

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) 2014 Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology

Disability Day, or the International Day of People with Disability, is a day that has been promoted by the United Nations since 1992. The aim of Disability Day is to encourage a better understanding of people affected by a disability, together with helping to make people more aware of the rights, dignity and welfare of disabled people, as well as raise awareness about the benefits of integrating disabled persons into every aspect of life, from economic, to political, to social and cultural. Disability Day is not concerned exclusively with either mental or physical disabilities, but rather encompasses all known disabilities, from Autism to Down Syndrome to Multiple Sclerosis.

The History of Disability Day

Everything started in 1976, when the United Nations General Assembly made the decision that 1981 should be the International Year of Disabled Persons. The five years between the making of that decision and the actual Year of Disabled Persons were spent contemplating the hardships of the disabled, how the opportunities of the disabled could be equalized, and how to ensure the disabled take part fully in community life enjoying all of the rights and benefits non-disabled citizens have. Another issue that was touched on was how world governments could go about preventing disabilities from touching people in the first place, so much of the talk was about the viruses and other illnesses that lead to various kinds of disability. The decade between 1983 and 1992 was later proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, and during that time, all of the concepts previously created became parts of one long process that was implemented in order to improve the lives of disabled persons the world over.

How to Celebrate Disability Day

Each year since 1992, a variety of events are held in many countries. Disability Day is used for holding discussions, forums and campaigns relating to disability, and communities are encouraged to organize meetings, talks, and even performances in their local areas. These can range from hosting a musical to a play, with disabled people being involved in these productions. The overall aim is to show non-disabled people that a person with a disability can be a vibrant member of society, as it happens that the entirely healthy are not always quite aware of this fact, which can lead to different kinds of discrimination of varying degrees of severity. The disabled, on the other hand, benefit from such performances by proving to themselves that there are many things they can still do, despite their conditions, which can help with their self-esteem and avoid mental issues such as depression from plaguing them. In general, these kinds of events are meant to challenge and then get rid of various stereotypes so that disabled people can enjoy lives free of discrimination and additional hardship.

IDPwD 2014

Would fall on Wednesday, 3rd of December 2014. Throughout human history, technology has shaped the way people live. Today information and communications technologies in particular have impacted a lot of people's daily lives. However, not all people have access to technology and the higher standards of living it allows.

With an estimated one billion people worldwide living with a disability, and 80% of them living in developing countries, access to technology is key to help realize the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities. Under the theme of "Sustainable Development: The promise of technology", this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities will look at this issue in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

At UN Headquarters, this year's commemorative events will be organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). Representatives from Member States, UN system, civil society, the private sector and others will discuss how advances in technology can be utilized to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, with three different sub-themes:

- Disability-Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals
- Disability and Disaster Risk Reduction / Emergency Responses
- Creating Enabling Work Environments

2015 IDPwD will fall on Thursday 3rd December.