

POLICY BRIEF

LOCALIZATION to solve the ACCESSIBILITY CRISIS

Recommendations to States Parties
for immediate action



This policy brief was developed by the **United Cities and Local Governments** and the **World Blind Union**, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, the International Disability Alliance, the GAP PCG Older Persons Constituency Group and the Cities for All Network.



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1. Purpose

Humanity is facing a crisis of growing inequalities that requires immediate action to guarantee an equitable future shaped by dignity and human rights. Global aspirations to ‘leave no one behind’ and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be implemented into local actions to genuinely ensure that the obligations set down by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are met.

One critical area that needs to be addressed pertains to the accessibility barriers and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities and older persons. Accessibility is an internationally recognized human right and a precondition for inclusion and participation in society. In the present context of rapid urbanization, the proliferation of accessibility barriers has become a pressing concern, further exacerbating social exclusion and deepening inequalities within urban communities.

There is an urgent need to accelerate the implementation of comprehensive accessibility measures across physical environments, transportation, information, and communication technologies in line with CRPD Article 9. Further urgent actions are needed to support progress towards the realisation of SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities, which is key to achieve inclusive and accessible urban environments and a crucial link to integrate accessibility and inclusion across all other SDGs.

As a response to this critical issue, the World Blind Union (WBU) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), have developed this policy brief to:

- Stress the **vital role of Local and Regional governments (LRGs), persons with disabilities, older persons and their representative organisations** in achieving accessible and inclusive infrastructure and services for all across the urban-rural continuum; and,
- Provide **key recommendations for national governments and LRGs to collaborate** in fostering localization and removing accessibility barriers for all in line with the CRPD and the global agendas.

Accessibility is both a means and an end for the implementation of the Convention and the 2030 Agenda. The lack of accessibility is a fundamental barrier that causes persons with disabilities to be excluded, and it needs to be urgently addressed to promote the independent living of persons with disabilities and their participation in society and development. Accessibility and the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Report of the Secretary-General, July 2019

2. The Global State of Accessibility: a crisis on the horizon

2020

Today, more than half of all persons with disabilities and older persons live in cities with:

- **Inaccessible transportation and public spaces**
- **Inaccessible digital infrastructure**
- **A lack of access to adequate housing, employment, health and education** (UNDESA-2019)



2050

- **70% of the world's population will live in cities while 60% of urban settlements remain to be built** (UN Habitat)
- **Over 2 billion persons with disabilities and older persons will be living in urban communities by 2050** (UCLG)

2.1 Cities and Territories Under Demographic Pressure

Cities and territories are facing significant demographic pressures, as more than half of the global population currently resides in urban areas. Among them, 16% are persons with disabilities residing predominantly (over two-thirds) in low- and middle-income countries¹. The pace of population aging is accelerating, surpassing the rate seen in previous eras. Presently, there are more individuals aged 60 and above than children under the age of five². Furthermore, over 46% of older persons, aged 60 years and above, experience disabilities³. Projections indicate that by 2050, older persons will constitute 21% of the total population, with the majority residing in low- and middle-income countries.

By 2050, 70 % of the world's population will live in urban communities including over two billion persons with disabilities and older persons requiring inclusive and accessible infrastructure and services to live safe, independent, and dignified lives and participate in all aspect of society⁴. An estimated 200 million individuals may face displacement from climatic events, including approximately 30 million persons with disabilities seeking refuge in cities and refugee settlements⁵.

2.2 Millions of Lives at Risk

Impacts of **climate change, disasters and pandemics threatens persons with disabilities and older persons' lives, homes, health, food security, access to water, sanitation, and livelihoods**⁶. They are more likely to be left behind in emergency responses or even die during disasters and emergencies because of inaccessible environments. Research indicates that 73 percent of individuals with disabilities would encounter challenges during evacuations, with 6 percent unable to evacuate entirely. Additionally, 72 percent of people with disabilities lack a personal preparedness plan for disasters, and less than half of emergency and disaster relief locations are accessible to individuals with disabilities⁷.

Persons with disabilities and older persons have been amongst the hardest hit during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the discrimination and barriers they face to access urban infrastructure and services, transport and information and communications technologies⁸.

Negative cultural attitudes, such as stereotyping and stigma, further marginalize persons with disabilities and older persons in urban communities. During the pandemic, dangerous narratives have emerged, suggesting that persons with disabilities and older persons cannot contribute to the response and recovery efforts, are not capable of making their own decisions, and that their lives are not valued as highly as those of others⁹.

2.3 Inaccessible infrastructure is widening the inequality gap

The recent digitalisation of cities shows a growing digital divide for persons with disabilities and older persons globally as urbanization continues to grow and becoming less and less accessible¹⁰. Similarly, accessibility and universal design are often ignored in Build Back Better strategies or climate adaptation policies resulting in the building of new inaccessible infrastructure leading to further discrimination and deeper inequalities¹¹.

Inaccessible infrastructure threatens many other rights. Older persons and persons with disabilities, particularly women and those living in homelessness or residing in institutions, face significant barriers to access housing preventing them from enjoying their right to an adequate standard of living, their right to an independent life and to be included in the community¹². Inaccessibility of transport and public spaces pose significant barriers in their everyday lives and in situation of emergencies^{13 14}.

2.4 Closing the gap: Future proofing with universal design

The rapid urbanisation is expected to result in the addition of approximately 1.2 million square kilometres (km²) of newly developed urban areas worldwide by the year 2030. In other words, there will be a significant increase in the total area of built-up urban land over the next decade¹⁵. It implies that there is still an opportunity to plan and design these areas in a way that promotes accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability, rather than perpetuating past mistakes and contributing to the deepening of inequalities. It highlights the importance of proactive planning and decision-making by local and national authorities to ensure that the new urban settlements are designed in a way that responds to the rights and addresses the needs of all members of the community, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

By incorporating universal design principles, products, environments, and systems can be made more inclusive and accessible without extra costs¹⁶, making them “future proof” and able to meet the needs of a diverse range of people over time.

Box 1: What is Accessibility?

Accessibility is **an internationally recognized human right and a precondition for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society (CRPD Article 9). Accessibility and universal design allow for the realisation of human rights and fundamental liberties of all people, including older persons.**

Accessibility is often understood in different ways amongst urban practitioners. A common misconception is that accessibility is about geographical proximity (availability of services in an area) or only about physical infrastructure (ramps) while in reality accessibility means ensuring that all people with disabilities have access to the physical environment around them, to transportation, to information, to communication technology and systems on an equal basis with others. Mainstreaming accessibility and universal design as a fundamental principle in design and execution benefit society a whole by creating welcoming, safe, and user-friendly environments for everyone. Accessibility applies to any goods, products, or services open or available to the public, regardless of whether they are private or publicly owned. Accessibility is an obligation in many countries and accessibility legislation and standards exist internationally, nationally, and locally¹⁷.

The CRPD defines Accessibility (Article 9), Universal Design and Reasonable Accommodation (Article 2), while CRPD General Comment 2 offers guidance on implementation. References to accessibility and universal design are also found in the [New Urban Agenda](#) (paragraph 36), the [Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing \(MIPAA\)](#) and the [UCLG Policy Paper on Inclusive and Accessible Cities](#).

3. Localization as a Solution to the Urban Accessibility Crisis

3.1 The Crucial Role of Local and Regional Governments in Creating Inclusive and Accessible Cities

Addressing accessibility requires a comprehensive approach to infrastructure management, municipal codes, standards, land use, transportation planning, housing and community development, mobility, social services, and monitoring of human rights. Local and regional governments play a crucial role in achieving this. As the primary actors responsible for urban development and management, they are best positioned to understand the rights, specific needs and priorities of their communities and develop policies and programs to directly address them. By shaping the way fundamental human rights are promoted, protected and fulfilled, local and regional governments are leading and can further lead the way in responding to challenges such as climate change, poverty, and pandemics, which disproportionately impact people with disabilities

Local and regional governments can play a crucial role in accelerating the implementation of accessibility in the following ways:

1. **Adopt laws, policies and strategies that promote inclusion and accessibility.** This includes mainstreaming accessibility in city plans, developing and applying accessibility standards for the built and digital environments and enacting codes and regulations that support accessibility and universal design.
2. **Foster inclusive engagement in policy and decision-making processes:** involve persons with disabilities, older persons their representative organizations, in all phases of urban planning and decision-making to address accessibility barriers and implement effective actions, embracing diversity within the disability and aging community.
3. **Allocate adequate resources to implement accessibility measures.** This includes funding for physical and digital infrastructure, training and capacity-building for staff, and the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
4. **Collaborate with diverse stakeholders** such as civil society organizations, academia and private sector partners, to promote inclusion and accessibility. This includes sharing information, best practices, and working together to identify and address accessibility barriers.
5. **Promote inclusive data collection and monitoring on accessibility** through a specific indicator set to track progress and identify areas for improvement towards achieving accessibility and inclusion goals in line with CRPD article 9.
6. **Advocate for inclusive policies at the national, regional and international levels.** This includes promoting disability-inclusive and age responsive policies at the national level and work with national governments to ensure that all policies and strategies are responsive to the needs and rights of all persons with disabilities and older persons.
7. **Undertake VLRs (Voluntary Local Reviews) and VSRs (Voluntary Subnational Reviews)** to evaluate their progress towards sustainable development goals and inclusion indicators, identify areas for improvement, and implement measures to remove accessibility barriers in line with the CRPD Article 9.

3.2 Empowering Local and Regional Governments: the missing link

Fostering dialogue and cooperation between national governments and local and regional governments is critical for successful accessibility policies and implementation. This is especially true in countries where there is a centralized system of governance, where decision-making and funding allocation are heavily managed by the national government. In such cases, local and regional governments may not have the resources, authority, or capacity to effectively plan and implement inclusive and accessible policies and programs. With an increasing trend towards decentralization, national governments have also recognized the importance of local and regional governments in achieving the SDGs and have provided support through policy frameworks and funding mechanisms.

Decentralization, multilevel governance and the creation of an enabling environment with a clear allocation of mandates and resources, are key to facilitate the distribution and coordination of decision-making and responsibilities among all levels of government. Within this framework, localization emerges as a critical driver, empowering local and regional governments to create and tailor accessibility solutions that cater to the specific needs and context of individuals and communities. This shared responsibility is essential in supporting broader national objectives and fulfilling obligations towards the realization of the CRPD.

To effectively tackle accessibility barriers it is critical to:

- **Recognize and emphasize the strategic role of local and regional governments** in advancing human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Empower local and regional governments** to lead collaborative efforts in eliminating accessibility barriers by promoting decentralized cooperation and establishing platforms for joint decision-making.
- **Foster multilevel governance and adopt co-design approaches** that prioritize accessibility and participation of diverse stakeholders

Box 2: **What is SDG Localization and why it is so important?**

Local action is vital for global progress in addressing inequalities, combating climate change, and advancing peace and security. Local and regional governments play a crucial role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, with over 65% of the SDG targets related to their work and mandate¹⁸. Local and regional governments, being closer to local communities, understand their needs and priorities, leading development paths, delivering public services, and catalysing transformative change.

SDG localization means placing local communities at the center of sustainable development and anchoring development action on the principles of partnership, inclusion, and effectiveness. It transforms the SDGs into reality at the local level, aligning with national frameworks and community priorities. It involves collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders, across all sectors and spheres of governance, and is a two-way interaction between local, national, and global levels. In the context of CRPD implementation, localization emphasizes the crucial role of local governments in promoting and protecting the rights of all persons with disabilities. This involves co-designing inclusive and accessible policies, programs, and infrastructure, and ensuring the active participation of all persons with disabilities in policy and decision-making processes in line with CRPD Article 9 and the core commitment to leave no one behind.

Localizing the SDGs and integrating them into urban development strategies is crucial for achieving a more equal and sustainable world. SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, encompasses a range of commitments and targets related to accessibility. It recognizes the crucial role of inclusive and accessible urban environments in achieving broader sustainable development objectives. SDG 11 targets include ensuring access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems, enhancing inclusive and participatory urban planning, providing universal access to green and public spaces, and improving the resilience of cities to disasters. Beyond SDG 11, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely connected to cities and require localization for effective implementation. The SDGs related to education, gender equality, sustainable infrastructure, reduced inequalities, climate action, clean water and sanitation and others all have urban dimensions that necessitate localization efforts.

3.3 “Nothing without us”: Why Organizations of Persons with Disabilities are Essential Partners in Creating Inclusive Urban Environments

The success of efforts to make cities inclusive and accessible depends on the active participation and engagement of local communities, and localization is a key mechanism to achieve this. Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are key stakeholders in localization efforts of the global frameworks and CRPD because they are representative of the disability community and bring a unique perspective and expertise to the table. OPDs can provide valuable insights into the specific accessibility barriers that persons with disabilities face in their daily lives and can work with local authorities to develop solutions that are tailored to their needs. OPDs can also mobilize the disability community and promote their participation in local decision-making processes, help to ensure that the diverse voices of persons with disabilities are heard and their rights are respected. Additionally, OPDs can serve as watchdogs and hold local authorities accountable for implementing accessibility measures and ensuring that they are inclusive and sustainable.

This also holds true for the participation and engagement of older persons. Older persons associations (OPAs) play a crucial role as valuable partners in localizing initiatives. Their involvement is essential as it helps prioritize accessibility and inclusion in urban development endeavors, placing these aspects at the forefront of local agendas.

Box 3: CRPD General Comment No. 7, what does active participation mean?

The General Comment No. 7 emphasizes the importance of the active and meaningful participation of all persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of policies and programs related to the built environment, transportation, and information and communication technologies. The Comment highlights that involving persons with disabilities in decision-making processes leads to better outcomes, improves accessibility and inclusivity, and promotes the full and equal enjoyment of human rights for all. The Comment also stresses that participation should be meaningful, and that persons with disabilities should have access to the necessary resources, support, and accommodations to enable their participation.

Local authorities can take measures to ensure participation, such as:

- **Establishing consultative mechanisms or advisory groups with disability community representatives** for input on policies and projects related to the built environment, transportation, and information and communication technologies
- **Undertaking accessibility audits with persons with disabilities** to identify barriers and co-design inclusive solutions through site visits, usability testing, and diverse feedback.
- **Creating dedicated committees or working groups on accessibility** to develop guidelines and strategies for ensuring accessibility in various sectors.
- **Providing training opportunities** to enhance the knowledge and skills of persons with disabilities and stakeholders in urban planning.
- **Ensuring accessible information and communication for all**, including alternative formats, sign language interpretation, and accessibility of websites, apps, and meeting locations.

4. UN Members states obligations and commitments towards inclusive and accessible urban development

4.1 CRPD Obligations towards accessibility

The CRPD has accessibility as a general principle, Article 3 (f), which emphasizes the need for governments, policy makers, and planners to address accessibility across all interventions, policies, and programs.

Article 9 gives specific guidance outlining the responsibilities of States Parties to “take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas”.

CRPD General Comment No. 2 highlights the obligations of states parties to support and empower local municipalities to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. This can be translated through coordination with local governments to ensure they have the necessary resources, capacity, and authority to implement accessibility measures and promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all areas of society. Additionally, coordination between national and local authorities should promote the active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in local decision-making processes, including in the design and implementation of policies and programs.

Article 2 promotes the concept of universal design, which calls for the application of universal design to all new goods, products, facilities, technologies and services to ensure full, equal and unrestricted access for all, including persons with disabilities and older persons. This does not exclude the right to individual adaptation, assistive devices, and reasonable accommodation.

Universal Design should contribute to the creation of an unrestricted chain of movement for an individual from one space to another, including movement inside particular spaces, with no barriers. Persons with disabilities and other users should be able to move in barrier-free streets, enter accessible low-floor vehicles, access information and communication, and enter and move inside universally designed buildings, using technical aids and live assistance where necessary.

CRPD General Comment number 2

Accessibility underlies all articles of the CRPD to safeguard and promote the rights of all persons with disabilities to equally access all areas of social, economic, cultural, and political life. This covers all articles but is essential to ensure living independently and being included in the community (Article 19), to access health (Article 24), education (Article 25), work and employment, an adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28), participation in political and public life (Article 29), and participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport (Article 30). The CRPD also obligates States Parties to address accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian and emergency responses (Article 11) and international cooperation (Article 32)¹⁹.

Box 4: In all General Comments of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides authoritative guidance on the provisions of the Convention, including accessibility. Through these general comments, the Committee assists States parties in fulfilling their obligations under the CRPD. The full list of adopted general comments is available in the [OHCHR online database](#).

4.2 Commitments towards an inclusive and accessible urban future

“Accessibility and universal design are an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanisation, including urban crisis, and constitutes the agent of transformative action for a more equitable urban future”. [Katowice Declared Actions, Transforming our Cities for a Better Urban Future, 2022](#)

Universal and equitable access is a foundation of sustainable development and is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda in the core commitment to “leave no one behind”. The global agendas including the SDGs, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the New Urban Agenda commit to addressing accessibility barriers and ensuring equal access and participation for all. The New Urban Agenda focuses specifically on addressing the needs and rights of persons with disabilities, as well as older persons, in urban settings and commits to promoting accessibility and inclusion as key components of sustainable urban development. It highlights the need to increase and ensure equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility, resilient infrastructure, safe public spaces, adequate housing, and provide effective and inclusive settlement growth and regeneration across urban and rural communities. It also calls for capacity building of governments at all levels and meaningful partnerships with civil society including organisations of persons with disabilities and older persons.

The CRPD, the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda are powerful tools that complement and support each other in localizing efforts to realize human rights and create inclusive and accessible communities. To fully unleash the potential of localization, governments at all levels must fulfil their obligations under the CRPD and their commitments to the global agendas, recognizing the key role of local and regional governments, organizations of persons with disabilities, and older persons associations in engaging with these agendas to promote accessibility, inclusion, and resilience. This includes:

- **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets**, including Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, as an estimated 65% of the 169 SDG targets will not be reached without engagement of local and regional governments.
- **The New Urban Agenda** as it recognizes the role of local governments and communities, promotes inclusive and accessible urban environments, and facilitates the localization of the other global agendas.
- **The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** as local authorities are key to ensure that local disaster risk reduction strategies and plans are inclusive and accessible to all.
- **The Paris Agreement**, as inclusive climate action and resilience will not be reached without engagement of local and regional governments, OPDs and OPAs.
- **The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development**, as local finance is critical to achieve the 2030 Agenda and support actions towards accessibility and inclusion.
- **The Agenda for Humanity and the Charter for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Actions**, as local authorities have key role to play to ensure the protection and safety of older persons and persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and the occurrence of natural disasters.



Box 5: How can the New Urban Agenda support the implementation of the CRPD?

The New Urban Agenda is a global framework for sustainable urbanization that was adopted by United Nations Member States in 2016. It recognizes the important role of local and regional governments and emphasizes the need for localization of policies and programs to ensure that they are tailored to local contexts and needs. The mechanisms for implementation of the New Urban Agenda can support the implementation of the CRPD in various ways:

- **National urban policies** can provide a strategic framework for the implementation of the CRPD at the local level by setting out broad goals and objectives for the development of accessible and inclusive cities. These policies can also establish mechanisms for coordination between different levels of government and stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities.
- **Land policies** can facilitate the allocation of land for the development of accessible and inclusive infrastructure, services, and housing. This can include the provision of land for the development of accessible public transportation systems, healthcare facilities, and public spaces that promote social interaction and inclusivity.
- **Housing and slum upgrading policies** can help to ensure that housing is accessible and affordable to persons with disabilities, including those with low incomes. This can include the provision of financial support for the retrofitting of existing housing stock to make it accessible, and the development of new housing that is designed to be universally accessible.
- **Urban legislation and regulations** can establish legal frameworks that require the provision of accessible infrastructure and services and can ensure that those who violate accessibility standards are held accountable. This can include building codes, zoning regulations, and accessibility standards for public spaces.
- **Urban design** can play a critical role in creating accessible and inclusive cities. This can include the design of public spaces, buildings, and transportation systems that are universally accessible, as well as the incorporation of accessibility features such as tactile paving, audio signals, and accessible signage.
- **Municipal finance** can support the development of accessible and inclusive infrastructure and services through the allocation of financial resources. This can include the provision of subsidies for the retrofitting of existing infrastructure, the development of new infrastructure, and the provision of accessible public transportation services.
- **Urban governance** can establish mechanisms for coordination and collaboration between different levels of government and stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities, to ensure that the needs of all members of the community are accounted for in the development of urban policies and programs. It can also provide mechanisms for the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, including through the establishment of disability advisory boards or other mechanisms for consultation.

5. Joining Forces for Inclusion: A Call for Urgent Action to Support Localization and Implement Accessibility

5.1 Recommendations to member states for accelerated policies and actions

a. Participation and coordination

- **Ensure that local and regional governments and civil society are fully engaged as recognized stakeholders in the realisation of the SDGs and the CRPD**, through an inclusive multilateral system built on trust and sustainability to support collaborative decision making and enable local actions.
- **Support the meaningful involvement of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and ensure their active participation in dialogues** with agencies, ministries, departments, and the private sector at all levels, aiming to achieve inclusive and sustainable urban development strategies, policies, and practices.
- **Establish inclusive, accessible, and participatory processes and consultation mechanisms** to ensure that all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, older persons and their communities, can actively participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of inclusive urban planning policies and programs across all levels.
- **Strengthen the connection between local and national levels**, recognizing the importance of adopting a multilevel governance and multistakeholder approach to deliver inclusive and accessible policies, programmes and practices across the urban–rural continuum.

b. Policies, harmonisation, standards

- **Support an enabling environment to harmonize policies and standards** by renewing partnerships based on inter-governmental coordination, fostering cooperation among key actors and sectors, as well as on social and institutional innovation.
- **Ensure compliance of National Urban Policies, programs and actions plans with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** – including [Article 9](#) and [General Comment number 2 \(2014\)](#) on mainstreaming of accessibility – and in adherence with the Concluding Observations by the CRPD Committee. For this, national governments should actively engage with local and regional governments to ensure they have the necessary capacity to comply with and implement these policies.
- **Develop, promulgate, and monitor the implementation of accessibility standards in line with universal design principles and international standards** ensuring that effective mechanisms for disability-inclusive public procurement, budgeting and compliance are in place, harmonized and available to both public and private entities at national, regional, and local levels.

- **Assist local and regional governments in conducting Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs)** with a stronger emphasis on accessibility and meaningful participation of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). It is important to ensure that VLRs and VSRs are closely aligned with the principles and objectives of the CRPD, as they are often disconnected from it.

c. Data and capacities

Empower local and regional governments and provide them with adequate competencies and human, technical and financial resources to ensure accessibility-related policymaking, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- **Regularly generate disaggregated data and support local governments to undertake city-wide assessments to collect appropriate information and evidence** – including statistical and research data – to systemically understand and address the barriers that limit inclusion and accessibility and to enable the formulation and implementation of inclusive urban development policies, programs, and practices.
- **Promote, develop, and deploy resourced capacity development initiatives supporting authorities at all levels**, along organisation of persons with disabilities, in shaping inclusive governance, dialogues, and partnerships informing urban and territorial development.
- **Provide support to the urban initiatives and programs of UN agencies**, ensuring that donor agreements specifically address disability inclusion and accessibility.

6. Cities for All in action: useful tools and resources

1. **[Access and Persons with Disabilities in Urban Areas](#)** (ITDP, 2022 report) elaborates on the challenges for safe, sustainable, and accessible urban mobility and public transport for persons with disabilities.
2. **[Accessibility Go! A Guide to Action](#)** (WBU and CBM Global, 2020) provides organisations with practical support on how to progressively achieve accessibility across built environments, information and communications, procurement of goods and services, training and capacity development, programs, meetings and events, recruitment, and human resource management.
3. **[Empowering local governments on inclusive pandemic response](#)** which highlights commitments and actions to promote inclusion, accessibility, and non-discrimination during a pandemic outbreak, as well as in ensuring preparedness and in recovery periods.
4. **[Habitat 3 Website](#)** which provides the New Urban Agenda in 30 different languages and accessible formats including [Audio](#) and Braille in the six UN languages.
5. City Case studies on “Inclusive Design and Accessibility of the Built Environment” (2021-2022, Global Disability Innovation Hub at UCL & AT2030 Programme) provides a great collection of case studies from [Nairobi \(2022\)](#), [Solo \(Indonesia, 2022\)](#), [Varanasi \(2021, India\)](#), [Ulaanbaatar \(2021, Mongolia\)](#).
6. **[Cities for All Campaign and Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities](#)** provide key principles and learning tools for cities to advance inclusion and accessibility.
7. **[UCLG Community of Practice on Inclusive and Accessible Cities and Territories Peer Learning Note Building Cities for All](#)**. A summary of the capacity building activity that local governments have done in regards to the Global Compact and Campaign on Inclusive and accessible cities. Also [available in Spanish](#)
8. **[COVID-19, Amplifying Voices: Our Lives, Our Say: World Blind Union](#)** captures experiences and barriers faced by people who are blind or partially sighted during COVID-19 including mobility and transportation.
9. **[Declaration of children and adolescents with disabilities in the world](#)** (Special Envoy of UNSG on Disability and Accessibility) advocates for their right to inclusion and participation in an accessible quality education system, free from abuse, violence, harassment and discrimination, on equal terms with other students.
10. **[The Inclusion Imperative: Towards Disability-Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development, Key Recommendations for an Inclusive Urban Agenda](#)** developed by the Global Network for Disability-Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development (DIAUD) and which provides practical recommendations and case studies to support advocacy work. Also available in [Easy Read](#).
11. **[Smart Cities for All Toolkit](#)** (G3ICT) contains four tools to help Smart Cities worldwide include a focus on ICT accessibility and the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons.
12. **[The New Urban Agenda Illustrated handbook](#)** serves as the base for the New Urban Agenda online crash course. The self-paced course in two parts is available for free and accessible at any time. Access [part 1 of the course here](#) and [part 2 here](#)
13. The Journal of Public Space – “**[Special Issue on Universally Accessible Public Spaces for All](#)**” (2022, WBU and City Space Architecture) provides a great collection of articles and case studies, best practices, and lessons learnt in relation to public spaces from disability, ageing and accessibility perspectives with multiple angles, with contents from across numerous cities, academia, civil society etc.

14. **[UCLG Policy Paper on Inclusive and Accessible Cities \(2019\)](#)** also available in [Easy Read format](#) and [audio format](#) which sets the vision and captures the top challenges, enabling factors, and some key recommendations towards building more inclusive and accessible cities for all.
15. **[Universal Accessibility: Pillar and Bridge for the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms - YouTube](#)** (Special Envoy of UNSG on Disability and Accessibility) explains in a short video the importance of universal accessibility as a right and precondition for inclusion.
16. **[WHO's Age-Friendly Cities Framework](#)** which provides check lists; step-by-step information on how to create local groups to adapt and implement the framework; tools to monitor and access progress and links to additional resources and support. Check out the [guide to national programmes for age-friendly cities and communities](#).
17. **[Building Cities for All Training module](#)**. Online course aimed at strengthening the awareness on disability inclusion and accessibility for urban practitioners. Includes interviews of the lived experience of persons with disabilities in urban environments and with city leaders championing equity at the local level through accessibility and universal design
18. **[Missing Pieces: Three Metropolis Break Down Barriers for Everyone](#)**. Chapter contribution to the sixth edition UCLG Global Observatory of Local Democracy report, with cases from local government leaders in Banjarmasin, Sao Paulo and Mersin who are implementing the right to accessibility to achieve cities for all
19. **[Feminist Accessibility Protocol](#)**: is a set of commitments that aims to ensure the inclusion of feminist with disabilities by making gender equality discussions and decision making spaces fully accessible.

Endnotes

1. WHO, [Disability key facts](#), 2022
2. WHO, [Ageing and Health key facts](#), 2022
3. United Nations, [Ageing and disability](#), Department of Economic and Social Affairs
4. UCLG, [Policy Paper on Inclusive and Accessible Cities](#), 2019
5. CBM & World Enabled, [The Inclusion Imperative: Towards Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development](#), 2016, p.9.
6. UNDRR, [Disability-Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction](#)
7. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, “[Living with disability and disasters: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2013 Survey on living with disabilities and disasters – Key Findings](#)”, 2014.
8. [IDA’s COVID-19 End-Discrimination campaign](#) and [WBU’s Global Report on COVID-19](#)
9. Ibid
10. [Global Survey](#) from the Smart Cities for All initiative, 2016–2017
11. McGill Centre for Human Rights & Legal Pluralism and the International Disability Alliance, [Disability Rights in National Climate Policies](#), November 2022
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