



World Blind Union  
Union Mondiale Des Aveugles  
Unión Mundial de Ciegos

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## Statement at 2nd Session of the UN-Habitat Executive Board 2020

October 27, 2020

Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius, Program Officer/Co-Chair of the GAP-PCG Persons with Disabilities

- I. Thank your honourable chair for allowing me as representative of the World Blind Union and co-chair of the Partner Constituent Group of Persons with Disabilities in the General Assembly of Partners to put forward a few remarks during this second session of the UN-Habitat Executive board 2020.
- II. Dear excellencies, distinguished delegates, stakeholders.
- III. I like to congratulate UN-Habitat for the unique partnership with the World Blind Union which is truly a milestone for the collaboration between a UN programme and a global Organisation of Persons with Disabilities. Despite ongoing global challenges, we have witnessed UN-Habitat's increasing leadership and actions to promote disability inclusion as key to sustainable development for all.
- IV. Today, I like to bring the attention of the Executive Board and Executive Director to the following considerations:
  - V. **First**, to take note of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2019 as an essential instrument to make the UN system fit-for-purpose on disability inclusion; enabling the United Nations to support Member States in their achievement of international human rights, development, and humanitarian commitments.
  - VI. **Second**, to acknowledge UN-Habitat's successful submission of its first report on strategy implementation of UNDIS as was confirmed by the progress report by UN Secretary-General to the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.
  - VII. **Third**, to make necessary arrangements allowing the Executive Board of UN-Habitat being briefed annually on the strategy implementation as encouraged within the UNDIS.
  - VIII. **Fourth**, to take steps aligning policies, practices, and operations with the UNDIS and consider alignment a whole-of-organisation priority to underpin the inclusive implementation of the 2021 work plan and overarching strategic framework. Such efforts may also serve as basis for resource mobilisation efforts with Member States who have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with obligations under article 32 to promote inclusion of and accessibility for persons with disabilities within international cooperation.

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### World Blind Union

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- IX. ***Fifth***, to be mindful in allocating sufficient funding and staffing resources towards the UNDIS and in the development and conduct of normative and practical work, including considering how to increase the number of staff with disabilities to reflect the diversity of social groups UN-Habitat aspire to be inclusive of.
- X. ***Moreover, considering items at this specific meeting of the UN-Habitat Executive Board:***
1. We share the concerns for the financial situation of the programme and like to express our worry regarding the potentially decreasing funding towards the normative work which is key in informing the inclusiveness and outcomes of practical work and technical cooperation.
  2. We hope that decreased funding will not impact UN-Habitats commitment to act on enhancing social inclusion of all groups, all including persons with disabilities,
  3. With reference to item 6c-VI “Draft Impact Communication Strategy” we encourage further consideration be taken of accessibility in communications, and its planned implementation to align with the Entity Accountability Framework of UNDIS.
- XI. Lastly, the World Blind Union is fully committed to sustain our vibrant and constructive partnership with UN-Habitat, recognising the critical importance of engagement of a broad range of stakeholders to advance towards more inclusive and accessible cities for all. This year the COVID-19 pandemic has shone light on that we have not done enough to address global inequalities, for instance those faced by persons with disabilities many of which faced exacerbated challenges to basic services and access to information on an equal basis with others.
- XII. Once again, thank you Mr. honourable chair for allowing me to take the floor. I take this opportunity to wish you a successful continuation of this meeting.

Nairobi, 27 October 2020

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