



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

21 January 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Realizing the rights of persons with disabilities and our collective commitment to leaving no one behind is an imperative that reaches across all three pillars of work of the United Nations. Given our mandate, it is furthermore incumbent on the United Nations system to itself embody this commitment within our own internal arrangements.

In light of this, in April 2018, the Secretary-General initiated a process to develop a policy, action plan and accountability framework to strengthen system-wide accessibility and mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities.

To inform the development of these tools, an extensive assessment of the current approach of the United Nations system was undertaken, led by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Ms. Catalina Devandas Aguilar. Her full report entitled “Strengthening the System: Foundations for a Disability Inclusive United Nations” is attached for your consideration.

The key findings and recommendations emerging from this assessment were discussed at a meeting of the Senior Management Group on 6 December 2018. The findings were broadly welcomed and are to be addressed in the system-wide policy and action plan.

An intensive process to develop those tools is now underway. Led by the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organization, a working group of the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will be engaging United Nations entities over the next three months, starting with a full-day workshop in New York on 24 February 2019.

Members of the United Nations system
Chief Executives Board for Coordination

It is critical that all United Nations system entities, across the three pillars, actively participate in this process. It is intended that the new tools will be ready for endorsement by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination at its May 2019 meeting. A full timeline for the process and relevant contact information is enclosed.

I count on your active engagement and support as we move forward together to strengthen the ability of the United Nations system to deliver for and with persons with disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A J M', positioned above the printed name.

Amina J. Mohammed