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Webinar 8: Universal access to employment
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>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Good afternoon to everyone. My name is Alessia Rogai, and I am the Knowledge Management Learning Coordinator of the project Bridge the Gap. For those that know the project Bridge the Gap 2 is a project funded by the European Union, and it is coordinated by the International IBER Administration policy, FIA, in partnership with three agencies for development cooperation of the European Union, the Spanish, the Italian and Australian, and two international NGOs, the International Disability and Development Consortium and the European Disability Forum.

The initiative aims to contribute to the social economic inclusion equality and non-discrimination of persons with disability for more inclusive and accountable institutions and policies.

Well, it seems I think incredible, but we arrive already to the eighth session of this webinar training cycle organized by Bridge the Gap, which from the beginning is exploring different cross-cutting issues taking into consideration by this European initiative. We started months ago with the session about CRPD,

it's principle to go, then through SDGs, the inclusive project cycle management, communication, inclusive education was last session, finally arriving today to talk about employment.

The webinars are conducted, as you know well now, in the English, French, and Spanish in separate sessions, and you can find all the previous sessions, the recording, the transcriptions, and also the learning material on our website on the Facebook and Twitter pages, and also on where you took Jana in separate languages. You can find these links in a while in the chat box.

Today, as I said, another important topic, universal access to employment, mainstreaming disability inclusion to ensure the right to work and employment of persons with disability.

According to the convention on the rights of persons with disability, persons with disability have the right to work on an equal basis with the others, specifically the Article 27 of the CRPD requires state parties to take adequate measures to safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work of persons with disability. Including prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability with regards to all matters

concerning employment.

Employment is crucial to sustain livelihood, as well as a crucial factor for inclusion in societies. Having a job is an essential feature of human systems, and in many societies the ability to work is viewed as one of the most important ways in which people can make their individual contribution to their communities.

Persons with disability face barriers in the form of an accessibility of information and in physical, of the physical environment including transportations, housing, and workplaces. Employers can also assume that having implementation for employees with disability is expensive. Mainstreaming disability inclusion strategies into existing development processes is a way of ensuring the rights of persons with disability in terms of work and employment.

Well, today the webinar will highlight the barriers facing persons with disability and their access to work, such as lack of equal education and training opportunities, cultural stereotypes, and the accessibility of information and the physical environment.

This session will also explore disability inclusive strategies and measures that can be taken to promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disability. This include mainstreaming disability national development plans, setting up of support employment programs, microfinancing, and ensuring accessibility to information.

I will give immediately the floor to our special speaker today, that is Stefan Tromel from the International Organization ILO. Stefan is a senior disability specialist in ILO since 2013.

Before this date he was the Executive Director of the International Disability Alliance and Director of the European Disability Forum between '99 and 2004. Very important to mention, Stefan was actively involved in the legislation process of the CRPD.

Well, thank you very much, Stefan. It's really, I think, a pleasure having you today. Before starting and giving you the floor, I would like to inform this audience that this webinar is live captioned, so you can find the live transcription by clicking on the link that you can find immediately now in the chat box.

So, well, enjoy this session, and thank you very much again, Stefan. I give you the floor to talk about this important topic today. Thanks.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Thank you. Thank you, Alessia, and thank you for inviting me to be part of this round of webinars to speak on the issue of employment, which is, of course, the mandate that we have here in the international labor organization, which is where I work, so hello from Geneva, which is where we have our headquarters.

Let me say a few things just about the ILO connected with the issue of today. The ILO has, the international labor organization the specialized agency within the UN that has a specific mandate to work -- to promote employment of everybody, and it also has a very strong mandate on the issue of social protection. So, to the extent both articles 27 and 28 of the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities are for us the ILO is actively involved. I was not wearing the ILO hat at that stage, but the ILO was actively involved in contributing to both Article 27 and 28, and the ILO has also been, of course, supporting issues linked to the 2013 development agenda, in

particular goal No. 8, which is about employment and decent work, which is one of the words that we use very much in the ILO, as well as other goals, for instance, connected to combating poverty and promoting social protection.

Our governing structure in the ILO is very specific and very different from many other UN entities. On our governing structure, you have both Governments usually represented by the ministries of employment or labor, but we also have 50% of our governing structure is decided up between employer federations and trade unions. Also, here we call it tripartite composition, and I come back to that, because it is relevant for also the presentation today.

Another relevant feature of the ILO is that we also are an organization that adopts conventions. So, most of the conventions that exist nowadays in the areas of employment and social protection have been generated by the ILO in the hundred years that we're celebrating this is where we are, a hundred years old. We were established just immediately after the First World War, and since then we have been adopting different conventions, and since 1983, in fact, there is one specific

convention of the ILO on vocational rehabilitation, so the title of persons with disabilities. And, it's interesting when you see -- when you compare that ILO convention from 1983 ratified by 80 countries, the last 110 years ago, you can also compare that with ratification level and speed of the convention, but if you look at the content of that convention and compare it to the UN convention to the CRPD, as I will refer from now on, you can really see how much the thinking on disability has evolved over those 30 years or so between the ILO convention and the UN convention.

On issues like discrimination, there is no reference in the ILO, the definition of disability is a very individual definition. It does not take into account the barriers. The approach is very much about specialized solution. There are some referencing to mainstream solutions, but the focus 30 years ago, 35 years ago was really about specialized solutions both in terms of employment, as well as vocational training.

So, in 1983 this convention, which was the first global international convention specific on disability was at the forefront. It was very advanced in 1983. It just reflects how

quickly the thinking has evolved and has now made this ILO convention, although it is still technically on our books and still considered valid, it is really no longer the guiding document for our work, the guiding document for our work is, of course, the unconventional and from a broader perspective, the 2013 development agenda.

So, I'm going to start with that background. When you look at work, Alessia was saying it's about the right to work on an equal basis with us. Now, this term of on an equal basis of others, it is particularly relevant in the context of employment, because nobody has the absolute right to work. There are a lot of people in our countries, disabled and non-disabled, more disabled than non-disabled that are not working and are out of work for a number of reasons. So, compared to some of the other rights that you can see in the convention, like the right to education or right to health, where Governments should be imposing it's a universal right and access to these rights, in the context of employment, that is much more difficult to achieve, because there are other factors that come in which we will be discuss anything a minute.

Also, there is a certain limitation to the right to work compared to some of the other rights in terms of what states can do.

The other important element to take into account and think about work and employment is that it is one of the very good examples, when the UN convention speaks about the fact that the different rights are interrelated and interdependent, I think the right to employment is a very good example of that, because as Alessia was saying, our capacity to promote employment of persons with disabilities and good employment, not any employment, very much depends, of course, on education, if people with disabilities, like any other citizen, do not have good education, they have very little opportunities to find a job. Or, if they find another good job. If there are a lot of barriers in terms of access to information, in terms of access to buildings, to the workplace, if there are barriers to project transport, all these elements make it very difficult for people with disabilities to find a job. But also other elements, like many persons with disabilities are still limited in their legal capacity, cannot properly sign a line bore contract, somebody else will need to

sign on their behalf. All of that also contributes to problems. And, of course, also the whole issue of attitude null barriers. So, I think all of these elements mean that if we want to work on employment, we want to promote employment of persons with disabilities, we also need to work on all these other elements outside the purely employment context, because if those are the elements are not there or are not adequately there, it would then be very difficult to promote the employment of persons with disability.

There are other elements of the UN convention that are also relevant from an employment perspective. Right now we don't have, in many countries, good statistics on the employment of persons with disabilities. This is further complicated by the fact that we use different definitions, but even from -- so that makes also comparability a very complicated issue, but even if you look at a specific country context, the fact of the matter is very rarely employment statistics de-segregated by disability. So, if the countries are using regular labor force service, very seldom are these regular surveys done with a focus on persons with disabilities. And, so there is a clear link, of

course, with article 31 of the CRPD which requests states to provide the Relevant statistical information and also very clearly linked with a strong push for disability statistics as seen by the sustainability development agenda.

Having said that, the statistical information that is available shows that clearly there is a problem with the employment of persons with disability. There clearly showing higher levels of unemployment, although they're really the big difference is not so much in the level of unemployment, but it's really about the level of activity, which means basically that especially in more developed countries, there are many more people with disabilities that are not even seeking employment, for a number of reasons, including discouragement, including disincentives, including a badly design social protection system, so there are a number of elements that explain why a person with disabilities are very often not even resisted as unemployed and are what I would consider in the ILO terminology inactive. They are not even part of the labor market as such, although they are in working age between 16 and 64, whatever the working age is of our countries.

The situation of women with disabilities, again, we have statistical information desegregated both by disability and gender, it is usually even worse than that of men with disabilities across the board in all types of countries, and of course they are then within specific subgroups of persons with disabilities. There are groups that have each more problems to find employment, persons with intellectual disability, persons with psychosocial disability are usually among the groups that are facing even much lower levels of employment, of participation in the labor market than the rest of the population of persons with disabilities.

When you look at the employment from a developing country perspective, the main message I would deliver at this stage is there is a general perception that in the context of developing countries where the majority of persons disabled or non-disabled work in the former economies and not proper labor relationship as we are used to in developed countries and public sector on the private sector. In the context of a developing country this informal employment is the only option for persons with disabilities. There is no expectation that among people with

disabilities that they should also be having a part, at least, of the employment that is provided by the public and private sector is and that is one of the I shall news the ILO we're trying to check. We're trying to say if 80% of the general population like Bangladesh are working outside the formal economy that is the same type of percentage that should apply to person with disabilities. We should not accept that for persons of disabilities is 100.

That is one challenge we need to address and up front because otherwise the whole expectation is the only option for persons with disabilities is to basically to find and create their own job through save employment, which sometimes we might call Entrepreneurship or business development, we might put nice names to it but at the end of the day it is rather bad self-employment in most of the cases. I think we need to challenge that idea.

Those who have a problem in terms of mental barriers, and Alessia was referring to it. In many countries, and that is across the board, both in developing countries, there is the idea very much seen in society not only by employers also, also

by trade unions, also by media, sometimes by even persons with disabilities themselves and their families, that disability is almost to equal to inability to work. And, I think we need to challenge that. We need to make it very clear that the majority that the absolute large majority of persons with disabilities if provided sometimes when they need it and not always when they need it with the adequate workplace adjustments, they will be able to work and will be able to work at the similar level as non-disabled people. And, that is, I think, something that these stereotypes about not being able to work or if able to work definitely not at the same level. I think this is something that we need to challenge very strongly, and that is why it is also so important to see that article 8 of the convention has a specific reference to the needs to show to the private sector to the employers the capabilities of persons with disabilities. Probably that small sentence in article 8 could have also been in Article 27, but for whatever reason it is there. It is just a good reminder that in this general effort that states need to do to change the mental barriers among society in general, a particular tension should also be provided

to the private sector. To employers in general, because as I said, all those these perceptions might be equally bad within the public sector.

So, let me now have a look at -- let us have a look at Article 27 of the up convention. Alessia has given us a quick introduction to that article.

Now, first, as you will see, it is one of the longest articles in the convention, which to some extent shows that if we want to promote the employment of person with disabilities, we need to come up with a very multi-layer strategy. We need to address many different areas and issues if we really want to make progress in the area of employment. So, what are some of the messages that Article 27 sends us? On one hand, it sends us a clear message that it is about inclusive employment. We are talking about people with disabilities finding jobs in an open labor markets, labor market inclusive to everybody, and in jobs and professions alongside the rest of the population. We are moving away from solutions from the past that were mostly -- can mostly be found still in developed countries, which is what we call the (Indiscernible) workshops or other modalities. Now,

these still exist. I will not go into a discussion of whether they are good or bad, but we really think in the ILO that these are solutions that belong to the past and when were now developing countries are looking into this issue, they should be thinking about solution that is are based on people with disabilities working in the same place as everybody else and not in any sort of segregated or separate solutions.

But it's not only about inclusive employment. It's also about ensuring not just any job, as I said before, we use this term in the ILO decent employment, which is a combination of many things. It is about being protected from discrimination, of course being protected from violence investment, having adequate working conditions and adequate salary, good protection from -- good health and safety requirements, and also good opportunities for everybody for career development. So, this understanding of decent work applies equally to persons with disabilities. Too much in the past our focus has been on finding persons with disabilities a job and then basically for getting about them and say okay, now they have a job, they are in the bottom of the pyramid, but now we just don't care about providing the

opportunities for people with disabilities to move up on the ladder of the pyramid and tomorrow, not tomorrow, but in ten years' time become the head of the department, the head of the human resource department, the head of marketing, and a bit later why not become the CEO of a company. We don't have that expectation in our minds, and that is something that also needs to change, and I think from that point of view again the CRPD sends us very clear messages that it is not just about any job, it's about ensuring also the same opportunities for career development, and some people will make it more, others less, like the rest of the population.

Article 27 also is very clear that it is about ensuring non-discrimination in all stages of the process. I think it is in the first paragraph under -- first element under the second paragraph of the convention deals with these different stages. It's about ensuring non-discrimination in the recruitment process. We need to revise, employers need to revise what are the different barriers. Sometimes inadvertence that exist in their recruitment processes. Other barriers to e recruitment for instance, are recruitment panels adequately prepared to look

at the abilities of disabled candidates versus just focusing on oh, the person has a wheelchair or using a cane or is deaf.

Focus on the abilities of the person, try to think about what that person might require, but don't focus on the business built. Focus on what the talent and skills that that person brings to your company if employed.

It's, of course, non-discrimination once the person is in the company providing the same opportunities for continuous training. Nowadays in the current context of a labor market that is changing rapidly when new development start coming in, artificial intelligence, if workers disabled or not, are not able to retrain and obtain new skills very regularly, they will soon be sort of moved out of companies and replaced by younger people who are better able to do so. So, we need to not only ensure to get people into the job site, also ensure that they are able to access the same training opportunities as others, digital skills, it's communication, all of those elements. It's much more complicated and complex nowadays to get into the labor market and sustain the labor market and we just need to ensure people with disabilities have the same opportunities in others

to acquire that knowledge if we really want them to stay and also to promote progress in their employment.

Of course, a very important reference in Article 27, not surprising, to the needs to ensure that provision of accommodation is provide e. As you know the concept of reasonable accommodation, reasonable adjustments, is a concept that started in the context of employment. It is now thanks to the CRPD it is a widely understood complex, not only applying to employment, also to education and all areas, in fact, but it is a concept that really started in the context of employment and from that point of view is of course very important to have that explicit reference again also in Article 27. It doesn't go much into the legality of it, because that is already dealt with in other parts of the convention, article 2 and article 5 when these consents are defined, but I think it is very important reminders Article 27 that the role of state is not only to have this concept embedded in ledge laying, as it should be, it is the denial of reasonable accommodation. It is important to have that in our legal systems, but also to go beyond that and for instance provide the adequate technical assistance both to

employers, public and private, but also the individual disabilities of available reasonable accommodations that exist in the specific country, sometimes it's about covering the cost of such a workplace adjustment, but I think more relevant than funding, relevant as it is, it is really this concept of providing the technical assistance. It really sometimes even dismantles this myth that exists there among employers that this is something very complicated and extremely costly. That is not what the evidence shows. The evidence shows that usually these workplace adjustments are rather low cost, and if there is a cost, it is a rather minimal cost compared also with the return investment of these expenses.

But there is a role of the public sector to convey this message and provide that support, because in the absence of that, there is a strong myth stereotype around this concept and that can then lead to companies not considering the employment of persons with disabilities.

Apart from this strong non-discrimination focus of Article 27 consistent with the overarching focus on non-discrimination of the CRPD there are also references to affirmative action in

Article 27, so in that context the article is less prescriptive. As you know, one of the most well-known affirmative action measure that exists in more than 80 countries is, quote Tau systems. Many countries have quota systems that say if your employer, public or private, with more than 25, 50, a hundred employees, a certain percentage, 1%, 2%, even 5% of your staff should have a disability. Now, that exists in many countries, developed and development countries, but also many countries that do not have these schemes, and sometimes also disability organizations are not comfortable with these schemes because they think that this puts the focus on the wrong thing, it puts the focus on the au disability and not the ability. I would tend the agree with the argument, at the same time I also feel in certain contexts in the absence of having some push that often well designed quota system provides, and most of the quota systems are not well designed, but when you have a well-designed quota system, there are ways of overcoming the negative elements that a quota system brings with and still sort of -- quota system helps to put the issue on the agenda of the employers both public and private. So, it is still very much used policy

option which I would not say it is part of the past, it is still part of the current reality, and when it's well designed, I think it can still make an important contribution. But there are also other affirmative action measures around the creative use of public procurement, very few examples like South Africa and a few others that have done a good use of public procurement to promote the employment of underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities.

Article 27 also speaks about a very important issue in my view, which is the issue of work experience. So, we have for instance in the ILO, we have short fact sheets in which we explain how you make an apprenticeship or internship scheme accessible to people with disabilities. We are arguing not for separate program targeting in terms with disabilities, you might also consider that, but more generally would say if you have an internship program or any other program in connection with universities or that, think about how to make that mainstream program inclusive of youth with disabilities, youth young women and men with disabilities. I think that is a quite powerful tool. So, to some extent these programs, especially for an ploy

ser startlingly to think about opening up the persons with disabilities, they provide a rather safe bet, so to say, because they give it a try, if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out, but usually what happens is that it works out, there is some evidence from the U.S. that companies that they are using these approach have six times more success in the context of disability inclusion that companies are not using this approach. So, it is quite an interesting element, and it works perfectly in all different economic context.

The convention also speaks about the issue of job retention and return to work. We all know that most of persons with disabilities acquire their disability while they are in working age. It can be through work accident, it can also be in many other context, any other accident, any health condition, and the current practice is that in most situations when this happens, person with disabilities leave the labor markets and undergo some form of rehabilitation and all that and then they you try to come back. This coming back to the labor market usually does not work. There are some good examples, Malaysia is a good successful return to work program where people who are in these

situations that have been covered by social security, a lot of efforts are being made to bring these people back to the labor market ideally in the same job for the same companies before. When that is not possible, in a similar job with a different company, or that doesn't work, perhaps also in the context of self-employment. But very interesting scheme, not so much seen in many other countries.

Another important message that the convention Article 27 of the convention sends us is about public employment. In most of our countries, the public sector if you bring together the central government, the regional government, however our countries are organized, the local governments, if you bring all that together, usually the public sector the largest employer in our countries. What we still see very often is that the public sector is largely not interested in its issue. It has not been a focus of our advocacy work, both I would say from the ILO, we don't have any -- startlingly to look at that a bit more, but we don't have any good publication on the public sector. We do a lot of work with the public sector, come to that in a minute, but the public sector been an area that has been largely

overlooked by us. We just don't think there are many good examples. We have seen a few countries where it is startlingly to change, but I think it is something that needs to happen more. If Governments are trying to get the private sector more engaged in the feasibilities and are not themselves showing the way, they have little credibility and authority to expect that the private sector does bet other that.

Let me move a built into the private sector. This is an area where the ILO has been doing a lot of work. Probably one of the most complex areas. Especially also in a developing country context, as I explained before. But what we have been thinking for many years is what is the best way to convince the private sector that they should engage in the employment of persons with disabilities, because there can be no doubt that while the public sector is important, as I said before, still the largest part of the population is working in the private sector, and what we can see is that the private sector is usually not aware of the issue or has this very deep rooted stigma stereotypes and prejudices. Not so much different from the rest of society, but still of course also to be found in the context of the private

sector.

So, the conclusion that we arrive already a number of years ago, and it was not myself, one of my predecessors in the ILOs, that we think that the best way to convince the private sector on how to get engaged in this issue beyond just legal compliance is really the listening, hearing from other companies that are really doing it, that are doing it for the right reasons, because they have realized that it's good for them to employ persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities bring to their companies skills, and talent that for companies in direct interest to have a diverse workforce that is then best prepared to also deal with a diverse consumer expectation. So, it's this what we sometimes call the business case, this advantages for the private sector of people with disabilities. We have seen that being a role of facilitator between companies that are engaged in that process and have a good advanced understanding of this, there might not be a hundred percent experts on the CRPD, usually they are not, to be very honest, but they have a very good approach. The way they do things is extremely advanced. They have very good examples of providing reasonable

accommodation, very good example. Sometimes they are better employers for instance than my own organization, like the ILO, just to put it very bluntly. The good ones. There are a number of good ones. They're able to showcase and use these good ones at global level and we do it through the ILO global disability network or through a national level. This is really what is then starting to make a difference.

One thing we have been promoting is called National Business and Disability Networks in Ethiopia. It is an example where the disability organization, a network was established a few years ago that is bringing together the private sector entities, still a few, but increasingly more and more. They come together, they share experience, they get the support wherever from each other, they get support from NGOs that understand where the private sector comes from, that can help them find skilled persons with disabilities probably coming out of university, coming out of an increasingly inclusive vocation training system and these type of initiatives are still, although they are small in numbers, I think these are showing the way in which we can sort of more significantly improve the performance of the private

sector. I'm happy to come back to that in the Q&A part of the webinar.

Now, I mention at the beginning of my presentation that the ILO has this (Indiscernible) composition as I explained, Governments, employer and trade unions, of course in the ILO context we have tried also in line with a specific provision in Article 27 to get the trade union sector more involved, and the good news is that especially over the last two or three years some more progress has been done. We have now a couple of publications where we have identified examples from national trade unions that are startlingly to put the employment of persons with disabilities on their agenda. I think it is fair to say that this is a rather new issue. It's still not at the level where it should be. There are still many trade unions out there that are not thinking about persons with disabilities, but I think what they're seeing is that this is making progress. Again, the more trade unions you have startlingly to include persons with disabilities in their regular work, not as an ad hoc or separate idea, really as part of their core activities, whether it's collective bargaining, whether it is discussion on

labor policy, whatever, of course also internally, it's important that trade unions are startlingly to include disability in that context, and then again, the most trade unions we have doing it, they can then sort of -- we can use them or they can then become ambassadors towards other trade unions that are not yet thinking about.

What are other -- five more minutes to go and then I'll stop, if that's okay with you, and I am happy to look for questions from everybody.

But five more minutes on some final messages that the Article 27 of the convention sends us. One, it's very clear. It is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the adequate access to vocational training. Now, what we still see in countries, in many countries, especially developing countries, when there is some attention to vocational training of persons with disabilities, it is being done through segregated specialized training centers usually focusing on skills and professions that are either no longer exist or almost not, or definitely would lead to extremely low level of jobs, usually in self-employment. Never thinking of mainstream employment in the private sector,

it's about basket weaving, it is about knitting. With all due respect to these professions, when you have these specialized vocational training centers, that avenue is an avenue that is not leading to what we think is decent employment for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the fact that these specialized entities exist create an excuse for the mainstream vocational training system, which might not be for everybody, that is okay, we cannot solve ourselves only, but the existence of these specialized entities provide an excellent excuse for the mainstream entity. Say no, no, we are sorry, but we are not ready to make our premises, our training, accessible to persons with disabilities, our staff is not prepared to deal with that, so we are not interested in this, why don't you go over there, the other side of the street, there is a specialized vocational training that yeah, you can only do knitting and basket weaving and things like that, but they know how to provided training to persons with disabilities.

So, we really need, and this is still happening. We just got a request now from an eastern Europe country saying how can we change this situation. And, it's very much similar to the

discussion that we still are having in many countries, not solved, to be clear, about specialized education and inclusive education. But in the context of education, there is a general agreement that inclusive education has to be objective, and we need to find a way, a transition from the still existing specialized schools to that inclusive education. But it's happening. The process is happening.

It is still surprising to see that in the context of vocational training we don't seem to have be having a similar process in place. The ILO side, and the CRPD is very clear on that, we are making very clear push that we think that what is needed is that the mainstream vocation training institutions -- institute become disability inclusive, which will then allow people with disabilities to have the same choices for skills and professions that the rest of the population.

Of course, it's also part, not specifically mentioned in Article 27, also about checking about university. The University can do better, it is more for article 24, of course there is a clear need for universities to be more inclusive for a person's with disabilities again that would make it easier for a person with

disabilities to find a proper job.

The convention, of course, also deals with self-employment.

Even different entrepreneurship, or that. We're not against it. What I was trying to say at the beginning, we are not against it, but we are just saying this should not be the only option for person with disabilities. That's correct. It should be one more option. It probably would be the majority option because in many countries it is the majority option for everybody, but it is not the only option.

Now, again, we would not argue that you should have specialized segregated training for self-employment of people with disabilities or subgroup of person with disabilities. We don't think that is the right approach. If you have in your country general mainstream entrepreneurship training, business development service, whatever you can call them, make these general trainings accessible to people with disabilities. Don't try to come with the second -- usually second or third class training because it will just not help people with disabilities also to create their own jobs and their own companies. Of course, it is all about microfinance. Again, the solution is

not to come up necessarily with a specialized microfinance program for persons with disabilities. No. Why don't we make the effort, like it is happening in many countries, Uganda is the example we usually provide, make the mainstream microfinance system accessible to persons with disabilities. Take away all these barriers that exist, a lot of those, practical, based on stereotypes, a number of barriers that in reality exist that make it very difficult for a person with disabilities to get a loan from a microfinance institution. We need to deal with it. Alessia, I think on my side this is what I wanted to share in this initial presentation. I didn't check exactly how much time I have taken, but I hope that we still have a lot of time for question and answer, and I look forward to you sharing the questions that you might have received over the chat or those questions that might be asked by people orally.

Thank you.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: So, great. Thank you very much, Stefan. It was really an interesting presentation, also because as you said, I think that this specific topic about employment really needs, maybe, just a little more attention or different way to

approach it.

So, we can start, as you said, with question and answer. So, I invite our audience to text a question in the chat box or raise directly your hand to and talk with Stefan. I really invite you to take this opportunity because I don't know if we will be able to have for an hour Stefan for us to answer to our question about employment.

Before startlingly reading, because we have almost some questions in the chat box, I just would like to make a reflection, because we work on employment specifically in students, because as you know and also maybe your audience know where Bridge the Gap works in five country and every country we work for a specific topic. In Sudan we work specifically on employment, but as you said, one year ago when we started implementation phase we faced the first challenge working on employment because we start with a strong action plan based universal access to employment, but we immediately stopped working on that specifically, because we recognize that we are missing data, and also policies on education. So, we made a step back on our work plan, but more or less yes, because now we

are not working really more -- a lot on employment in Sudan than more on data collection and education.

So, I don't know why my question is more reflection than a question, but there is a way to work little by little on this topic also if data are missing and also there is a lack of policies in terms of inclusive education. Can we do something in the mean type? Because the risk in our case that at the end of the day we spend the next two or three years working with Bridge the Gap on data and on inclusive education that, of course, Sudan and specifically also other countries, but also Sudan need to work on the education, but of course we selected at the beginning on working employment and we are facing this issue.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Good question. Yes, I would definitely say don't wait until you have solved the education issue and the data issue, because these are -- especially education one is a long-term issue. That you can solve more or less, depending a built on what are the regular service that are being used, but the moment you solve the data issue the only thing you have is proof that there is a problem. But the data issue itself will

not solve the issues, it will just hopefully help you to monitor progress over time.

I think as I said before, it is a complicated issue. It is an issue that requires tackling different issues, but there are things that can be done and you shouldn't be waiting, because I mean the situation that you described is very similar to many other countries, no, and people should not just sit back and wait for these -- people should be aware that these elements have a negative impact on employment, which is why they need to be solved, but at the same time, we should not sort of say, well, until we solve those, we cannot do anything, because then you have to wait five years, ten years, or whatever.

I think these multi layer approach should address some of the issues I mentioned. I think there is a role for the public sector. I'm sure the public sector in Sudan is the largest employer. Probably not the best employer. I don't know the situation in Sudan at all, but public sector is an option.

I think it's important to look for examples of private sector companies in Sudan, banks, IT companies, telephone companies, other larger companies to try to identify within that context

champions that could sort of start challenging this widely held stereotype that people with disabilities cannot work in that context. I think it's interesting to see, to understand what are the other avenues, we use very much the term pathways. What are the pathways that young people in Sudan go -- take to get into the labor market, no. How can we make sure that these pathways, which for sure are difficult for everybody, how can we make sure that these pathways are accessible to people with disabilities. For instance I'm often saying, most countries in the world now have a strong focus on youth employment, because there is a big challenge in almost every country about very high levels of youth unemployment. And, usually when you see a youth employment strategy or policy or measures, whatever, there is a recognition of including the gender element. You need to pay special attention to young woman, but there is never a reference to youth with disabilities. So, there is a need, really, to position ourselves in this mainstream policy initiatives that are -- that countries are designing to get specially young people into the labor market and try to make sure that in those initiatives young people with disabilities get their fair share

about it. The vocational training system, as I mentioned before, again, I don't know the situation of Sudan, but we need to see, as I said, we need to look at university. We need to look at vocation. We need to look at all these pathways that youth follow to get into the labor market and just make sure that these pathways are reasonably open for persons with disabilities. Sometimes there are entry criteria which are not -- for people with disabilities are not able to meet because they were not -- they did not get the proper education before. Then we need to engage with these authorities to find a way either to provide that can extra training to get the threshold, to get some threshold to say look for these historic reasons this group has been discriminated. You should have waivers for some of these requirements, because still people with disabilities once they are able to access this training will be able to deliver in a similar way than the rest of the population. So, definitely my message would be don't wait for these general issues to be in place, that will take too much time. Will not necessarily solve the issues, so I think you need to work in parallel creating these pre-requirements or

enabling environments like statistics to get them in order, but at the same time, try to think, and of course in collaboration with the private sector, with trade unions, of course with DPOs, that goes without saying, get them around the table and start to try to strategize together what are the possible entry points of something that can deliver at least some level of results early. I mean, initially the figures -- I come from Spain. We started to work on Spain end of the 80's, and in that context we had 25% of unemployment in Spain going to the private sector to convince them to approach people with disability was unheard of. They look at you and said, what are you crazy? It took a lot of years to change that. The employment situation got better then worse again, but we got a number of employers for this reasons startlingly to engage with us, the business built organizations became more aware on how to speak with the private sector, it is also something that is not always the case. I really come from that sector before I joined the ILO, I have always all my life in many years, I'm pretty old now, many years work in the disability organization, and I perfectly know that disability organizations very rarely find the right way of interacting with

the private sector. We are better use to do advocacy work with the government, and that we do very well, but the work with the private sector, you need to take a different approach, because otherwise if it becomes a confrontational approach, they will not see you as a partner, and then I think you are somehow not doing the proper job. So, I think there is also a job very often for disability organizations to try to strategize and think about the private sector as a potential ally. There many private sectors who will never be good, but let's focus on those who are perhaps interested in changing their attitude. In many developing countries it's the companies that come from outside into the country that probably are, perhaps, sometimes in a more -- in a position where they are even more interested in showing that they are not just there for the cash, but also for providing jobs for certain groups. So, I think there are a number of opportunities that need to be discussed, but definitely don't wait for solving the other issues, because it just takes too long.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Yes, I guess, so today it's not really available, our coordinator that is following the support of our

coordinator in Sudan, because it was interesting also knowing better just specifically what we are doing in the sense that you described, also working with the private sector. But anyway. If we have the possibility to connect, he will explain to us, if not we have a lot of questions, so we can go ahead with our question.

I will read an interesting question made by Manal Miry. Manal is asking can you share with us some good example of countries of program of employment with persons with intellectual disabilities. As you said, it is more challenging for persons with disabilities. If you have some good example about specific issue in development countries that we in the sense of organization can follow.

Thanks, Stefan.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Good question, indeed. It is often more difficult to find jobs for persons with intellectual disability at least initially. That is a methodology that has been used mostly in developed countries, but startlingly to be used in a developing country context, which is basically it is about finding a job for a person with intellectual disability

and supporting that person in the initial two, three months by teaching the person on the job. So, it is not a person that has to go to classroom training, it's really learning the job on the job. Because that usually works better for many people, but also works better for people with disability. What we call a job coach, the person has been there with the person with intellectual disability, he will then be helping the person to understand the content of the job, to sort out any problems potential problems with the coworkers, with the manager, with the transport from home to the job, any family issues that might be there, because there might be issues there in terms of over protection and fears and other. So, it is a person that would address these situations and then gradually the support will fade away and the person would still the entity provide support which is usually an N GO would be there in case there is a problem between the person and the employer.

Now, this might sound as a quite intensive support, but it is definitely a better approach than workshops, which as I said at the beginning is what we had in the past in developed countries, because the idea was that person with intellectual disability

will never be able to work in a normal company. And, I think we have -- this methodology has shown that is not true.

The other thing I would say is that we see, I'm thinking now for instance in China we have such a program, it was supported by the ILO, the numbers are small. I mean, sometimes more job coaches than actual stuff with disability, but there are a number of examples where this has worked out quite well. The other thing I would say is that usually the moment you start changing the attitude of the employers, the moment they open up themselves to employing persons with disabilities, it might not be a person with intellectual disability would be the first ones to be employed, but once the employer realizes the potential they have, once the employer realizes the support they can get from specialized entities and all that, what we have been seeing is that perhaps they were not the first to be employed by the private sector, but the moment the private sector becomes more confident and comfortable with the issue, it starts opening up the jobs for persons with, let's say, more severe disabilities from an employment perspective. Not saying it is more severe, but from an employment perspective, person with intellectual

disabilities just requires usually more support than others. And, sometimes providing that extra support initially is not something that the company would be too comfortable with. The moment the companies open up to people with disabilities, they might start, perhaps, with physical disability, with hearing disability, with vision disability. At a certain moment, the companies will also be prepared to provide opportunities for persons with intellectual disability, no. So, I think we should also think at this from that point of view.

Thank you for the good question.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you very much, Stefan. I can see a hand raised. David, I will try to give you the floor, if you want directly make your question to Stefan. Hello. David?

>> David: Hi.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Hi. I see -- I saw your hand raised. Maybe you want to make a question to Stefan.

>> David: Exactly. I am calling from Ghana, specifically Bolgatanga.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you. Thank you. Feel free to ask your question to Stefan.

>> David: My question is in Ghana we have this set up called rehabilitation center where persons with disabilities are put there to acquire skills, such as basket weaving, hairdressing, and fashion. And, over the years people who have graduated from these schools have never got any support from any institutions in order to set up the businesses that they want to set up. And, in that case, what do we do? Because such people, the school is still open and to collect people with disabilities and put them there and give them that skills then they don't get support to set up the businesses. So, what do we do in this case, please.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Thank you, David. I mean, I don't know the exact situation, but what you describe is not very different from what I have heard from many other countries and what I mentioned in my presentation before, no. For me, let me be very blunt. I think that these specialized rehabilitation centers do more bad than any good. And, they do more bad, first, because they have mentioned basket weaving myself, before, no. They are usually providing skills that are no longer demanded by the labor market or only would lead to very bad self-employment.

They usually, the choice of these skills have been made by somebody who is very stereotyped notions of what people with disabilities can do. So, I think it is only something you can do with your hands or whatever. So, from that point of view I'm not surprised at all what you're saying. My very blunt answer would be for me the best thing that could happen is that these centers are closed and that the resources have been used for maintaining those centers are being used to make the mainstream in Ghana for providing for persons with disabilities. The moment you have these specialized centers and disabled person knocking on the door of a mainstream case null training because you want marketing studies or IT or accounting, I don't know, whatever you can think of, something that is demanded by the labor market, they would basically very often send you back and say look, we not prepared to do so, but we know this is very nice center over there where you can do basket weaving and knitting, no. So, from that point of view, the bad contribution of these centers make is not only that they don't deliver skills that will then lead to proper employment, or employment at all, but also they provide an excuse for these mainstream

institutions not to become more disability inclusive. For me, we need to think, and the other day we add delegation hearing in Geneva that came to the meeting of the CRPD committee and they were can go me about because they wanted to come up with creating a specialized center for blind people in knitting. I said, I don't think that is a solution. I don't think that is -- these are solutions from the past. We need to think about solutions for the future, and these solutions pass by solutions that are mainstreamed that are inclusive. We need to move away from these segregated specialized solutions. We are moving away from those solutions in the convex of education. The convention is crystal clear about that. It's not easy. Not easy for the same way for every group, but in the context of vocational training, we are still sort of bound by these old fashioned solutions, which have for many years proven not to be useful at all. But just they have prevented more inclusive solutions to appear. That would be my very blunt reply. But I said, I don't know enough about the Ghana situation, but what you were describing is very similar to what I've heard in many other countries.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you very much, Stefan, and thank you also, David, for your question. I have another interesting question made by Jay Coumar.

Jay said, it's not just getting a job, but it's also earning a decent income. That, of course, is passed through education and development of skills, training, et cetera, as we said before. The question is how ILO is focusing and working with other stakeholders in addressing this issue.

Thank you, Stefan.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Thank you for the question. We're not doing as much as we could. The team is pretty small, so we have to be focused on our interventions because we can not do as much as we would like to do.

To put it very simple, we have basically, we see this two main elements. On one hand, we are trying to make sure that the private sector and the same logic would apply to the public sector, but have a strong focus on the private sector, we think it is very important that the private sector becomes more disability inclusive disability confident. We need more employers to be saying we are willing to employ people with

disabilities, as long, important caveat, as long as they have the skills that we require for our jobs. And, I think that is a fair request, no. But we need more companies and we are doing that as I explained before by having this global disability network, by having these national disability networks in almost 30 countries, we have in Ethiopia, now in contact with different organizations to set it up in Kenya, we've had in context in Ghana, we think Uganda is ready for that, it needs to happen on the ground and happen with involvement of disability organizations. That is one side of coin. We need to have a private sector that is more disability welcoming, and as I said, we think that what we have learn said the best way to achieve that is by showcasing countries that are doing it. It is much more effective when ILOs say it or when the government says it or an N GO says it. It is when the private sector in one company saying it to the other is you start to see that, oh, there is something in it because if this company is doing it it is not because they are nicer people than us, it's there is something in it from a business perspective. So, that is one side of the coin.

The other side of the coin very much in line with what were you saying is we need to ensure that people with disabilities have the right skills to be employed, to be attractive for this private sector, and not only to be attractive to get the initial job, but also then to sort of be able to move up in the ladder, and that would require sometimes training that they have received before, and also trying to ensure that any training that they can get by the company or through other means why they are working there allows them to move up in the hierarchy of that company. So, it's really, we need to work on both sides. We need to make the private sector more comfortable, we also need to make sure that people with disabilities have the right access to the skills, which is why I took this very strong stand in the reply to David in terms of, look, this specialized vocational training centers that exist, they are not helping us. They are creating -- they are putting energy and resources, making people waste their time on things that will not deliver any type of job or at least not any type of decent job that is what we are expecting and also what the CRPD Article 27 in the CRPD is telling us.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you for your answer, Stefan. I have -- we have lots of questions in the chat box, so I don't know if you will be able to answer to everybody, but you -- I suggest you continue to text your question and we will find a way to reply also after this session.

I would like to read an interesting question made by Jane Turner about that one of the barriers that are encountered, it is the access to the government vocational institute, she was specifically talking about Uganda, but I think that is the same situation in other countries that the entry requirements for these vocational institute are too high for persons with disability that usually also have a high level of education. So, at the end she said we ended up working with private institute that were more flexible on entry requirements. So the question is: Do you have any suggestion, example of pushing for mainstream vocational training institute to be accessible to persons with disability who may not have the required level of education that they should require?

Thank you for your answer.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Yes, thank you to Jane for the

question.

I don't have now an exact details of, but I know the work we've been doing in Bangladesh, in Zambia, in particular and Ethiopia has been very much focusing on making the mainstream vocational training institutions more accessible for the reasons that I've mentioned before. And, definitely looking at the entry requirements is one of those things that need to happen. It is not the only one of the it is also about awareness of the staff, it's about making the premises accessible, sometimes it's about making certain changes, having probably a small budget for reasonable adjustments to the training, and all that. But the entry requirement is the key issue.

I think that there are two solution toss that. One is to discuss with the government institution that is in charge of this, and some day it is called Tavital, the Tivolt authority in Zambia. One option is the look at waivers for these entry requirements, basically using that argument in terms of if you keep those requirements, this group that was -- has been excluded from education will also be excluded in this later part of the life. So, you might want to consider waving those

requirements. That is one option, and I think it's one option to pursue. Sometimes some of those requirements are sort of more difficult to take away because they would have a significant negative impact than on the actual level of the training, and then I think it is for N GOs, for the government to see about very much targeted training that would bring people with disabilities who have not had the benefit of proper inclusive education to bring them to the level that they can reach these entry requirements, or at least those that could not have been waived. It is a combination of flexibility in the requirements, and then also some sort of targeted pre-training that would bring people with disabilities to the right level, which would also have them in the following training. If you just waive all the requirements and then they come in and don't have any sort of minimum level of education, they would just not also be able to adequately follow the training. So, I think this pre-training is something that should be done, but always with the idea, and sorry for being a bit insistent, always with the idea of them getting people with disabilities into the mainstream training. Not sort of using the fact that they can't

make it to say no, then we go into the other avenue where I don't know about this private institutions where they are doing a good job or not. The example I was given before is no, you then take them to the second and third class solutions and then it is a waste of time for everybody. In particular, of course, for persons with disabilities.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you. Thank you for your reply. For your answer. Now I would like just to collect three or four questions that I have about the, quote, systems, because people are asking if you can give us some example of a well designed quota system and not a well designed quota system and also especially Manal ask again and said maybe again these quote systems are not really specific for persons with intellectual disabilities. Do you have some examples to share with us? Thank you.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Let me start with a non-well designed quota system, because there are few examples, and the few examples are countries where to have a quota system which includes a certain payment, it's a sanction, usually it is a sanction that companies need to pay in case they're not

complying with the quota, no. This is led with companies that do not want to create that to create fake employment. They put people with disabilities on the payroll, they pay them the minimum salary or whatever, which is sometimes lower than the actual sanction, so it makes more sense to pay that than the sanction, but then they tell the people don't even come to work because we're not expecting you here, so just please stay at home and don't bother us here. That is of course a badly designed quota system. You can find that in a number of countries. I won't give any names, but there are countries where we get that. They're in different regions, not always the same. That is definitely a badly designed system.

Now, there are not so many well designed quota systems. There are many quota systems on paper. Public and private sector are supposed to employ 1%, 2%. Nothing happens if they're not meeting it, so again that is a quota system without any enforcement, so nothing happens. A few countries have quota systems within there is this payment associated with it. Sometimes the payment goes to a special fund. That we think we usually prefer not to call them sanctions. It is more like a tax. You pay a tax or

fee for every position imagine that you have a hundred staff, you should have five staff with disabilities. You have three. So, you should pay a fee for the two positions that have not yet been covered. So, recognizing companies that have made an effort. It is not the same to have three and zero. Sometimes when you go by a sanction, you either meet the level or not of the if you have under the level paying sanction. We say you should pay a fee for each of the positions that have not yet been covered, and that fee should not be to the general budget, it should go to a specific budget which you can then use for instance, to finance a supported employment program like the one I described before, to finance workplace adjustments when they have a cost, to do an awareness raising campaign, some subsidies for smaller countries that are under the quota threshold. Some quota examples for countries that use the quota system in what I think is a good way, and also in a way that the quota system is also positively perceived by the employers. I think that example is also when a quota system is seen as very negative by all employers, there are obviously some employers who don't like it. That we have to accept. But the moment, the community e is

against the private sector, e they are not involved in the negotiation and discussion, they are thinking this is a recipe for failure. So, I think we also need to think about the process that will lead to the design of such a quota system. Where about in the ILO we are later this year to come up with a quota publication looking at examples of good and bad practice and coming up with some recommendations of terms how we think Governments should go about when they are designing a new quota system or revising the current quota system.

In terms of the issue of persons with intellectual disability, it is correct to say that almost no -- none of these quota systems makes any distinction by type of disability. There are few countries where the quota system distinguishes by type of disability, so a person with a more severe disability from an employment perspective would count, like, twice compared to a person with a less severe disability from a work perspective. The only scheme that I know that exists with a sub quota for persons with intellectual disability, that is the only one that comes to mind, is in my own country in Spain, in the public spector, not in the private, in the public we have a 5% quota

for all new jobs. 2 of these 5% reserved for persons with intellectual disability. But I said, it's the only example that I can think of right now that has this particular focus on persons with intellectual disability, otherwise I would agree with the person asking the question, there is a risk that quota systems with certain groups would benefit more from it than others, which is why it is so important to accompany a quota system with these other measures that I was describing before, otherwise certain groups would probably be mostly left out of a quota system.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you very much. I would like to read this interesting question made by Sylvia. She is asking is the methodology of job coaching a standardized one, and the second is, are there any deadlines to facilitate working inclusions for persons with disability. Thank you, Sylvia, for this question, and thank you Stefan.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Sorry, Alessia, I didn't understand the second part of the question. Any deadlines?

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: She is asking if you having some suggestions about guidelines.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Guidelines.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: To facilitate the work. Thanks.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Yes and yes. I guess many supported employment provider, this is the terminology we use, might have their own differences between each other, but there is a general agreement on what this entails. It very much depends on the funding available for it to be the more generous the funding is available is, the better the service can be, but you have the words of support employment race of WASE, if you Google for them, you can find on their website information, including guidelines on how to create and run such a program. So, it's quite standardized. It's quite, as I said, every program might have their smaller changes to the system, but it is very important, and that is the main requirement is that there is public funding available for such a scheme. Because you basically have the host company, the private sector, who will put on their payroll the person with intellectual disability, or psychosocial disability, they will need to pay that person a decent salary, at least a minimum salary in the minimum sector, but then there will be this job coach who will be along a side

that person for a couple of weeks or two months depending on the person and the complexity of the job. Somebody has to pay for that and the employer will not pay for that. The employer will pay the salary of the person, will accept that the person can come with this job coach, which is not the usual relationship with any other employee, so that is already a positive attitude for from the employer if I say so, but then somebody has to pay for the job coach. That is where the publish funding comes in, that is why I was also describing if you have a well designed quota system and the fees from the company are not yet meeting the quota system can then be used or part of it can be used to finance such a scheme, then you have a scheme in place, which hopefully will also sort of self-fund this required additional support that many persons with intellectual disability would require to find employment in the regular labor market.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you very much, Stefan. I would like to take the opportunity for another question made by Samaja Paul. I'm sorry for the pronunciation. I hope that I pronounce it wall. But Samaja Paul was asking about women, because as we know, of course maybe there are even more difficulties when we

talk about women, and especially also in terms of sexual harassment, but also other-in the employment sector. So, Samaja is asking if for example ILO has some advice for the needs of women that really face some sexual harassment in the employment sector.

Thank you very much for this important question, and also to raise the attention on the women issues in this important topic about employment. Thanks.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Yes, thank you for the question.

I mentioned at the beginning that definitely the statistics show that the situation of women with disabilities is each worse than the situation of men with disabilities. I mean all countries where this information exists, and goes back to the issue of statistics that is the same reality.

Of course, the situation is particular bad in countries where there is extremely low participation rate of women in general.

I mean, some countries in some regions that employment rate is very, very low, and then of course the employment rate of women with disabilities is almost zero. It is amazingly low.

The same time, it's quite surprising to realize, and we did last

year, we did document for the G20, this coming together of the biggest economists, they had employment of persons with disabilities on their agenda, and we did a study on the situation of different employment policies and we could only find one country from the G20, South Korea, that in fact had in their employment policies for persons with disabilities a specific focus on women with disabilities. It was basically around their quota system. Basically the quota system, if a Korean company would employ a woman with a disability, that would count more as a man with a disability, and there was also a financial incentive for that was a bit higher than for a man with disability. So, very few examples of policies that really pay that attention. So, I think there is a need for more of that.

In the context of a quota system, rather straightforward way of doing it would be to have a sub quota. It complicates things, but I think it is more than appropriate to think about that in the context of quota.

In the context of vocational training, I remember when we did work in Zambia, there was also need to particular think of women

with disabilities in the context of vocational training. In the context of Zambia there was a lot of mainstream institution where they were providing board to go their students. I mean the context of women with disabilities. You can imagine, there were certain situations that were not -- were quite terrible. Again, that reminds that you need to pay special attention to this issue, and it's linked to the issue that the person raised in terms of sexual harassment.

We are currently, as ILO, and startlingly to make a bit of commercial there. We are currently working on what hopefully will be convention on violence and harassment in the workplace. It hopefully be adopted in June this year, and it's not disability specific but definitely persons with disabilities is one of the groups that should receive particular attention in the implementation of such a convention, because the little evidence that exists shows that person with disability in general, but woman with disabilities in particular are definitely much more likely to be in situations of violence and harassments in the workplace than the rest of the population. So, we need to in that context, we need to think about both

prevention and reactive protective measures to make sure that women with disabilities once they manage to get into the labor market, difficult as it is as we have explained, they don't sort of then end up in a situation where they would have preferred not to be in that position, because then they are now subject to harassment. It is not only about getting men and women with disabilities into the labor market but then also to have the systems in place that adequately protects them from these situations because in the situations wherever it exists, very little evidence on this, there is evidence that persons with disabilities and in particular women with disabilities are reporting significantly higher level of violence and harassment than other colleagues.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you very much, Stefan. We have time for really the last, last question. I'm trying to collect some question, because people are asking really about how to collaborate with different stakeholders. How to put together the private and public sector to face, to achieve this goal. And, also another question is if in that sense ILO is taking these -- how ILO is taking this forward. How do you for see if

world of ILO in taking this, the collaboration with this different stakeholders?

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Yes. Yes. Thank you.

As I said before, our team is pretty small. Let's put that from the outset. We have this very strong focus of collaboration with the private sector, and as I was saying, this is not just something only happening at global level, important as it is, but it is also happening more and more at national level in developing countries. Very often with the collaboration of both of local DPOs, NGOs, also some of the global development and disability NGOs like human inclusion, disability, site savers, they also connected with us through this global disability network, and we are -- they came to join our network because in many of the countries that we have been discussing they have a certain presence, they are there working with the local NGOs, and over the last years in particular they have increasingly paid more attention to work with the private sector. I think that is a very encouraging development which we on our side are supporting as much as possible. We have -- we launched a network or a network was launch wed our support in China last

August, now in January in India. We are currently working with counterparts in Philippines to create a similar network. We have network in Sri Lanka, in Zambia, not as many countries as we would like to. I mentioned a few African countries we are now trying to move ahead on this, and I would basically suggest to the people on the call, Alessia, please feel free to share my contact details if they want to have a bit more information on their specific country and if something is happening in the country or if they want to have some advice on how to get involved in such initiative or even start such initiative if such initiative is not there, please feel free to reach out to us.

The ILO has a reasonably plea good presence in the field, but it is also fair to say that in many of the places where the ILO has an office, my colleagues in that office have not yet been thinking very much about disability. So, also from that perspective, the more colleagues in the different countries reach out to the ILO and say, well, can we do something together, well, that will also help in moving the agenda forward, to say.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: Thank you very much Stefan, thank you very much for your ability to keep the contact with our participants, our partners. It's really important for us, because as you said, as you know, Bridge the Gap works at this level, so we need the support, and for sure we are going to take this advantage in the future, I hope so.

So, thank you very much again, a lot for your participation and providing --

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Thank you.

>> ALESSIA ROGAI: -- your time today to us.

I also would like to say thank you very much to the audience and for your interesting answer -- questions, sorry, that have helped us to go deeper through this topic, and just a couple of information. The next English session of our webinar training cycle will be about universal access to health. It will take place in April, Thursday 18, April at 3:30 this time. Not usually at 2:30 as we usually have the English session. At 3:30, because our panelist for this session is based in Canada, so we just gave to her the time to wake up.

So, take notes on your agendas, also because as I said, we will

have this important international expert Alessandra from HI Humanitarian and Inclusion. She is the inclusive policy lead at HI and she is the cohort chair in IDDC. So, again, don't miss also this session.

Thank you very much Stefan, thank you very much to everybody.

We will meet next time. Have a nice afternoon.

Thank you. Bye.

>> STEFAN TROMEL: Thank you.

(Concluded at 10:00 AM CT)

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