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UN Volunteer Rupmani Chhetri (centre, India) addresses UN Secretary-General António Guterres in sign language.

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UNV and UNDP engage young talent with disabilities for the SDGs

With a commitment to diversity, inclusion and leaving no one behind, UNDP and UNV are implementing a Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities to increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the workforce of the development sector. The programme also aims to build a talent pipeline of highly qualified professionals with disabilities who can contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at national and global levels.

The UNDP-UNV Talent Programme will offer young people with disabilities the opportunity to acquire practical work experience and exposure to the work of the UN Development System through assignments with country, regional or headquarters offices of UNDP and other UN entities. UNDP-UNV will identify relevant assignments and select applicants. Programme participants and host offices will benefit from dedicated support, guidance and professional development opportunities as part of the programme.

“ Young people with disabilities from the global South are among the most marginalized and underrepresented populations in the world. We must recognize that they can be fundamental drivers of innovation and change. --Lykke Andersen, Manager of the UNDP Junior Professional Officer Service Centre

The duration of assignments will be 12 months, with the possibility of extension for another 6-12 months. Participants will be deployed as national UN Volunteers (in their home country) or international UN Volunteers (assignments outside of their home country). Initially, the programme will focus on engaging professionals with physical and sensory disabilities, and will have a particular focus on deploying women with disabilities as UN Volunteers.

“ Inclusion of persons with disabilities is one of the biggest human rights issues of our time. Persons with disabilities experience inequalities, as well as stigma, abuse and prejudice. UNV will work in partnership with UNDP to establish a solid foundational structure for scalable engagement of youth with disabilities in the United Nations. We aspire to bring in new talents to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
--Toily Kurbanov, UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator

Learning and professional development will be an integral part of all assignments. It is expected that through participation in the programme, young professionals will gain greater knowledge and experience in thematic areas related to the SDGs, including development and implementation of programmes and projects, operations management, partnerships building and UN coordination. Being better equipped with relevant competencies, skills and professional experience will enable participations to be more competitive in the labour market, and strengthen their ability to explore employment opportunities with the UN System and a career in the broader development cooperation sector.

The programme will be implemented in two phases: (1) a pilot phase with up to 10 participants deployed primarily in UNDP offices globally, and (2) a scaling-up phase during which the programme will be expanded to cover a larger number of participants and offices, as well a larger number of UN agencies.

The programme will be administered jointly by the UNDP Office of Human

Resources and UNV. It will be implemented in partnership with interested governments, private sector organizations, foundations, and disabled peoples' organizations. A special fund will be established to cover the costs of reasonable accommodation for the participants and host offices.

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth](#)