



03 December 2014 – Persons with disabilities can benefit enormously from the latest technological advances, yet too many don't have access yet to these essential tools. That's why this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities ([IDPD](#)) focuses on sustainable development through technology.

It is estimated that more than one billion people around the world live with some form of a [disability](#) , of whom 2-4 per cent experience considerable difficulties in functioning. In recent years, persons with disabilities are benefitting from rapidly evolving [assistive technologies](#) (AT), such as [AsTeRICS](#) , a European open-source construction set which allows using a large set of sensors and actuators.

But according to the World Health Organisation, even in [high-income countries](#) , between 20

and 40 per cent of people with disabilities don't have their needs met for assistance with everyday activities. Additionally, up to 80 per cent of the disabled people live in developing countries, thus lacking access to essential tools, such as Apps on smartphones or interactive whiteboards.

Sustainable Development: The promise of technology



The observance of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) will be celebrated under the theme 'Sustainable Development: The promise of technology'. Ensuring accessibility for, and inclusion of, persons with disabilities is important for achieving internationally agreed development goals, such as the [Millennium Development Goals](#) .

"Through adaptive, assistive and inclusive technology, persons with disabilities can make the most of their potential in their communities and in the workplace. Employers can harness technology to create an enabling environment for persons with disabilities to find productive employment and fully use their skills and capacities", Ban Ki-moon stated in his [official message for IDPD 2014](#)

"Let us spare no effort to ensure that policies, programmes, guidelines and 21st century technologies are accessible to persons with disabilities, and sensitive to their perspectives and experiences."

During the day, [UNDESA](#) will host multiple panel discussions at the UN Headquarters, identifying key issues and trends with regard to technology and how the post-2015 development agenda can promote an inclusive path to development.

"Let's unite the different skills we have, to find solutions, to make society accessible to everybody," said Ms. [Daniela Bas](#) , Director of UNDESA's Division for Social Policy and Development.

"Leave the 'dis' at home and bring the ability."