



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Call for Action in Support of Persons with Disabilities Affected by the Beirut Port Explosion

Background

The present call for action is part of a joint campaign by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to mitigate the impact of the Beirut Port explosion, which occurred on 4 August 2020, on persons with disabilities in Lebanon, through three interconnected tracks.

The first is to provide persons with disabilities with **immediate necessities** for health and well-being, and secure required assistive devices and technologies. The second is to **rebuild affected areas so as to provide inclusive access** to streets and public and private facilities **for persons with disabilities**. In support of this, partners are called upon to urge those concerned with rebuilding efforts to follow international standards in the designs of all buildings and public facilities to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The third track envisages **long-term support** by policies and measures to ensure access by persons with disabilities to quality care and assistive facilities, and their unimpeded inclusion in the social and economic spheres.

This campaign is based on the principles of a people-centred recovery, which preserves dignity and restores hope while leaving no one behind.

Beirut Call for Supporting Persons with Disabilities affected by the port explosion

1. **We, the signatories of this Call, gathered today in front of the United Nations House in Beirut, as part of a joint campaign to support persons with disabilities in Lebanon**, and in line with the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sphere Basic Principles of Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response, reiterate the importance of placing persons with disabilities at the centre of development planning and response to emergencies.
2. **Realizing** that persons with disabilities, like others, need immediate assistance, and must benefit from inclusive emergency and recovery responses, **we underscore** that their needs must be at the centre of planning and implementation processes. Failure to do so may potentially lead to exclusion of at least a fifth of the afflicted population.



3. **Recognizing** the importance of integrating persons with disabilities in all aspects of life to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), **we affirm** that failure to realize their rights not only causes them harm, but also damages society as a whole, undermining social cohesion, and impeding human, social and economic progress.
4. **We reaffirm** our commitment to engaging persons with disabilities and their organizations in all stages of the response to the Beirut explosion, including recovery and reconstruction, and to leverage their expertise and knowledge in determining their own needs and priorities.
5. **We emphasize** the need for prioritising rehabilitation of damaged public facilities, including schools, hospitals, streets and walkways, to ensure safe access for persons with disabilities.
6. **We pledge** to work towards ensuring that the principles of Universal Design, embodied in the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are adhered to in the reconstruction of homes, public service buildings, facilities for community activities, public spaces and walkways.
7. **We commit** to not support initiatives that do not meet standards of ease of access for persons with disabilities, and to prioritize all those that would benefit from improved-access engineering designs.
8. **Recognizing** the recovery efforts that are underway, including civil society efforts, and underscoring the need for community solidarity to contend with crises, we **reaffirm our commitment** to building an inclusive, just and accessible Beirut for all, and **pledge** to encourage all parties, stakeholders and international partners to make a similar commitment.

Beirut, 14 October 2020