

Israel

16.4 The highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities

Thank you chair,

Israel commends WHO on adopting the WHA74 resolution on the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities, aiming to advance the agenda on disabilities in the health sector. A lot has been done since, including the adoption of WHO European framework for action to achieve the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities (2022-2030), which was adopted last September during the EURO Regional Committee in Tel Aviv.

This is an excellent example of the outstanding work of WHO in setting high standards and contributing to the realization of several SDGs and the key principle “leave no one behind”.

Estimated 1.3 billion people around the world experience significant disability. This represents 16% of the world’s population, or 1 in 6 of us. Persons with disabilities face many health inequalities, and are often confronted with stigma, discrimination, and exclusion from education or employment opportunities.

Aspiring to achieve "the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities" is a change in mind-set. It is an inclusive approach that will allow persons with disabilities to play more significant roles in their communities, in their workplace, and within their families. An individual who can enjoy a good standard of health is more able and confident to fully participate economically, culturally, and politically on an equal basis with others.

Many persons with disabilities testify that although their lives, and the lives of their families are intertwined with the world of health, they often feel that this world values them less. In many of our societies, a body with a disability is still considered to be a "broken body" and adjusting our health systems to address their needs is considered a luxury, a special effort, a burden, something to "cure".

The WHO global report on health equity for persons with disabilities presents an analysis of the factors that lead to systemic health inequities for persons with disabilities and outlines key policy and programmatic actions and recommendations to reduce these health inequities.

In order to achieve health equity and highest standard of health, we must address these inequalities.

Advancing health equity can be done through an integrated health services, with emphasis on primary and essential healthcare; multi-sectoral action; and empowering people and communities.

We must ensure access to effective health services, protection during health emergencies and access to cross-sectoral public health interventions. We must include the perspectives and experiences of persons with disabilities in design and implementation these policies.

Israel commends and encourages WHO to continue its work on this important matter and we stand ready to play our part.

I thank you.