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Senate Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade

Email: fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Children and Young People with Disability Australia and Disabled People's Organisations Australia welcome the opportunity to contribute to the *Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. This brief joint submission has a specific focus on issues of key relevance to people with disability.

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability aged 0 to 25 years. CYDA's purpose is to advocate systemically at the national level for the rights and interests of all children and young people with disability living in Australia. CYDA has a current national membership of 5300.

CYDA provides a link between the direct experiences of children and young people with disability to federal government and other key stakeholders. This link is essential for the creation of a true appreciation of the experiences and challenges faced by children and young people with disability.

CYDA's vision is that children and young people with disability living in Australia are afforded every opportunity to thrive, achieve their potential and that their rights and interests as individuals, members of a family and their community are met.

Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia) is an alliance of national disabled people's organisations, which are organisations constituted, led and governed by people with disability. The key purpose of DPO Australia is to promote, protect and advance the human rights and freedoms of people with disability by working collaboratively on areas of shared interests, purposes and strategic priorities and opportunities. DPO Australia is made up of First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN); Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA); National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA); and People with Disability Australia (PWDA).

CYDA and DPO Australia welcome and support Australia's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The SDGs are highly relevant to people with disability. People with disability are explicitly referred to in the targets of seven of the SDGs and all 17 goals are of relevance. For the majority of the SDGs, people with disability are disproportionately affected by the disadvantage that the goals aim to eliminate including poverty, poor health outcomes and less access to education.

The position paper *Leave No One Behind*¹ by International Disability Alliance, endorsed by DPO Australia, was presented in 2016 to the United Nations High Level Political Forum. It states "*the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes persons with disabilities and has thus opened doors for*

¹ Persons with Disabilities 2016, *High Level Political Forum 2016: Ensuring that no one is left behind*, International Disability Alliance, viewed 10 April 2018, http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/documents/leave_no_one_behind_-_position_paper_by_persons_with_disabilities_.pdf

their participation and recognition as active contributing members of society: who must not face any discrimination or be left out or behind". Further, and aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), it emphasises that it is critical that there is an active partnership with people with disability in the implementation of the SDGs. This is seen as essential to facilitating the relevance and success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for people with disability.

CYDA and DPO Australia believe that there is minimal awareness of, and discussion regarding, the SDGs within Australia and their domestic relevance and application. As national disability representative organisations, who have knowledge of most government consultations, forums and policies that are of core relevance to people with disability there is scant mention of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or how the SDGs will be promoted or progressed within Australia.

Further, the knowledge of the SDGs within the general community, outside the policy and official international development assistance sectors, appears to be extremely minimal.

Australia's role in progressing the SDGs internationally is more substantive than what is occurring domestically. Again, however, this still appears to be largely limited to those who are directly involved in the initiatives being undertaken and contributed to by the Australian Government.

A major initiative of the Australian Government that progresses the SDGs internationally is the strategy *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*². This strategy aims to improve the quality of life for people with disability in developing countries. Some of the key commitments laid out in the strategy include: the promotion of disability-inclusive education; removal of physical barriers through infrastructure investments; cooperation with partner governments to enhance access to vital services. Additionally, the Australian Government commits to supporting disabled people's organisations in developing countries so that they can continue to give people with disability a voice. A major focus of the strategy is on improving data collection, which will allow for internationally comparable data on people with disability.

It is of considerable concern, however, that international initiatives involving the progressing of the SDGs occur with minimal or often no input from the Australian Disabled Persons and Representative Organisations. There are minimal mechanisms and processes which have been developed which would enable and encourage this input. This is in stark contrast to the recommendations contained in the *Leave No One Behind* Position Paper³. Additionally, the Disabled Persons and Representative Organisations have extremely limited capacity to be able to undertake this work due to organisational constraints with a very significant requirement to contribute to domestic initiatives with limited funding.

In adopting the 2030 Agenda, Australia is required to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the UN High Level Political Forum in New York in July 2018. The VNR will provide details of Australia's progress in advancing the 2030 Agenda, and its development will be led by the

² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2015, *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

³ Persons with Disabilities 2016, *High Level Political Forum 2016: Ensuring that no one is left behind*, International Disability Alliance, viewed 10 April 2018, http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/documents/leave_no_one_behind_-_position_paper_by_persons_with_disabilities_.pdf

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. There was minimal promotion of this initiative specifically to the disability representative and advocacy sector and the few who are known to have been aware of the work undertaken did not have the capacity to contribute.

In particular, CYDA and DPO Australia are aware that the key department responsible for policy and programs for people with disability, the Department of Social Services (DSS) has contributed to the information that will be presented through the VNR. However, we are not aware of any consultation process or opportunity for our participation or the participation of other Disabled Persons and Representative Organisations. This is despite requesting information on SDG implementation and reporting from DSS.

CYDA and DPO Australia recommends that a review should be conducted of existing processes regarding the domestic implementation of the SDGs to ensure that Disabled Persons and Representative Organisations are able to actively participate in the development and implementation of the actions being undertaken.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. If you wish to discuss any of the issues presented in this submission further, please contact CYDA or DPO Australia.

CONTACT

Stephanie Gotlib
CYDA
Chief Executive Officer
03 9417 1025
stephaniegotlib@cyda.org.au
www.cyda.org.au

Therese Sands
DPO Australia
Co-CEO of PWDA
0412 935 128
ThereseS@pwd.org.au
www.dpoa.org.au