On the 10th of June 2013, the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) organised, with the support of the European Economic and Social Committee, a High Level Exchange on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 development framework. At this meeting representatives from the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the EU – ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly and civil society from both European and developing countries, discussed the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the MDGs and the challenges and opportunities for a future development framework. The key messages resulting from this exchange are outlined below.

- What became clear in this exchange is that all parties (EU, Member States and civil society) would like to see persons with disabilities included in the Millennium Development Goals and in the Post-2015 framework, as this would mean implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the highest political level. Both the EU and developing countries are already making some progress. Persons with disabilities are included in some but not all EU development policies, projects and programs. However, inclusion mostly occurs in sectors such as health and education. Disability inclusion should not be limited to social sectors. It should be a cross-cutting issue in all sectors.

- Within the post-2015 development framework strong human rights and non-discrimination objectives, including the human rights of persons with disabilities, should be prioritized.

- The inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU development policy should not be a stand-alone goal. Policy has to be put into practice in order to translate it into real achievements. Implementation is the real challenge. In order to tackle this challenge existing tools such as the EU Human Rights training, the current civil society mapping and the EU guidance note on disability and development can be used.

- Statistics and data are very important. At the moment, hardly any data on disability in developing countries are available. This makes persons with disabilities invisible. The post 2015 framework should contain an obligation to disaggregate collected data by disability.

- Linked to the idea of statistics and data is the importance of indicators. What is measured gets done. So indicators on disability should be put in place in the post 2015 framework. This is not a call for one specific indicator on disability. Instead we call on the
EU to promote disability as a cross-cutting issue in the post-2015 framework, meaning that indicators on persons with disabilities are included in every goal.

- The above recommendation is also clearly linked to the fact that in the MDG framework all progress is measured via averages. This focus on averages has inhibited vulnerable groups in society, such as persons with disabilities, to benefit from the MDGs. In the post-2015 framework indicators should include concrete targets rather than to focus only on averages. This way reaching an average while not taking into account the most vulnerable groups in society can no longer be called a success.

- In defining the post-2015 framework the process is as important as the outcome. Within this process the entire society, including the most marginalised and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities should be represented. Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) should be part of the consultation. Therefore, logistic support is necessary. This means amongst others that meetings and consultations should take place in accessible venues and that sign language interpretation should be available. More important is that at the moment in most developing countries DPOs are not very strong and they struggle to fulfil their monitoring and advocacy role. There is a need for empowerment! The EU should support and promote the strengthening of DPOs, in order to stimulate a fully inclusive post-2015 process and thus an inclusive post-2015 framework.