

CONCEPT NOTE

EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND COMMUNICATION

12 June 2023, 3 pm

Conference Room 4, United Nations Headquarters

Mandate

On 16 December 2023, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 77/240, entitled "Promoting and mainstreaming easy-to-understand communication for accessibility for persons with disabilities". The resolution requests the President of the General Assembly to hold a half-day meeting, on the margins of the sixteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP-CRPD), dedicated to easy-to-understand communication.

Background

Adopted by the United Nations in 2006, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes the importance of accessibility to information and communication.

Easy-to-understand communication is an accessibility tool in which information is presented using simple words supported by images to make information accessible. There is no single type of easy-to-understand communication, which includes different formats, depending on specific needs. It aims to be easier to understand than standard documents. Accessible information leads to inclusive participation and decision making. It tends to benefit a much larger portion of the world population, especially marginalized groups.

Similarly, access for persons with disabilities to information offers unprecedented opportunities to support the building of inclusive knowledge societies and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and transformative change. Despite being guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the right to information and communication is not fully respected. Generally, effective fulfilment of the right is not sufficiently widespread in the world. Accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society

Objectives

In line with General Assembly Resolution 77/240, the meeting will provide an overview on how Member States and United Nations have been including easy-to-understand communication in their policy and practices, exchange experiences and identify and promote good practices on how easy-to-understand communication can enable persons with disabilities to access information and communication, to live independently and to participate fully, equally and meaningfully in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others. It will also address the use of easy-to-understand communication in the United Nation in a broader sense.

The meeting will aim to:

- Raise awareness about the importance of the accessibility of information and communication for persons with disabilities, including through the use of easy-to-understand communication;
- Explore best practices in ensuring inclusion of persons with disabilities and accessible information and communication;
- Reflect on how the UN can include persons with intellectual disabilities in different parts of its work, including through facilitating the use of communication in easy-to-understand formats;
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership among Member States and persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in enhancing accessible communication and information;
- Stimulate discussions on means to make the UNHQ more accessible and the decision making and shaping more inclusive.

Participation and Format

The meeting will be open to Member States, Observers, UN system and persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. The program will feature a short opening statement by the President of the General Assembly, followed by a panel discussion and an interactive segment. A preliminary programme will be circulated in due course.