

Global Disability and Diversity Fact Sheet for CEOs



The Nippon Foundation

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Introduction	8
Chapter I:	
Keywords	13
Chapter II:	
Why Embrace Differences? Key Facts About New Global Priorities	
Differences are valuable assets for businesses	
in the context of the economy, innovation, risk aversion & social welfare	21
Chapter III:	
Dos and Don'ts	28
Chapter IV:	
New Commitments	31
Resources	34









Introduction

This fact sheet¹ sets out must-know fundamentals for CEOs and companies to effectively respond to social and legal responsibilities and to transform social risks into business opportunities in the areas of diversity, disability, and inclusion based on existing United Nations (UN) tools. It covers actions for responding to the needs and rights of diverse customers, employees, and business partners, including persons with disabilities, older persons, and caregivers.

The global community has shifted paradigms on diversity, disability, and inclusion based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention_accessible_pdf.pdf) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E). In 2011, building on many decades of work, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) (https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf) was endorsed. Diversity, disability, and inclusion became important business priorities and responsibilities along with investment in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues. Failing to understand and respond to the new diversity paradigm is a big business and social risk. On the other hand, strategically realigning business is a new global imperative that is bringing enormous new opportunities and merits.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is drastically changing business sector norms and standards, including the way we work and how we commute and communicate, and how we operate our businesses, reach our customers, respond to the needs of our employees and customers, and choose vendors and business partners. The resulting alternate working arrangements and conditions have provided opportunities to promote accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and markets, cultivate new areas for work, and build back better and more inclusive businesses and societies. Recent visible movements such as Black Lives Matter and others also highlight the people's commitment to diversity and inclusion, which can directly affect economic growth and shared prosperity in the world.

Historically, many people, both as employees and as customers, have been left behind, marginalized, due to what is referred to in this fact sheet as "differences." There is a global call to address this, in order to enhance business opportunities as well as to realize the equality of all by leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. Through this, the business

¹ This fact sheet aims to challenge and support the private sector in setting ambitious corporate targets and accelerating integration of the UN's 17 SDGs into core business management. The fact sheet should enable companies to move beyond incremental progress and step-up transformative change – unlocking business value, building business resilience, and enabling long-term growth. The world is not delivering progress towards the SDGs at the necessary pace and scale. Urgent, scalable and multi-stakeholder action is required in order to dramatically accelerate this progress. Companies must take a clear stand and demonstrate bold leadership to transform business models and economies so they become more just and inclusive – leaving no one behind and bringing those who are furthest left behind to the forefront of the global agenda. The fact sheet is designed to help businesses develop and implement innovative business strategies that significantly increase their positive impact on SDG implementation. It also enables assessment of current performance, identify risk areas, discover new opportunities across business units and functions and take ambitious business action towards achieving the SDGs for ALL, in particular for those who are furthest behind.

community can expand its reach to new workforces, valuable new partners, and previously unreached customers worldwide. As we are all on some level “different,” respecting this difference is the business of us all.

Although it might not have been very visible, most companies already have rich experience and expertise in responding to various differences through various channels, for example local dealers, development partners, marketing departments, health services, and human resource departments. This has led to the new business ideas, technologies, and values that have changed our world. Many successful employers and employees recognize that their differences have been the unique assets, rather than threats, that have led to these innovations. This is in part because everyone is different, and the number of those who have been categorized as minorities or socially marginalized is not a small one. For example, 15% of the world’s population, some 1 billion people, 1 in 7, live with disabilities.

This fact sheet consists of the following sections: (1) key words, (2) “must-know” key facts, (3) dos and don’ts, and (4) a discussion of new commitments and next steps for increasing accessibility and inclusivity, respecting differences including disabilities, and nurturing the emotional well-being of each, based on the state-of-the-art global diversity and disability frameworks. Links to helpful resources are also provided.

It is well known that differences and emotional well-being will be key human assets in the era of artificial intelligence (AI) when robots handle mass production, “effectiveness,” and “productivity” since such qualities are unique to human beings. Strong leadership from CEOs is required to change the old culture and to help realize historic transformations of humankind.

To align businesses to the latest regulatory and conceptual frameworks on diversity, disability, and inclusion, just a bit of creativity is needed. We can utilize technology and human capital that already exist or simply change attitudes; complicated measures or extreme investments are not always needed. Adjusting to diversity and increasing options can improve a business’s chances for success, spur innovation, and open doors to new customers and new profits while enhancing the well-being of employees, customers, self and family. New ways of doing business and living life can lead to a better world.







Chapter I: Keywords

Diversity: Differences in values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, health, social status, impairments, and other specific personal characteristics. All of us including persons with disabilities belong to some diverse group. We might have diverse identities (as women, indigenous persons, and children) and different impairments. Due to the intersectionality of these factors, we may face multiple forms of discrimination. (IASC)

Inclusion: Inclusion is achieved when we meaningfully participates in all our diversity, when our rights are promoted, and when difference-related concerns are addressed in compliance with human rights norms, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is related to the concept of ‘social inclusion’ that has been defined as “the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to services as well as enable citizen’s participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.” (IASC)

Persons with Disabilities: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term **physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory** impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (CRPD)

Social model: The “social model” considers disability a result of social barriers rather than a medical condition. This is in opposition to the medical model, in which a disability is perceived as a health issue that requires charity or medical treatment. (This definition was completely changed in the CRPD. For example, the stairs leading into a building are the cause of disability for wheelchair users. If there is a ramp or elevator, there is no disability.

“Nothing about us without us”: When something related to someone’s life is determined, the process should include the someone in discussion, decision-making, and monitoring. For example, bringing persons with disabilities into your team. This can help make your products, services, and workplaces more accessible and inclusive.

Accessibility: The right to enjoy “access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. Accessibility is a precondition of inclusion: in its absence, persons with disabilities cannot be included. (CRPD)

Available technologies that enhance accessibility are listed in the table below. Many of them are already built into Windows, Mac/iOS, and Android systems as well as various applications.





Technologies for enhancing accessibility

Technological features	Benefits
Screen readers (into speech or braille), tactile markers, audible feedback on pressed buttons, adjustable font sizes, audible cues, adjustable brightness/contrast, screen magnifiers, digital access to "talking" books, GPS	Support visual inputs, etc.
Visual and vibrating alerts, relay services, hearing aid compatible devices, volume adjustment, SMS text messaging, SMS-based emergency service, mono audio, captioning of videos	Support hearing, and distant communication
Voice recognition, auto text, head movement recognition, eye movement recognition, alternate switch interface	Support arms/hands/fingers mobilities
Predictive texting, speech recognition, text-to-speech, built-in calculator, scheduled reminders, large and simple display screens, translation to simple language that avoids abstractions and jargon	Support cognition

Adopted from the UN Disability and Development Report (p 185) on the basis of information from the International Telecommunication Union and G3ict (2012) and Sesami.

Assistive technology: Devices and mobility aids that are external products (devices, equipment, instruments, software) specially produced or generally available, that maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, participation, or overall well-being. Examples of assistive devices and technologies include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids, and specialized computer software and hardware that improve mobility, hearing, vision, or the capacity to communicate. (IASC)

Reasonable accommodation: Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms (CRPD). For example, additional preparation time for implementing a color-coded filing system, replacing a door knob with an accessible door handle, providing a magnifier, and the use of screen reading software with synthesized speech are not considered unduly burdensome accommodations. This constructive process of accommodating various needs contributes not only to improving the well-being of individuals but also to making products, services, workplaces, and society accessible and inclusive for all.

Universal design: The design of products, environments, programmes, and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (CRPD). Universal design can be explored by including various people with diverse backgrounds and experiences in the design process.



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28-2-3

28-2-4



Barriers: Factors in a person's environment that hamper participation and create disability. For persons with disabilities, such factors can limit access to and inclusion in society. Barriers may be attitudinal, environmental, or institutional. (IASC)

- **Attitudinal barriers** are negative attitudes that may be rooted in cultural or religious beliefs, hatred, unequal distribution of power, discrimination, prejudice, ignorance, stigma, and bias, among other reasons. Attitudinal barriers are at the roots of discrimination and exclusion.

- **Environmental barriers** include physical obstacles in the natural or built environment that "prevent access and affect opportunities for participation" along with inaccessible communication systems. Lack of services and problems with the delivery of services also comprise environmental barriers.

- **Institutional barriers** include laws, policies, strategies, and institutionalized practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities or differences and prevent them from participating in society.

Twin-track approach: The twin-track approach combines inclusive mainstream programmes with targeted interventions for specific individuals. Mainstream policies and programmes designed for the entire population need to include perspectives of marginalized individuals. In addition, targeted interventions should empower marginalized individuals to address existing gaps.

Informed consent: Informed consent occurs when a person willingly agrees to do something or allows something to be done to them (for example, a medical intervention, relocation, the communication of personal information, etc.) based on full disclosure of the risks, benefits, alternatives, and consequences of acceptance and refusal. (IASC)

Enabling Environment: A working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias, and is inclusive of all staff. The effectiveness of the business and the success of efforts depend on reaping the gains in efficiency and productivity that come from diversity and gender parity. See the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System for details.

<https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/gender-parity-enabling-environment-guidelines-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1535>

Rights-based terminology

- Use person-first terminology (For example, 'persons with disabilities')
- Avoid terms that have negative connotations, such as 'suffer', 'victim' or 'handicapped.' Speak of a 'wheelchair user' rather than a person who is 'wheelchair-bound' or 'confined to a wheelchair'
- Speak of persons 'without impairments' rather than 'normal' or 'regular' persons
- Vulnerable/vulnerability: Persons with disabilities are not inherently vulnerable. Rather, vulnerability is imposed on them, including by barriers and lack of support. Do not use acronyms to refer to children with disabilities (e.g., CWD) or persons with disabilities (e.g., PWD)
- Use appropriate, specific, and accurate terms to refer to different types of impairment, including physical, visual/vision, hearing, intellectual and mental, or psychosocial impairments.

Chapter II: Why Embrace Differences? Key Facts About New Global Priorities

Differences are valuable assets for businesses in the context of the economy, innovation, risk aversion & social welfare

1. Magnitude

- Persons with disabilities: 15% = 1 billion among 7.7 billion = 1 in 7
https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf
- Older persons (60+): 12%
- Pregnant women: 211 million/year = 2.9%
<https://www.who.int/whr/2005/chapter3/en/index3.html>
- People living with HIV: 38 million = 0.5%
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>
- Immigrants: 272 million = 3.5%
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/international-migrant-stock-2019.html>
(Forcibly displaced people (refugees/IDPs, etc.): 79.5 million
<https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>)
- Indigenous people: 370 million = 4.8%
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/5session_fact-sheet1.pdf

Intersectionality of differences

Social barriers and forms of exclusion based on disability, race, ethnicity, gender, age, or other differences are often intertwined. Some individuals face multiple forms of discrimination. For example, 1 in 5 women will experience disability at some point during their life; in such cases, women may face double discrimination, discrimination based on both gender and disability. Likewise, 46% of persons aged 60 years and older have a disability, and 1 in 10 children have a disability. Harm and violation associated with differences cannot be understood sufficiently by studying differences separately. Attention to various aspects of diversity such as ethnicity, sexuality, age, and others is required. We tend to be afraid of differences, but differences can bring new perspectives, solutions, and options. We should bear this in mind when developing products and services, and when safeguarding employees' human rights.





2. Economic Impact: Cost and Benefits


- Persons with Disabilities: Spending power of \$8 trillion (Global Economics of Disability Report)
- Households without persons with disabilities see companies that include persons with disabilities in their advertising more positively. They are also more likely to buy products and services from those companies. (ILO Guide for Business on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)
- Among captioned TV viewers, 66% are more likely to buy a product that has a captioned commercial, and 53% will actively seek out products that include captions in their advertisements. (ILO Guide for Business on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)
- A recent study shows that more inclusive companies are twice as likely to have higher total shareholder returns than their peers.
(<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/04/what-companies-gain-including-persons-disabilities-inclusion/>)
- Direct and indirect costs of not attending to mental health can be above 4% of GDP (OECD). Investing \$1 in mental health will return \$4 (The World Bank and the WHO).

3. Innovation

- Engaging with diverse populations and including persons with disabilities in the planning and development of products, services, places, and spaces will foster innovations that are based on untapped perspectives, needs, and ideas.
- Increasing accessibility in and to ICTs and related products and services for persons with disabilities will increase usership, which will likely lead to increases in popularity and profit.

4. Legal obligation

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development & SDGs (SDGs 8, 10, 17): Global priority till 2030: No one should be left behind and those who are furthest behind should be supported first.
- Target 8.5: “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.” (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by 182 countries and regions (Article 27): Legal obligation: With or without disabilities, all persons have the right to work at a job, without facing discrimination. (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>).
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 159: Equality of opportunity and equality between men and women with disabilities (https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_103529/lang--en/index.htm), and ILO’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (<https://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>)
- United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) (https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf)
- National laws: Most countries have laws to legally protect the rights of employment and the usage of services or goods by all beyond differences.



5. Risks aversion

- More entities include diversity, disability, and inclusion in their procurement and performance indicator scorecards. Not doing so can leave your business in the past and deem you unaccountable.
- Companies can face civil and criminal penalties for not ensuring diversity and inclusion, not accommodating different needs, and not promoting accessibility of products, services, and work environment.
- Quality workers may choose companies with companies based on their accessibility, options, and investments in their employees' emotional well-being.
- Customers tend to choose socially responsive companies, goods, and services. Failure to respond to issues of diversity, disability, and accessibility can downgrade a company's social reputation and credibility.

Differences: Threats or Values

Together with ignorance and mistrust, our negative attitudes toward difference have been a root cause of wars, terrorist attacks, refugee crises, poverty, and inequality, all of which lead to compromised life expectancies, lack of efficiency, economic downspins, and emotional distress. However, when differences are mutually respected, the whole picture changes and economic gain, peace and sustainability along with individual and collective well-being and more options and time for our preferred lifestyles become possible. Since our world is already diverse, the latter picture is the wise choice, and to build it we can start with our workplaces and our markets. Eventually, CEOs can lead the business sector to “build peace in the minds of people” as per our pledge after World War II in the UNESCO Constitution.





Chapter III: Dos and Don'ts

Don'ts	Dos
Don't provide important information only in one medium of communication (for example, oral or written messages or posters)	Provide information in multiple accessible formats (oral, print, sign language, easy-to-read/plain language, etc.). There are various technologies to support this. Also provide human support to those who need it to access information
Don't make decisions only by the majority rule or based on big voices	Reach out to and listen to the often unheard "silent majority" and "silent minority." For example, conduct consultations in a range of formats, and ensure persons with hearing, mental health, psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, or other differences have the support needed to participate in community consultations, feedback, and complaint mechanisms
Don't try to "fix" people	Identify potential social barriers for inclusion, and address them with increased options from the perspectives of accessibility and providing reasonable accommodations
Don't categorize people with stereotypic labels	Recognize each person has various differences, diverse identities, different capabilities, different needs and different preferences. People of the same age and gender on the same team can have completely different hobbies, weak and strong points, and dreams.
Don't force support or services and don't be paternalistic in decision-making and provision of services. For example, don't assume all persons with disabilities require support and medical care	Recognize individual differences and ask if/ what people need. Also recognize their right to make decisions on issues that affect them with informed consent. Respond to needs rather than arbitrary "categories" or stereotypes
Don't assume persons with disabilities cannot work effectively	Conduct awareness-raising and sensitization through trainings with supervisors and staff members to challenge stigma and misunderstandings, and remove barriers through reasonable accommodation. Many employees are already with differences including disabilities whether they disclose them or not
Don't judge productivity and efficiency in short timeframes and limited perspectives, especially based on stereotypes	Increase options, which will in turn contribute to outcomes with more of the benefits and innovation that arise from the unusual, and from gaps in space and time

Don'ts	Dos
Don't assume that providing reasonable accommodation for persons with differences is too hard, too expensive, or someone else's responsibility	Ask the person what they need and how to provide it. In most cases, simple low-cost solutions can be found with a bit of creativity. This will increase options and increase accessibility and well-being for others as well. Establish a reasonable accommodation fund in your company with a diversity focal point/team
Don't force people to 'come out' with differences	Respect privacy. If a colleague shares their differences, keep confidentiality unless otherwise instructed
Don't contract with vendors who do not ensure accessibility and inclusion	Choose business partners who are promoting and protecting the rights of all persons through accessibility, options, and inclusion
Don't focus only on the majority or the average in evaluation and reporting	Include "differences performance" in your reporting by collecting (at least) age, gender, and disability-disaggregated data as per SDGs17
Don't evaluate outcomes only by money, numbers, mortality rate and satisfaction	Evaluate to ensure that your business is not aggravating certain customers or employees and thereby threatening their emotional well-being
Don't keep discriminatory policies	Ensure company policies are aligned with the CRPD. For example, evaluate candidates based on their capacity to deliver the core functions of the advertised job with support if required, without discrimination based on their differences. Also, develop diversity policies with human and financial resources for their implementation



Chapter IV: New Commitments

1. Transform from the “productivity model” to the emerging “options model” because productivity can be pursued through technologies. Differences and emotions are valuables that are unique to human beings.
2. Develop or revise company policies and budget allocation to promote
 - 1) accessibility of information, facilities, services, and attitude during recruitment and in the workplace, as well as products and services, with reasonable accommodation when needed;
 - 2) targeted recruitment and workplace arrangements possibly utilizing the employment quota system as well as products and services intended to reach the furthest behind first as part of strategic inclusive investments; and
 - 3) corporate social value to provide resources and services to non-traditional customers including those who might not presently have employment.
3. Establish a reasonable accommodation fund in your company
4. Appoint diversity, disability, and inclusion focal points and/or teams in your company and systematize meaningful consultation with various stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities
5. Include disaggregated disability data in addition to majority vote data in internal and external reports as a key company accountability mechanism.

(See the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) or [The Washington Group / ILO Labor Force Survey Disability Module \(LFS-DM\)](#))
6. Introduce indicators on emotional well-being in accessing employment and customer services



Resources

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>
- Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- United Nations Disability Inclusive Strategy (UNDIS)
<https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>
- United Nations Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19
<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Policy-Brief-A-Disability-Inclusive-Response-to-COVID-19.pdf>
- United Nations Policy Brief: Impact of COVID-19 on Older Persons
<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Policy-Brief-The-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Older-Persons.pdf>
- Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities 2018
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/publication-disability-sdgs.html>
- United Nations Global Compact's Principles
<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>
- United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
<https://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>
- The ICT opportunity for Disability-inclusive Development
https://www.itu.int/en/action/accessibility/Documents/The%20ICT%20opportunity%20for%20a%20Disability_Inclusive%20Development%20Framework.pdf

