**Health, well-being, and inclusion for all through equitable access to assistive technology**

**Concept Note: Side event during the 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development**

**Event title:** Health, well-being, and inclusion for all, through equitable access to assistive technology

**Date and time:** Wednesday 9 April 2025 from 13:15-14:30 (New York Time, GMT+5)

**Venue:** Conference Room 11, UN Building

**Hosted by:** Ireland, United Kingdom, the World Health Organization, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and UNICEF, in partnership with the International Disability Alliance, the International Federation on Ageing, the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics and the UK Global Disability Innovation Hub

**Background**

The 2022 WHO and UNICEF Global report on assistive technology estimates 2.5 billion people globally require at least one assistive product. The need is projected to be 3.5 billion by 2050. The report further highlights significant inequity of access, with as few as 3% having access in some low-income countries.

Assistive technology is an essential enabler for as many as one third of the global population, supporting health and well-being and ultimately genuine participation and inclusion for many in all aspects of social, political and civil life. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities brought assistive technology to international human rights law creating the duty for States to promote the availability and use of affordable assistive technology, and facilitate access to assistive technology for all persons with disabilities. Several Human Rights Council resolutions recognise the importance of assistive technology in the promotion and protection of the human rights of the child, older persons and persons with disabilities. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, equitable access is necessary to ensure no one is left behind as the world strives towards achieving 2030 targets. As a cross-sectoral issue relevant to health, education, water and sanitation, livelihoods, economic development, social protection, justice, humanitarian response and more, addressing the current global inequity of access to assistive technology is everyone’s responsibility.

**Objective**

This side event, held in the context of the Commission on Population and Development and its thematic focus of health and well-being for all at all ages, will call on all stakeholders to play their part in addressing the current inequity of access to assistive technology, to ensure that the 1:3 people globally with a functional impairment are not left behind. Event hosts will convene Member States, UN Agencies, civil society and those with lived experience of the impact of assistive technology on their lives in order to:

* demonstrate the role of assistive technology in equitable population development and in accelerating delivery of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, considering the needs of children, older persons and women;
* showcase assistive technology initiatives working to address the current inequity of access including integrating assistive technology into primary health care, international development cooperation, and development of a Global road map on access to assistive technology;
* inspire cross-sectoral and cross-agency collaborative action to achieve universal and equitable access to assistive technology, in the spirit of equitable population development for all.

**Programme**

**Moderator:** Werner Obermeyer, Director, UN Office, World Health Organization

**Opening remarks**

Assistive technology in the context of population development

*Chris Carter, Deputy Director and Head of the Human Development Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom*

The role of assistive technology in health, well-being, inclusion and participation: perspectives from international development and as an assistive technology user

*David Constantine MBE, President, International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics and Co-founder, Motivation Charitable Trust*

**Assistive technology – a critical tool for inclusive, equitable, sustainable global development for all**

Statement from UNICEF on the importance of assistive technology for children and in particular girls, in order for them to achieve their full potential

*Gopal Mitra, Global Lead on Disability and Development, UNICEF and*

*Chen Zhao, Youth Advocate, UNICEF China (recording)*

Assistive technology and meeting the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Work for older persons

*Amal Abou Rafeh, Chief, Programme on Ageing Unit, DESA, United Nations*

The gender divide: understanding the impact of gender on access to assistive technology

*Cara Yar Khan, Senior Advisor, Global Disability Innovation Hub*

**Tangible actions towards assistive technology access**

Expanding access to basic assistive technology for older persons through primary health care

*Dr Emem Omokaro, Director General, National Senior Citizens Centre, Nigeria*

WHO and UNICEF Global road map on access to assistive technology for all – charting priority actions to respond to the unmet need in the context of changing population demographics.

*Kylie Shae, Team Lead, Access to Assistive Technology, World Health Organization*

**Question and answer session**

**Closing remarks**

*Dónal Cronin, Deputy Permanent Resident, Ireland’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York*