

Press release: UK calls for action to address 'global injustice' of discrimination against disabled people

UK calls for 'move from rhetoric to action' to address 'global injustice' of discrimination against disabled people

· The Department for International Development will today host the UK Government's first ever [Global Disability Summit](#) at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London · The Summit will shine a light on the discrimination and stigma faced by up to 1 billion people globally who have a disability · The UK will pledge to ambitious commitments to tackle the scale of the problem

The UK will today [Tuesday, 24 July] host its first ever Global Disability Summit and call on international partners to tackle the prejudice faced by disabled people.

The International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, will lead a global call to 'move from rhetoric to action' on improving the lives of disabled people, including some of the poorest and most vulnerable in the world.

As part of the UK's commitment, Ms. Mordaunt will announce a new innovative UK Aid Connect programme which will work with different organisations within small communities to support disabled people into jobs in the developing world.

The landmark summit will be co-hosted alongside the Government of Kenya and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and will see the UK challenging established practices to ensure that equal rights of disabled people are upheld.

Participants will be expected to commit to real, transformative action, and the International Development Secretary will call on delegates to hold each other to account on delivering pledges made at the event.

The UK-led event will bring together government ministers, business leaders, and disabled people from all over the world to tackle what is a burning global issue. Governments and other organisations will commit to work in partnership with each other to put disabled people and their representative organisations at the front and centre of their work.

The Summit will feature a keynote speech from President Moreno of Ecuador; a world leader who has a disability himself. Participants will also have access to a marketplace of organisations showcasing new policy and technology for disabled people. Over the two days there will be range of spotlight sessions exploring issues affecting disabled people and a screening of the Oscar winning short film Silent Child, alongside a Q&A. In advance of today's

Summit, the Prime Minister has called for real and substantive change.

The Prime Minister, Theresa May, said:

“The path a person takes in life should not be dictated by their disability and yet people are forced, every day, to deal with prejudice and even violence.

“That is why the UK’s first ever Global Disability Summit is dedicated to bringing together our international partners and transforming the lives of the world’s most vulnerable and why we are committed to ending discrimination and stigma against disabled people.”

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, said:

“Discrimination and stigma against disabled people is a global injustice – one that has been ignored for too long – and one we need to fix urgently.

“Today I am calling for countries around the developing world to stand alongside disabled people in their countries and commit to end stigma and fully value the contribution disabled people can give to the success of those nations.

“This isn’t just the right thing to do for humanity – it is also the smart thing to do because it’s impossible to end extreme poverty if a significant part of your society is left out of the deal.

“Today we will learn from each other and will make commitments to enable disabled people to reach their full potential.”

Ms. Mordaunt, who referenced the importance of this Summit when she became the first Minister to use sign language at the despatch box of the House of Commons earlier this month, has committed the UK Government to a number of initiatives to demonstrate our commitment and leadership.

These include:

- a new global partnership – ‘AT Scale’, to transform access to and affordability of life-changing devices and basic technology, such as wheelchairs, prosthetics, hearing aids and glasses; this would be aimed at reaching 500 million people globally by 2030 by bringing organisations together to share data and consider how best to tackle issues of innovation, affordability and availability – work that would benefit disabled people in the UK and overseas;
- a new innovative UK Aid Connect programme, led by charities Sightsavers and Leonard Cheshire Disability, which will work with organisations within small communities to support disabled people into jobs in the developing world;
- a new six-year programme to design ways to help 100,000 disabled people to access health services, 10,000 disabled children to access education, and up to 45,000 disabled people to increase their incomes. This programme will also help to improve policy making in the UK;

- increasing DFID's work with businesses around the globe, supporting disabled people as employers, employees and consumers.

The Department already pledged in April this year to support disabled girls into education as part of the flagship [Education Challenge programme](#).

The Global Disability Summit has been designed to mobilise new global and national commitments on disability, and showcase good practice, innovation and evidence from across the world.

There will be four central themes for the Summit, around which the participants will build commitments and showcase best practice. These are:

- [tackling stigma and discrimination](#)
- [inclusive education](#)
- [routes to economic empowerment](#)
- [harnessing technology and innovation](#)

The Chair of the International Disability Alliance, Ana Lucia Arellano, said:

"IDA is welcoming this historic Global Disability Summit and commends the UK Government for this timely initiative. We, as a representative organisation of persons with disabilities, are committed to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and we see the Summit as a critical impetus into its implementation in every corner of the world.

"We believe that we can achieve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society only through the meaningful and genuine stakeholder partnership between organisations of persons with disabilities, governments, the private and all actors involved. We are committed to supporting Governments and all participants of the Summit in the implementation of their commitments that they are expressing today."

Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Labour and Social Protection, Ukur Yatani, said:

The Global Disability Summit provides nations, together with civil society, a rare and welcome opportunity to act in tandem on this important issue of disability – an area which has been neglected for too long.

We need to delve into the causes of the existing and emerging gaps in the sector and provide realistic trackable actions that will immensely improve the situation for people with disabilities from the countries represented in this unique summit.

Notes to Editors

- An estimated one billion people – 15% of the world's population – have some form of disability and an estimated 80% of these people live in developing countries – [\(World Disability Report, jointly published by the WHO and World Bank \(2011\)\)](#)

- Disabled people are often the poorest and most excluded in their communities, and face significant barriers that can prevent them from realising their rights, living with dignity, and fully participating in social, economic and political life.

- Around the world, disabled people continue to face appalling levels of stigma, discrimination and abuse, and all too often miss out on the opportunities that are the right of every person.

For images and videos of the stories of people with disabilities around the world go to this link [link](#) If used please credit DFID.