of living.

As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift to clean and affordable energy for all can create millions of new jobs, advance innovation and new technologies and spur investment, bringing greater prosperity and improved health to people around the globe.

It’s time for energy action, and everyone is invited to be part of it. Learn how your organization can submit an [Energy Compact](#) and join the conversation at the [Ministerial Forums](#).



EXPERT VOICES



Innovating the future of public service

From home schools and offices to remote doctor’s appointments and online tax filing, the COVID-19 pandemic pressed the fast-forward button on the global shift to e-government. We talk to Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of Public Services International, the global union federation of workers in public services,

about the promise and challenges of delivering public services in the age of digital revolution.

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed our lives, including a large part of public services, online. How have public servants adapted to this shift?

“The digitalization of public services is a process that has been going on for some time now, in many countries. This transition, sometimes referred to as “e-government”, has been happening as part of the modernization of the public administration in general. Of course, not all countries had been making progress at the same pace.

Whereas there was an overall unpreparedness of national and local governments to deal with the pandemic as such, many public servants were, if not completely ready, then certainly almost ready for the digital challenge, including teachers, who quickly adapted to the online environment. The pandemic fundamentally changed the situation in three aspects: it pushed the transition forward at great speed, shifted many workers to a work-from-home environment, and made us realize who the essential workers are.”

What kind of skills and mindsets will public servants need to effectively deliver in this brave new digital world? How will they acquire them?

“Honesty, courage, commitment, service vocation, are still among key skills and are always needed to become a good public servant, whether it is in digital context or not.

Training is also paramount to acquire digital capabilities and proficiency, but with the generation of digital natives joining the public sector the acquisition of such skills will be much easier than we think.”

Looking forward, what are some of the challenges that the digital revolution poses to public services, especially to those without access to Internet?

“The pandemic has exposed the immense need for investment in public services, including digital infrastructure, which proved critical especially for services such as transport, education, and tax collection, among others. In many places, both where this infrastructure already exists or where it is being developed, it is in the hands of the private actors. One of the main problems with this approach is that the private sector is not going to invest where there is no profit, for example in remote or underprivileged areas. Also, other issues arise, such as privacy and the use and handling of data, which has been labelled the gold of the 21st century.

The state needs to step in to regulate this area to guarantee access to Internet for all, the protection of privacy and sensitive data, and ensure that the generation of data benefits the public good and is treated as a common good.”

On 23 June, the international community will be paying tribute to public servants around the world. Learn more about the UN Public Service Day and this year’s virtual commemoration event [here](#).



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



5 things you should know about persons with disabilities

Roughly 15% of the world’s population, around 1 billion people, live with a disability. It can be a physical, developmental, emotional or a sensory impairment. Each condition requires its own special attention to

fulfil the needs of the individual. Here are five things you should know about persons who live with a disability today.

1. Independence is key

Persons who live with a disability should be able to make his or her own choices, enjoying the same freedoms and services as the rest of society. Failure to acknowledge each individual’s needs prevents them from fully enjoying their human rights and freedoms. [The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) was adopted to protect these rights.

2. COVID-19 has strongly impacted persons with disabilities

Persons who live with a disability are at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19. Many cannot afford or are denied healthcare. Persons with intellectual disabilities are also disproportionately affected by the socio-economic consequences of the health crisis.

As the pandemic has disrupted many services, it is necessary to implement structural reforms.

3. **Women with disabilities are at a higher risk of discrimination**

According to UN Women, one in five women live with a disability. They are more easily subject to discrimination and sexual violence, especially if they live with intersecting identities. All efforts for persons with disabilities must include a gender perspective to protect those at a higher risk of discrimination.

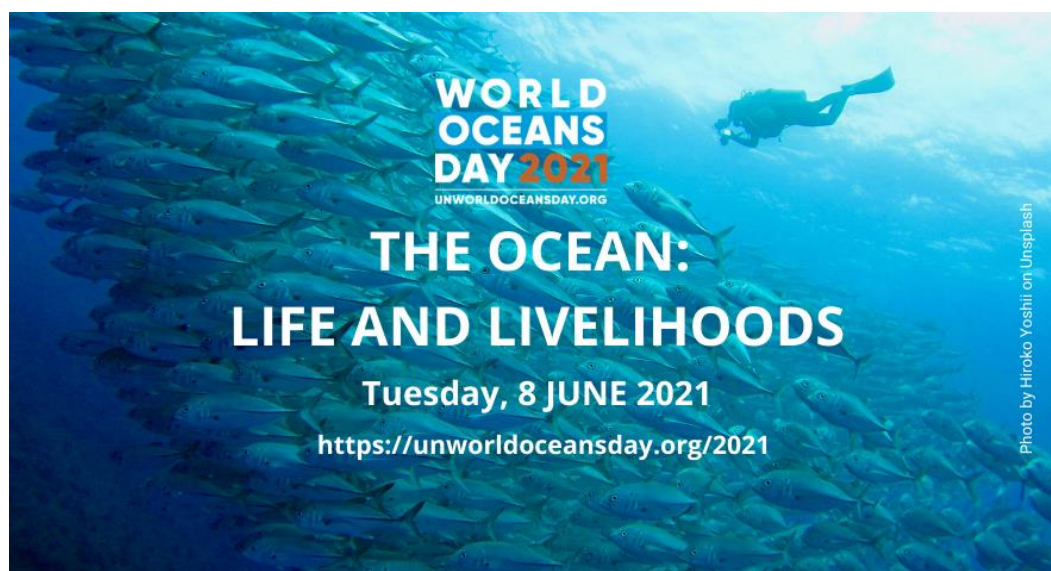
4. **Many countries lack funding and training to integrate technological advances**

Information and communications technologies contribute to the education of persons with disabilities. Accessible technology also allows for full participation in society, subsequently diminishing stereotypes on disabilities. Countries need more targeted policy and funds to support the right to education of persons with disabilities.

5. **Persons with disabilities face restrictions in healthcare**

Disability is often overlooked in the public health department. The lack of research and action, combined with lower incomes, often lead to difficulties for persons with disabilities in securing quality healthcare.

Stay updated on efforts to advance and protect the rights of persons with disabilities by following the [14th session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD](#) on 15-17 June 2021.





A recovery that works for everyone

By Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo, Global Disability Advisor, World Bank

As the world continues to grapple with what it means to ensure an inclusive recovery, we must remember that persons with disabilities remain disproportionately excluded from accessing adequate health, education, transportation, and other basic services.

This year's Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) could not be more timely. As we reach an inflection point in development, we must work towards a global recovery from the pandemic that is disability-inclusive and premised on the Convention's principles, particularly those of respect, dignity, non-discrimination, full and effective participation, accessibility, and access to services.

This pandemic, which continues unabated in so many places, has presented the world with a myriad of challenges that have set us back in achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals, including those that explicitly refer to disability](#).

As the spread of COVID-19 slows in many places that have better vaccine access and as people begin to return to their pre-pandemic ways, we must remember that for many of them the pre-pandemic reality was not one of accessibility and inclusiveness. It was not a world where persons with disabilities could fully and equally enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, as envisaged by the CRPD. As we plan for the future and the post-pandemic possibilities, let us not forget the long-term goal of ensuring a recovery that is inclusive, resilient to future shocks, and sustainable for all.

The [World Bank's COVID-19 Crisis Response Approach Paper](#) shines a clear spotlight on the need for all stakeholders to be deliberate about accessibility and inclusion across all stages and areas of crisis response. The approach includes vaccination campaigns, employment opportunities, school re-enrollment, and other critical government services.

To this end, the World Bank has supported several West African countries to include vulnerable individuals and groups in national identity card programs, which are essential to accessing services, such as vaccinations, in most countries. To help broaden this approach to other regions, the World Bank recently launched a guidance note, "[Creating Disability-Inclusive ID Systems](#)".

The World Bank has also provided technical assistance to several COVID-19 response projects to ensure they are disability-inclusive. For example, the [Rwanda Vaccination Rollout](#) now mainstreams disability inclusion throughout the project design. And while the work we've been doing is important, it's not enough. We need the whole global community – international financial institutions, public and private sector actors, civil society, and academia – to do more.

Last March, as 85 per cent of children were affected by widespread school closures, the World Bank's [Inclusive Education Initiative](#) (IEI) acted swiftly to highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children with disabilities given the dearth of information on disability-inclusive education from past pandemics, such as Ebola. Recognizing the vulnerability of children with disabilities to shocks and disruption, the IEI analyzed the multiple forms of exclusion they experience linked to education, health, gender and social exclusion.

Recognizing the urgent need to curate and circulate new knowledge, the IEI released an issues paper titled "[Pivoting to Inclusion: Leveraging Lessons from the COVID-19 Crisis for Learners with Disabilities](#)". This paper highlights the emerging educational and social needs, barriers, and issues experienced by learners with disabilities. It focuses attention on the roles of teachers, parents, and caregivers that have changed drastically, leading to much uncertainty in supporting the continued learning of their students and children with often new and unfamiliar methods and technology.

Several of the recommendations presented in the IEI issues paper apply to other sectors and activities for a disability-inclusive recovery, including an equitable approach to ensure all persons are vaccinated.

As we envision and work towards an inclusive future that embodies the rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities, we need to:

- Include persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in the planning from beginning to end in a meaningful way.
- Adopt a twin-track approach, meaning plan for inclusive mainstream solutions to benefit all while also planning activities that target persons with disabilities.
- Advance the principles of universal access to ensure increased access to physical, digital and basic services for persons with disabilities and ensure information is made available in multiple accessible formats.
- Scale up the collection of [disability-disaggregated data](#) to shape long-term, inclusive models going forward. With funding from the SDG Fund the World Bank has recently developed an e-course on collecting disability-related data.

As we emerge from this unprecedented global crisis, let us do so with a renewed sense of how we want to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals—with people and the planet at the centre, we have an opportunity to ensure equity, accessibility, and inclusion for all and that no one is left behind.


** The views expressed in this blog are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of UN DESA.*



SDG 7 IN NUMBERS 



**EFFORTS NEED SCALING UP
ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

 **789 MILLION
PEOPLE LACK
ELECTRICITY**
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