



Presidency of the (82) session
of the Executive Bureau –
Council of Arab Social Affairs



Social Affairs Sector, Department of
Development and Social Policies
Technical Secretariat of the Council of
Arab Social Affairs



Presidency of the 44th session of the
Council of Arab Ministers for Social
Affairs

Concept Note

for the High-Level Side Event:

"Towards Inclusive Social Integration: Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities and Eradicating Poverty"

Date: 6/11/2025

From 13:15 pm- 14:30 pm

Room (12) - Qatar National Convention center (QNCC)

Doha - Qatar

**As part of the Second World Summit on Social Development,
Doha –4-6 November 2025**



Introduction:

The League of Arab States places great importance on the rights of persons with disabilities at both regional and international levels. It continuously strives to promote their rights in the Arab region through active participation in relevant regional and international events.

This is evident in the initiatives of the Secretary-General, namely the “Second Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities (2023–2032)” and the “Independent Living Initiative”, both adopted by the Arab Summit in its 32nd regular session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under Resolution No. 846 dated 19/5/2023. These initiatives aim to create a more inclusive future for people with disabilities by ensuring equality, equal opportunities, and social integration. They also emphasize the role of entrepreneurship and innovative financing in empowering people with disabilities and developing inclusive economic policies and programs.

The Independent Living Initiative is a top priority for implementing the Second Arab Decade. It aims to empower people with disabilities to live with dignity and independence by providing an enabling environment in education, healthcare, employment, and transportation. The General Secretariat (Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs) is implementing this initiative in partnership with the Union of Arab Chambers, UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office in Bahrain, Arab Labor Organization, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, and other partners.

In continuation of these efforts, the League of Arab States held the Arab-Regional High-Level Meeting to Prepare for the Second World Summit on Social Development on June 30 and July 1, 2025, in Tunisia. This was in coordination with the Tunisian Ministry of Social Affairs and the League’s mission to the UN in New York, in line with Resolution No. 98 of the 5th Arab Economic and Social Development Summit (Iraq, 17/5/2025) and Resolution No. 1032 of the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs (25/12/2024). The meeting aimed to define Arab priorities for the summit, focusing on the three main themes: poverty eradication, decent work, and social inclusion, with special attention to vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities.

Despite these efforts, people with disabilities still face significant challenges related to poverty, exclusion, limited access to inclusive education, employment, independent living services, and social protection systems, this is due to several reasons, including the lack of comprehensive databases for this population group, which hinders full access to them with services and meeting their needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges. As the region moves toward recovery and sustainable development,

inclusive policies and programs that support independent living and poverty eradication are crucial to ensuring no one is left behind.

High-Level Arab Event: “Towards Inclusive Social Integration: Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities and Eradicating Poverty”

This high-level event, held during the Second World Summit on Social Development in Doha (November 4–6, 2025), continues the League of Arab States’ efforts and highlights its leadership in this field. It is organized in coordination with the current presidency of the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs (Kingdom of Bahrain), the Union of Arab Chambers, and UNIDO-ITPO Bahrain.

The event serves as a platform for dialogue and cooperation among policymakers, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector. It aims to showcase regional initiatives, share best practices, and promote the rights of people with disabilities in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Main Objectives:

- Highlight the interconnection between disability, poverty, and social exclusion.
- Showcase achievements and best practices in promoting independent living and social inclusion.
- Propose solutions and opportunities to improve national frameworks for integrating people with disabilities into poverty eradication and social development programs.
- Provide a platform for dialogue among governments, civil society, international organizations, development partners, and people with disabilities.
- Promote the concept of independent living and full participation in community life.
- Reduce poverty as a structural barrier to inclusion.

- Highlight regional and national initiatives that promote comprehensive social protection and innovation in disability inclusion.
- Strengthen multilateral cooperation among member states, UN bodies, civil society, and the private sector.
- Develop practical policy recommendations to empower people with disabilities and vulnerable groups.

Proposed Discussion Topics:

- Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities: Policies, successful experiences, and opportunities.
- Comprehensive Social Protection: Inclusive social safety nets encompassing universal health and social coverage, and addressing all forms of violence against women, girls, and the elderly, along with their benefits and mechanisms for expanding their scope to include marginalized groups.
- Arab League Initiatives with UNIDO ITPO Bahrain and the Union of Arab Chambers: Supporting entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility.
- Accessibility and Assistive Technology: Innovations that **support data access** for full participation and economic inclusion.
- Legal Reforms and National Policies: Strategies aligned with international and regional standards.
- Multidimensional Poverty Eradication: Economic and social challenges and innovative solutions.
- Role of International and Regional Partnerships: Supporting inclusive initiatives and sustainable financing.
- Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Decision-Making and Community Development.

Reference Framework:

- Second Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities (2023–2032)
- Independent Living Initiative
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (especially goals on poverty, equality, decent work, and social protection)

Expected Outcomes:

- Practical recommendations for national and regional policies promoting inclusive and economic development.
- Identification of partnership opportunities, technical support, and capacity building.
- Renewed commitment by the League of Arab States to support the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Increased awareness among policymakers of the priorities of people with disabilities and the poor.
- Enhanced regional cooperation to exchange best practices.
- Launch of new initiatives or partnerships to promote inclusive social protection and independent living.
- Support for joint efforts to implement international commitments, including the UNCRPD and SDGs.

Main organizers:

- League of Arab States – Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs – Department of Development and Social Policies
- Presidency of the current (44th) session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs – Kingdom of Bahrain
- Chairmanship of the Executive Bureau of the Council – Arab Republic of Egypt

Key Partners:

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- Union of Arab Chambers
- UNIDO – Investment and Technology Promotion Office (ITPO), Bahrain
- Arab Labor Organization (ALO)

Participants:

- Ministers of Social Affairs and senior officials from Arab countries
- International ministers and high-level figures
- Relevant international and regional organizations
- Senior UN representatives
- Civil society organizations for people with disabilities
- Entrepreneurs with disabilities
- Specialized experts
- Leading role models with disabilities from the Arab world and internationally

Conclusion:

The League of Arab States remains deeply committed to disability rights and the well-being of persons with special needs, as part of its broader human rights and equality agenda. Through various initiatives and policies, it seeks to improve access to education, employment, healthcare, and active community participation. It also supports legislative development and inter-state coordination to share experiences and resources.

The League reaffirms its unwavering stance in supporting disability issues and continuously working to improve the lives of persons with disabilities across the Arab world.