

Fact Sheet

Title of the proposed Joint Programme	Transforming social protection for persons with disabilities in Georgia
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UNCT	Georgia
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Date	Mon, 05/06/2019 - 12:00
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Relevant UNDAF Outcome/s and Output/s

UNDAF Outcome 2. By 2020 all people living in Georgia – including children, minority groups, people with disabilities (PwDs), vulnerable women, migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and persons in need of international protection – enjoy access to justice in accordance with national strategies and UN human rights standards.

UNDAF Outcome 4. By 2020 vulnerable groups have access to proactive and inclusive gender- and child-sensitive social protection system that address major vulnerabilities.

UNDAF Outcome 6. By 2020 the health of the population, especially of the most vulnerable groups, is enhanced through targeted health policies and provision of quality, equitable and integrated services including management of major health risks and promotion of health-seeking behaviour.

Relevant objective/s from national strategic document/s

National Human Rights Strategy: "Provision of equal opportunities to persons with disabilities and promotion of their full and active participation in all social spheres."

Policy Document on Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities: "Create conditions of quality life for persons with disabilities; eliminate discrimination against them; create an accessible environment for them; engage the public, decision makers at central and local level, mass media outlets and businesses in the problems of PwDs and mobilize their efforts to addressing these problems."

List human rights mechanisms which have issued recommendations relevant to the joint programme (please use acronyms)

1. Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on her mission to Georgia (2018, final report);
2. Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on her visit to Georgia (2017, final report);
3. Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on his mission to Georgia (2015, final report)
4. UPR second cycle (2015-2016);
5. UN Human Rights Committee Concluding Observations (2014)

All of these mechanisms welcomed Georgia's ratification of the CRPD, but all noted that implementation was partial and incomplete and urged Georgian authorities to redouble their efforts to realize the fundamental rights of PwDs, including through improving inclusion in education and employment. The need for a shift to the social model of disability from the outmoded medical approach was also highlighted, together with the necessity to strengthen capacities of state institutions, including the judiciary.

The Public Defender (Ombudsperson) in Georgia has also underlined the need for dramatic improvement in the way the country addresses the issue of disability. The key problems cited in the Public Defender's 2019 "Report on the Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia" are: 1) lack of accessibility in public spaces; 2) lack of information and specialized services; 3) lack of quality inclusive education; 4) lack of employment opportunities; 5) poor protection of the rights of people with mental health problems; and 6) lack and inefficiency of habilitation and rehabilitation programmes.

SDG targets on which the progress will be accelerated (includes targets from a range of SDGs and development pillars)

Goal 1: End Poverty	1.3
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Goal 2: Zero Hunger	
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Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being	
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Goal 4: Quality Education	4.5
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Goal 5: Gender Equality	
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Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	
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Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	
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Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	8.5
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Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	
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	10.2
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities	10.3
	11.2
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	11.7
Goal 12: Responsible Production and Consumption	
Goal 13: Climate Action	
Goal 14: Life Below Water	
Goal 15: Life On Land	
Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	16.7
Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals	17.18

Self-Assessment

The proposal reflects the integrated nature of the SDGs	Yes
The proposal is based on an inter-agency approach (two or more UN entities involved), with RC coordinating Joint Programme preparation and implementation	Yes
The proposed results are part of the UNDAF and aligned with national SDG priorities	Yes
The proposed Joint Programme will be led by government and include key national stakeholders	Yes
The proposal is based on country level consultations, as explained in the Concept note, and endorsed by the government (the letter of endorsement)	Yes
The proposal is based on the standard template for Concept Notes, it is complete, and it includes:	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of Change demonstrating contribution to SDG acceleration, • Results-oriented partnerships, • “Quick wins” and substantive outcome-level results, and • Initial risk assessment and mitigation measures. 	

Proposal for Joint Programme

1. Summary of the Joint Programme

This joint programme (JP) aims to fill the biggest gap in Georgia's social protection system by transforming the situation of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in the country.

Georgia ratified the Convention on the Rights of PwDs (CRPD) in 2013, and all policy documents commit to full inclusion. Despite this resolve, however, PwDs remain profoundly invisible. Data are fragmentary: only 3% of the population, and 1.2% of children, are registered as disabled, whereas WHO norms suggest the actual share must be over 10%. Stigma leads families to keep PwDs hidden, so few attend school or work (only 55 PwDs are currently employed in the public sector). Associations for PwDs function essentially as channels for state benefits, and thus have a vested interest in exaggerating disability and keeping PwDs passive.

In sum, PwDs cannot enjoy their rights and lack voice and agency, while officials lack the data and articulated demand from the affected communities that they need to craft effective policies.

Preliminary findings from the Georgia MAPS exercise identify PwDs as the group that is most penalized by the two most serious SDG bottlenecks: 8.5 (full employment) and 10.2 (inclusion for all). Unlocking progress for PwDs will thus give fresh momentum to the SDGs. To cite one example, full inclusion of PwDs in the labor force could add 3-7% to Georgia's GDP.

To achieve a breakthrough, a multi-sectoral approach is crucial. Here the UN family has the expertise and partnerships needed to achieve impact. Disability is a shared UNDAF priority and a focus of an ongoing JP on human rights, and UN agencies are currently working in a range of areas with benefit for PwDs. The UN system is thus the "go to" organization on PwDs; no other actor has comparable traction. What has been lacking, however, is targeted funding and truly collective UN-wide action, so this call comes at an opportune moment.

The JP will work both "top down" and "bottom up." At the policy level, the UN will support the Government in adopting legislation that translates CRPD commitments into practice. The UN will work with national institutions to shift from the "medical" to the "social" approach to disability, a transition that is vital to translate inclusion from theory into everyday practice. Crucially, the JP will at last make PwDs visible by generating credible disaggregated data, enabling policy-makers for the first time to develop policies that are truly evidence-based.

These efforts would lack impact, however, without a complementary effort to ensure that PwDs achieve voice and agency. Working directly with disabled persons organizations (DPOs), the UN will build on past awareness-raising campaigns to promote inclusion and support local communities to design and deliver essential services, including accessible facilities, reproductive healthcare, social activities and job opportunities. Incentives will be created to encourage private-sector companies to recruit and train employees with disabilities. Thanks to the UN's unique ability to operate in conflict-affected regions, these activities will extend into Abkhazia.

The lead partner on the Government side will be the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs (MIDPOTLHSA), but the JP will need to engage a range of partners at all levels of government and civil society. The UN team is in daily contact with all counterparts on PwDs and this proposal reflects their input.

2. Why is the proposed Joint Programme relevant and transformative?

Through its intersectoral focus on PwDs as the category of persons most at risk of “being left behind,” the Georgia JP will drive progress across a range of SDGs, including Goals 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10. Drawing on the findings of the MAPS mission, the JP will put particular emphasis on unblocking progress towards two key nationalized targets, namely: 8.5 (full employment) and 10.2 (inclusion for all).

With its support to the transfer from a medical to a social model that focuses on removing barriers that restrict PwDs from becoming independent and controlling their own lives, the JP will trigger a transformation in the approach to disability of state, society and citizens to disability.

The JP builds on two decades of UN work related to PwDs, in partnership with central and local authorities, the ombudsperson and civil society organizations. This work gained topicality and focus with Georgia’s ratification of the CRPD in 2013. Several relevant initiatives are currently under way, including a JP on human rights implemented by UNDP, OHCHR, UNICEF and ILO and a UNICEF program to protect children with disabilities. Service delivery to PwDs is also a focus of ongoing UN work, along with adaptation of public spaces to “universal design.”

PwDs are also a core population of concern for UN programs that do not target disability directly. For example, UNDP seeks to include PwDs as students in the VET courses it is helping the education ministry to introduce; and is designing measures to keep PwDs safe in the event of natural disasters.

The JP will thus build on solid foundations. There are areas where ample preparatory work has been completed which the JP can help in taking to scale. This applies to UNICEF’s efforts in reducing stigma and in introducing the social model of disability, which is currently under way as a regional pilot in Adjara. It also applies to UNDP’s work to ensure equal access to facilities and services in the Public Service Hall and Legal Aid, which have spawned numerous requests for replication at local level.

The partnerships with government and other counterparts built through the implementation of these programs are strong and reinforced through day-to-day contacts and mutual support. This is why no special discussion was needed in developing this program; needs and expectations are already clear.

However, there are also areas, such as data collection, where new and innovative approaches are vital. This applies in particular to direct work with PwDs, to support the autonomy and credibility of their associations, and with the private sector, which has so far shown a deep aversion to employing PwDs. Here the UNCT sees ample room for innovative approaches to be co-designed together with PwDs and partners, and for building on the success stories of other countries, particularly among EU members and aspirants. Here, success in enabling PwDs to demand their rights “bottom up” would serve as a catalyst for the implementation of new and improved policies coming “top down.”

3. What are the expected results of the proposed Joint Programme?

The JP aims to create an enabling environment for the inclusion and self-affirmation of PwDs at national and local levels. All activities will reflect the principle “nothing about us without us” by involving PwDs. Human rights standards will also underpin the JP, underlining the roles and responsibilities of rights holders and duty bearers.

The JP will deliver the following results:

- Evidence-based policy-making and needs assessment supported through the generation of disaggregated data on the prevalence of different disabilities (WHO);
- The “social model” for disability assessment and status determination adopted and applied on national scale, building on the regional pilot under way in Adjara (UNICEF);
- Social assistance entitlement for PwDs reviewed and expanded on the basis of the new status determination system (UNICEF);
- National capacities strengthened to implement CRPD through national legislation and service delivery (including sexual and reproductive healthcare) (UNDP, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA);
- Priority needs of PwDs, with special emphasis on women, identified and satisfied in demonstration communities through small grants programme (including in Abkhazia) (UNDP);
- Employment opportunities for PwDs in selected pilot sectors expanded (UNDP);
- Voice and agency of PDOs strengthened, including in Abkhazia (UNDP, OHCHR, UN Women); and
- Stigma towards PwDs and discriminatory attitudes and practices reduced, specifically targeting women, who are often subjected to double discrimination (UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women).

The JP will yield both systemic-level results and innovative pilots designed to show proof of concept.

The JP is fully aligned with national strategies and plans, and the UNDAF. The JP complies with section 15, “Access to equal rights for persons with disabilities and application of the principle of ‘reasonable adjustment,’” of the National Human Rights Strategy. It contributes to UNDAF outcomes 2, 4 and 6.

Social protection of PwDs is a crosscutting issue and directly or indirectly linked to all the SDGs. Georgia has nationalized SDG targets related to PwDs: 1.3., 4.5, 4.a, 8.5, 10.2, 16.7.1, 16.7.2 and 17.18. The JP will drive progress on all of these targets, with a MAPS-driven focus on unblocking 8.5 and 10.2.

Enacting all JP activities in partnership with national institutions is seen as the key to sustainability. Consultations with national counterparts have shown a strong commitment to engage and translate results into standard policies and practices. Empowering PwDs to demand and exercise their rights is seen as a second guarantee of sustainability. Building public enthusiasm for inclusion is a third.

4. What is the initial Theory of Change for SDG acceleration in the proposed Joint Programme?

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the JP is based on the assumption that PwDs, who are arguably the most marginalized group in Georgia, will not be able to lead better lives or claim their fundamental human rights unless changes take place in two directions at once: top-down, through policies, legislation and institutions that are revised to conform with the norms clearly stipulated in the CRPD (which in and of itself is a revolutionary document); and bottom-up, through activation of PwDs themselves.

To make this happen, UN agencies will need to work simultaneously with PwDs and their organizations and with a range of national and local institutions (including several different ministries at national level and municipal authorities at the local level) and private-sector employers.

The logical sequence behind the ToC starts with an effort to end the invisibility of PwDs. This is why the first steps of the JP are aimed at generating disaggregated data on the prevalence of disability and a stimulating a transformation in the prevailing approach to disability from a “sickness” to a social challenge. These changes are required to include PwDs fully and fairly in the social protection system.

New data and a new outlook will in turn serve as the foundation for a new generation of evidence-based policies for inclusion. The UN will provide training to policy-makers to ensure that laws align with human rights standards. To promote cohesion across mainstream and disability-specific public policies, counterparts will be exposed to CPRD-consistent systemic approaches such as EquiPP/EquiFrame.

As the JP's top-down activities proceed, a range of bottom-up activities will be undertaken to end the invisibility of PwDs. The assumption here in the ToC is that rights cannot be exercised unless PwDs claiming both voice and agency for themselves. Hence the UN team will work directly with PwDs and their associations to build capacity and autonomy. Success in these efforts will lead logically to meaningful engagement by PwDs in measures aimed at identifying and addressing priority needs.

Two years and the available funding will be sufficient to initiate a transformation that has eluded the country for years. At the same time, the JP will undertake a range of pilot measures designed to show “proof of concept” for efforts to ensure equal access to public facilities; equal opportunities in the labor market; and equal inclusion in community social activities that can easily be replicated after the JP.

5. What is the expected added value of the UN in this Joint Programme?

The implementation of a JP like the one described in this proposal is unthinkable without the UN as a driving force. Not only does the UN benefit from a “family” relationship with the CRPD, but the UN as a system and each of the UN agencies individually have undertaken work on PwDs in line with the “leave no one behind” principle. Some of these have been one-off activities; some have focused on PwDs as special categories in broader programs; but many have aimed at systemic impact. This cannot be said about any other actors on the Georgia development stage. The UN is thus uniquely placed to take on a broad, integrated and multi-sectoral program that unites a variety of diverse elements.

The JP will be different from “business as usual” thanks to the commitment of the participating agencies to undertake a transformative approach to PwDs that draws at once on multiple different yet complementary mandates, to demonstrate the promise behind our “One UN” ideals. Enthusiasm for the JP extends beyond the six participating agencies, and UNHCR, IOM and FAO have all committed to working through their own parallel programs to complement the activities undertaken as part of the JP.

6. How will the proposed Joint Programme operationalize ‘Leaving No One Behind’, and mainstream human rights, gender, environment, disability and youth?

The JP is directly focused on disability, one of the key reasons people in Georgia are being “left behind.”

By grounding all activities in the landmark CPRD, the JP takes a human rights approach that addresses both the immediate and structural causes of exclusion and discrimination and works at policy and legislative level while also striving to enable voice and agency of PwDs themselves. All program activities will apply universal human rights principles: equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law. The component designed to improve services for PwDs in Abkhazia, moreover, will contribute to improved living conditions and building in a conflict-affected area.

Gender equality principles will be both a direct focus of project activities (for example, strengthening organizations representing elderly or rural women, who often experience high rates of disability and are subject to double discrimination) and a common thread running through all project activities, in the awareness that women and girls with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination and, in particular, run a high risk of experiencing gender-based violence. These efforts will follow the UN Women global strategy on the The Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities, as well as the Common Chapter covering joint work by UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP. In this way, the JP will ensure that it merits Gender marker at 2.

Disability is something that disproportionately affects the elderly, so the JP needs to include all age groups. However, the consequences for children of social exclusion on the basis of disability can be devastating for a lifetime. Disability is the main reason for separation of children from their families and many end up in state-run institutions. Hence the emphasis of the JP on shifting from a medical to a social model of disability and on ensuring that children with disabilities are transferred to family type services and face inclusive options from the earliest days.

The JP itself will not focus on environmental factors. However, it will work closely with the large-scale UNDP program currently engaged in reducing the risk of climate-driven disasters, including floods. Owing to mobility challenges, PwDs face a high risk of falling victim to natural disasters and building their resilience while supporting community-level disaster preparedness is crucial to ensure their safety. Local-level grants programs funded under the JP will also cover environmental issues, upon demand.

7. Who will lead and implement the Joint Programme and what will their roles be?

The JP will be implemented by UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, OHCHR, UNFPA and UN Women. UNICEF has volunteered to serve as the administrative and convening agent. Please note that the UNCT has agreed deliberately and consciously to the participation of a relatively large number of agencies, owing to the importance of ensuring a truly multi-sectoral approach to PwD rights. The UNCT realizes that close coordination, constant communication and a strong guiding role for the RC will be essential to success. In addition, the JP will fund a position of programme manager to run day-to-day joint operations.

To ensure national leadership, strategic guidance for the JP will be provided by a Steering Committee co-chaired by the UN RC, the Minister of the MIDPOTLHSA and, to ensure alignment with human rights concerns, the Public Defender. The Steering Committee membership will also include heads of PUNOs, other government ministries, and significant civil society organizations representing PwDs.

To ensure efficient and timely management of the different components, the JP will establish a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) comprised of technical staff of implementing UN agencies and working-level representatives of external partners. Given the complexity of the program, PIU members will meet on at least a monthly basis to share programme implementation details, highlighting successes and challenges and deciding on technical issues related to project implementation.

To ensure joint planning, preparation, implementation, monitoring and learning, the progress of the JP will be a standing agenda item for UNCT meetings, so issues and opportunities can be raised monthly.

The RC will be responsible for communication and coordination with international partners to ensure complementarity and synergy of interventions, and to seek additional funding for the JP. In addition, the RC and the PUNOs will use all available platforms, including the Human Rights Council, gender councils, CRC commission, to build momentum for and expand the reach of the programme.

All bodies will include PwDs in prominent roles, and all meetings will take place in accessible facilities.

8. What capacity do the PUNOs and partners currently have to implement the proposed Joint Programme, and/or what plans are suggested to enhance capacity?

The PUNOs in the JP all have established track records in providing expertise and policy support on PwDs in Georgia in line with their specific mandates, as well as in managing project implementation. As explained above, this work covers the whole range of issues associated with PwDs: advocacy for inclusion; policy advice on legislation; capacity development on human rights adherence and provision of specialized services; advice on institutional and system change; ensuring accessibility to facilities and services (including websites); preventing institutionalization and promoting de-institutionalization; communication for social change campaigns; capacity building for national and local authorities and supporting civil society organizations (and PwDs themselves) in voicing the needs of PwDs. To date, however, these efforts have lacked the scale and traction needed to achieve transformative impact.

The UNCT also has a strong record in implementing joint programmes. Currently JPs are running in the fields of human rights; gender equality; vocational training; rural development; and private-sector innovation. In Abkhazia, almost all programming is operated as some modality of joint programming. This experience has established good habits of coordination, mutual information, and collective trouble-shooting. It is this history that gives the UNCT the confidence to propose an integrated programme involving six different agencies.

Capacities of counterparts are very mixed. The Public Defender's Office, for example, operates with an extremely high level of professionalism that has been recognized both at home and abroad. (Some of this is due to support provided by the UN system.) Government ministries and other official institutions often have highly qualified and motivated staff, but capacity is sometimes undermined by reorganizations and frequent changes of personnel. Civil society organizations and the private sector are less often partners in implementation, and their competence varies on a case-by-case basis.

This explains why the JP is dedicated in part to building the capacity of state institutions and their staff, strengthening the efficiency and autonomy of DPOs and other organizations working to support the private sector in devising and operating inclusive policies. Moreover, to ensure a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities ahead, the JP will provide regular refreshers on the CRPD to all participants involved from all participating entities and organizations.

9. What is the expected period of implementation?

The JP will be implemented over 24-month period.

The key milestones are:

- * Sustained programme of support to DPOs designed and launched (within 6 months);
- * Generation of statistically credible data on the prevalence of disability (within 9 months);
- * Community-level grants scheme launched to deliver priority services to PwDs (within 12 months);
- * Advocacy campaign to promote inclusion and discourage stigma launched (within 12 months);
- * Private-sector initiatives to promote employment of PwDs rolled out (within 15 months);
- * Comprehensive legislation adopted to meet all CRPD standards (within 18 months); and
- * Social model for disability adopted and applied on a nationwide scale (within 24 months).

Many activities, such as the training of government officials on their obligations as duty bearers and the provision of advice on legislation, will be ongoing for the entire 24-month period.

Coordination with partners will be undertaken on a continuous basis. At present there are few definitive timelines that structure official policy-making. For example, the Government is strongly committed to passing a new law on alignment with the CPRD, but work here lasted several years already. For this reason, it will be the UNCT's responsibility to align with official schedules as they take shape.

10. What is the estimated cost for implementing the proposed Joint Programme?

The budget for the JP is USD 2.2 million. The PUNOs have agreed to contribute an additional 10% of the contribution they receive from the Joint SDG Fund from their core funds or ongoing projects.

The budget will be distributed as follows:

- 1) Evidence-based policy-making and needs assessment supported through the generation of disaggregated data on the prevalence of different disabilities: USD 220,000
- 2) The “social model” for disability assessment and status determination adopted and applied at national level, building on the regional pilot already under way in Adjara: USD 200,000
- 3) Social assistance entitlement for PwDs reviewed and expanded on the basis of the new status determination system: USD 185,000
- 4) National capacities strengthened to implement CRPD through new national legislation and service delivery (including SRH): USD 495,000
- 5) Priority needs of PwDs, with special emphasis on women, identified and satisfied in selected communities through small grants programme (including in Abkhazia): USD 110,000
- 6) Employment opportunities for PwDs in selected pilot sectors: USD 275,000
- 7) Voice and agency of PwDs and DPOs strengthened at all levels, including in Abkhazia: USD 308,000
- 8) Stigma towards PwDs and discriminatory attitudes and practices reduced specifically targeting women, who are often subjected to double discrimination: USD 385,000

1% of the total budget will be allocated for JP management. 20% of the total budget will be allocated to activities directly addressing challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities, but indirectly gender equality will underpin all programme activities.

The total budget includes management and operational costs. PUNO country office staff (HR, procurement, M&E and communications) will provide services to the PIU. In-house and external expertise will be utilized; priority will be given to national experts to ensure that best practices and international standards on PwDs are adapted taking into account national specifics.

For cost-effectiveness, the JP will fund only on those actions required to provide key support to improvement of social protection of PwDs. At the same time, the JP will build synergies with other PwD-focused UN projects and initiatives related to human rights, employment and social protection.

The JP will coordinate with donor-supported projects active on PwDs and related issues.

Wherever possible, the project will use the competencies and technical skills within the mandated government institutions and other national agencies to implement project activities.

11. What is the stage of development of the idea for the proposed Joint Programme?

The JP is composed of both components that are quite mature and built on past and ongoing UN initiatives and those that are completely new and ripe for innovative approaches, such as co-design and ideas drawn from behavioural science. Some are ready to be taken to scale, while others are meant as pilots that could show proof of concept for wider replication. This is a good balance for the UNCT and for the Government, in that it allows for steady progress in systemic change and new breakthroughs.

Elements of the social protection system relevant to PwDs have been analysed in studies conducted both by government institutions and CSOs, and this proposal draws on the main findings. However, the lack of reliable data on the situation of PwDs is a major impediment to sound analysis, and thus the JP aims to remedy this.

The accepted framework for the inclusion of PwDs is the CRPD, which was ratified in 2013. The country is still in the process of adopting an overarching legislative umbrella on PwDs, without any fixed timeline. The National Human Rights Strategy adopted for 2014-2020 contains a chapter devoted to the provision of equal opportunities for PwDs, as well as a 2018-2020 Action Plan. There is also a Policy Document on Social Integration of PwDs adopted by the Parliament in 2008; this has only been implemented in part, and the relevant action plan has not been developed. One aim of the JP is to provide the support needed to ensure that all legislation necessary for full compliance with the CRPD is adopted within 24 months.

12. Initial risk assessment

The JP will enjoy broad support from all counterparts in Georgia. The country aspires to the highest standards for human rights and in this respect the UN is the touchstone.

However, the main risk to successful JP implementation is that this enthusiasm for the principles of equality and human rights is not matched by practical engagement in the activities undertaken by the PUNOs, particularly at points at which definitive government action is required (for example, in sending legislation to the Parliament). To mitigate this risk, the RC and UNCT will need to work continuously to ensure that the Government is able to look beyond the costs (which will seem overwhelming at first glance) and grasps the multiple benefits (including measurable economic gains) that inclusion of PwDs can bring.

A second risk are the many obstacles that popular myths and misconceptions about disability can pose. Especially in rural and remote areas – but not only – disability continues to be regarded as some kind of “curse,” and convincing people otherwise will require patience and ingenuity. Here enlisting parents of children with disabilities can be a good mitigating strategy, but not in every situation. This is why communication for social change and advocacy for inclusion is seen as a constant need.

A third risk is that of poor coordination, bad communication and competition inside the UN team. This is the only reputational risk to the UN family – that a JP built on the idea of “Delivering as One” fails to achieve its goals owing to discord and missed deadlines. This responsibility rests with the RC – but it can also be seen as an unrivalled leadership opportunity and a chance to show donors and partners the benefits of the empowered RC.

A fourth risk is that the financial resources available from the Joint SDG Fund are not sufficient to address the challenges that the JP is seeking to resolve. The ambition reflected in the JP is certainly quite large, but this is a necessary part of attempting anything truly transformative. To mitigate the risk that funding is not adequate, the JP has been deliberately built of components that are a mix of demonstration pilots and systemic reforms and fit neatly with other disability work of the PUNOs to create synergies. In the event that funding falls short, PUNOs will seek additional funding from different sources. The last resort might be that some of the bolder elements can be scaled back, for example to the level of a single region, while supplemental funding is sought to build on what has been started.

The Joint SDG Fund has offered the UN team a welcome opportunity to think big about the potential for “joined-up” work, and we hope for the chance to show that it can be done.

Signatures

Signed Signature Form
[SIGNATURE PAGE - Georgia.pdf](#) 106.3 KB

Government Endorsement

Letter of Endorsement
[2 Government Letters of Endorsement.pdf](#) 414.41 KB