**Annex 3**

*Programme*

**UN-convention**

Unlimited participation!

**Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

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# Introduction

In the Netherlands there are approximately 2 million people with disabilities. Many of them are confronted literally and figuratively by obstacles in their daily lives. That is an undesirable situation. People’s opportunities to participate in society should not be hindered.

The problem might be nothing more complicated than a doorsill blocking an entrance which means, for example, that you have to start looking for another shop that you can get into. Where you do feel welcome. Or it may be about travelling independently from A to B. Although you are keen to organise this yourself, the barriers to getting on a bus or train do have to be removed and you will also need good-quality information about your trip.

Facing numerous obstacles all at the same time can sometimes make people wonder: Do I actually belong? Continually having to ask for help and 'favours' increases the feeling of dependency.

People with disabilities want to have as much control over their own lives as possible.[[1]](#footnote-1) We want people with disabilities to be able to provide input if they want to, certainly if it is about solutions which make society more accessible and participation easier. Whether people have a disability or not, in 2018 you want to be able to participate in society and not be treated differently or specially.

We want to bring about a noticeable improvement for people with disabilities and that calls for a different way of thinking and acting by government bodies, companies and organisations. Wherever parties lag behind we take action, for example by establishing contacts between them and parties who are fulfilling pioneering roles.[[2]](#footnote-2)

We want to continue taking specific steps via seven lines of action (Building and Living, Work, Education, Transport, Participation & Accessibility, Care and Support, the State as an organisation) in collaboration with municipalities, sectors, social organisations and, of course, people with disabilities themselves.

You do not create an accessible and inclusive society by pressing a political button in The Hague. What you need is a national movement for more accessibility and participation. With this in mind we actively cooperate with our administrative partners, namely the Alliance (an extensive group of cooperating organisations engaged in disability issues), the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, the business organisations VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland who, over the past year, have started implementing their plans to enable people with disabilities to participate more in society. We are continuing to build on existing good quality plans and initiatives and, where necessary, we are taking new and specific steps to achieve further improvements. To support this movement we are showing inspiring examples and helping to build on specific initiatives and distribute them on a broader basis. We are also telling the stories of people who have taken a lead in this respect.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities forms the basis for this action programme. The Netherlands ratified this Convention in July 2016. The Convention intends to improve the position of people with disabilities in society. After all, people are all different but still equal and everyone has to be able to participate without restriction.

## Barriers to participation

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#### Analysis and context

The stories told by people with disabilities show that, in many areas of life, there are still barriers to participation. The aim of this programme is to bring about a noticeable improvement in this. Approximately 2 million people are affected in the Netherlands. Some have visible disabilities, for example, someone may use a wheelchair or have a guide dog or cane. However, there are also many invisible disabilities, such as a slight mental disability, dyslexia or autism. This programme will make a difference for all these people: young and old, highly educated and low-skilled, largely self-reliant or those requiring a large amount of care.

**Considerable diversity in disabilities**

This diversity makes it difficult to give a definition of the word 'disability'. What is more, a definition can also have a stigmatising effect.

The essential thing is that this programme relates to all disabilities (see also Illustration 1). After all, the Convention itself also uses this broad and cross-target group vision without drawing any distinctions.[[3]](#footnote-3)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Disabilities | | | | | |
| Physical | | | | Mental | |
| Motor (movement) | Organic  (chronic disorder) | Sensory | | Mental  (understanding) | Psychosocial (behaviour) |
|  | | Visual (blind/visually impaired) | Auditory (deaf/visually impaired) |  | |

Illus. 1 – WHO-ICF diversity of disabilities (2001), edited by the Mulier Instituut

**A broad view of barriers**

Barriers exist in many areas. These include the physical environment, education, the employment market and (public) transport, as well as in terms of accessing information, methods of communication and how individuals are treated.

The UN Convention applies to all these areas. This means that all public institutions, organisations and companies have to take action. The first step is to become aware of existing barriers.

|  |
| --- |
| **The things that matter in concrete and everyday situations:** |
| Being able to find information via accessible websites, apps and portals. |
| Obtaining information in clear, understandable language. |
| Having as few barriers as possible when visiting a restaurant, shop, museum, concert, nature reserve or festival. |
| Being able to travel independently by public transport. |
| Equal opportunities in education and work and feeling accepted at school and in the employment market. |
| The opportunity to live independently. |

Within the programme we focus on various types of disability. In daily life people can, after all, experience different types of barriers depending on the disability.

**Figures on existing barriers**

Studies show that, on average, people with disabilities participate less in society than people without disabilities.

Sometimes this is a result of their own choice or personal preference. Despite that, the figures clearly indicate which barriers people with disabilities come up against.

|  |
| --- |
| **Differences between people with, and without, disabilities:** |
| 74% of the general population regularly use facilities in their own surroundings or neighbourhood. For people with a physical disability this percentage is 66% and for those with a mental disability it is 40%.  (Nivel participation monitor 2008 – 2016, April 2018) |
| People with disabilities engage less in sports than people without disabilities. Figures regarding weekly sporting activities and membership of a sports club basically show a difference of approximately 15 percentage points.  (RIVM ambitions and barriers in terms of sport, 2017) |
| 61% of the general population regularly use public transport versus 54% of people with physical disabilities and 44% of people with mental disabilities.  (Nivel participation monitor 2008 – 2016, April 2018) |
| 70% of the general population have paid work. In people with physical disabilities this percentage is 29% and in people with mental disabilities it is 35%.  (Nivel participation monitor 2008 – 2016, April 2018) |

## Being able to participate based on one's own desire and capacity

#### Ambition and purpose of the programme

The ambition of this programme is to ensure that people with disabilities are able to participate in society in a manner that reflects their own wishes and capacities, just like any other person can. The main purpose of the programme is to bring about a noticeable decrease in the number of barriers people with disabilities encounter which hinder their participation.

The government shares this ambition with a large number of companies and organisations which is why cooperation is taking place with as many parties as possible during the programme’s implementation and at administrative level.

**Specific ambitions:**

* The Alliance of cooperating organisations of people with disabilities or chronic diseases will provide an impetus for the use of experts throughout the development and execution of policy by government bodies, institutions and organisations.
* Over the next two years, the Association of Dutch Municipalities is going to concentrate on encouraging initiatives by municipalities that focus on the unlimited participation of residents with disabilities. It is going to do this by, for example, cooperating with the 25 leading municipalities to make existing initiatives larger and more visible. Other municipalities can learn and be inspired by this. The Association also wants to support the other municipalities in their steps to a more inclusive society.
* The business organisations VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland want to increase awareness about the importance of accessibility. It is also their ambition to broaden the options available to people with disabilities and promote inclusive thinking in the business community. The aim is to reach 50,000 business people.

We are developing a monitor so that we can keep track of the programme's progress (see Chapter 5). Using this the monitor we will assess the focus of our joint ambition, among other things by asking whether people with disabilities perceive themselves as being better able to participate in society based on their own wishes and capacity. The monitor will also allow us to keep a finger on the pulse if any measures are taken in the lines of action.

**Working in specific areas**

The 2017 annual report of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, in which people with disabilities are themselves involved, was an important source when deciding on the six lines of action along which the government, together with all the parties and organisations involved, wants to carry out the phased implementation of the ambition. The lines of action are: Building and Living, Work, Education, Transport, Participation & Accessibility, Care and Support, the State as an organisation.

Our effort to achieve the goals is based on these lines of action.

1. Within the **Building and Living** line of action, the goal is to improve the accessibility of buildings and ensure the availability of sufficient, suitable homes and forms of housing for people with disabilities.
2. Within the **Work** line of action, the goal is to give people with occupational disabilities more opportunities to obtain a regular job in order to contribute to an inclusive labour market by creating jobs and organising suitable support, for example via training, job coaching and workplace adaptations.
3. Within the **Education** line of action, the goal is to ensure that all children have access to education which is suitable for their needs. Another goal is to ensure that pupils and students can find support and supervision more easily.
4. Within the **Transport** line of action, the goal is to ensure that people with disabilities who need to travel are able to use public transport more and more independently and that transport for target groups is improved. This requires, among other things, the reliable and accessible provision of information and more connection between public transport and forms of target group transport.
5. Within the **Participation & Accessibility** line of action, the goal is to offer people more opportunities to participate in areas such as sport, culture, libraries, media and the elections. Another goal is to gradually increase the number of accessible websites and apps and make the information provided by government bodies and other parties more accessible and understandable.
6. Within the **Care and Support** line of action, the goal is to guarantee good accessibility and high-quality care and support as this is a primary precondition for people with life-wide and life-long disabilities to participate in society.
7. Within the **State as an organisation** line of action, the goal is for the national government to be an accessible organisation within an inclusive society. This not only means securing physical access to government buildings and websites, information and systems, but also that the State as an employer is open to any employee.

These seven lines of action are not intended to be an exhaustive summary of the themes which the Netherlands is using as a basis for its implementation of the UN Convention. Initiatives are also being taken on numerous other themes. The focus on those other themes will also be reflected in reports on the Netherlands' commitment to the UN Convention.[[4]](#footnote-4) In its selection of the seven lines of action, the government is choosing an approach intended to achieve specific targets in seven areas and realise tangible improvements for people.

**Short-term and long-term focus**

The task which the UN Convention is presenting to us as a society will not be completed in a single day.[[5]](#footnote-5) On the one hand it requires us to set short-term goals and take concrete steps. On the other hand, we must remain aware of the work that needs to be done in the long term on the basis of the UN Convention, keeping focus on the long term and continue discussing the things which people with disabilities themselves put forward. We appreciate, of course, that the full realisation of the ambition goes beyond the duration of this programme. 'Nothing about us without us', an important principle in the UN Convention, is central to the implementation of short term actions and long term dialogue. More information on the way we are organising this can be found in the implementation strategy (Chapter 4).

## Approach in seven areas

#### The programme’s lines of action

**The essence of the measures described in the lines of action**

In this section we describe the most important steps we are taking to achieve our goals in each line of action. This is not the full description of the all the efforts made on certain themes, but the line of action does reflect the essence of the measures we want to gradually work towards with the other parties involved and the results we need to monitor (see Chapter 5 ).

**More awareness as a general priority**

Creating awareness about the barriers that people come up against is a general priority in all lines of action. This also includes encouraging government bodies, companies and organisations to involve people with disabilities when creating solutions to increase accessibility. Step-by-step the UN Convention must, in this way, become more of a feature of the DNA of government bodies, companies and organisations.

#### Building and Living

Within the Building and Living line of action the goal is to improve the accessibility of buildings and ensure the availability of sufficient, suitable homes and forms of housing for people with disabilities. With the Accessibility Action Plan for the building sector the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has started an initiative to make improvements in both new builds and existing buildings. Whereas, with new builds, good accessibility can be taken into account from the start of the building process, with existing buildings, refurbishment or renovation work provides an ideal opportunity for a proper assessment of a building's accessibility to be made.

When improving the accessibility of buildings, the guiding principle is to do so, in the first instance, on the basis of voluntary agreements between parties, within the frameworks of existing legislation and regulations. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has also indicated that, if insufficient progress is made, a review will take place to determine whether it is necessary to implement supplementary legislation and regulations which, for example, would stipulate requirements for improving accessibility when renovating or refurbishing buildings which are accessible to the public.

Apart from the accessibility of buildings, good accessibility to the residential and living environment is essential for an inclusive society. This is largely a local and sectoral responsibility. The government is creating the necessary preconditions.

Concrete measures in the Building and Living line of action focus on, among other things:

1. **Clear guidelines for accessible renovation/building work**

As part of the Accessibility for the building industry action plan, clear and broadly-supported guidelines for accessible building and renovation work are being developed jointly with the sector, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, experts and the organisations which represent them. All parties involved in the action plan have indicated that there is a lack of clear and broadly-supported guidelines and that it is important that these are drawn up. Such unequivocal guidelines will make it clear to everyone involved in the development and building process when a building is properly accessible and what measures have to be taken in existing or new buildings. It is important that these guidelines are properly accessible so that everyone can use them.

* The intention is to develop these guidelines in the coming two years (2018 – 2019).

1. **Encouraging sufficient suitable and available homes**

Most people with disabilities, including the elderly, prefer to live as long as possible in their own homes and in familiar surroundings. With this in mind, it is important for them to be able to live in a suitable home and that new forms of residential care become available. The extent to which people with disabilities can (continue) living independently depends, however, on numerous different factors. In addition to the suitability of the home, factors including the care required, social networks and the nature and seriousness of the disabilities also play a role.

At local level a difference can be made to bring about an effect for residents with disabilities. An overview of supply and demand can be drawn up locally. Municipalities can then use this as a basis to make agreements with housing corporations, market players, care providers and citizens regarding the realisation of a sufficiently suitable supply of homes for people with disabilities. In addition to this municipalities can make ‘living with care’ part of their residential vision and also specify explicitly what they expect from housing corporations so that they can then include this expectation in concrete performance agreements, including those drawn up with tenant organisations. The State will encourage and support local parties in this endeavour via the living and care line of action which these Ministers of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Health, Welfare and Sport are soon to submit to the House of Representatives.

This line of action is part of both the Longer at Home programme set up by the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport and of the Housing Agenda which the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has presented together with a large number of organisations.

1. **Studies into extra accessibility requirements in the Buildings Decree for new-build apartments**

In addition to the activities included in the Accessibility for the building industry action plan, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will assess whether it is possible and desirable to impose a number of extra accessibility requirements for new-build apartments in the Buildings Decree. The Minister will also assess whether it is possible and desirable to make it obligatory for assisted living residences to have outside space (balcony, garden).

1. **Inventory of bottlenecks in relation to accessibility of public space.**

Providing accessible public space is primarily the responsibility of organisations at local and regional level. Apart from municipalities, businesses in the goods and services sector also play an important role, as do the users themselves. It is not always clear who is responsible for what and frequently those involved are unaware of the lack of accessibility and the resulting consequences for people with disabilities. The government will therefore organise consultations with the parties involved, in cooperation with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, while people with disabilities, of course, will also play an important role. The purpose of the consultation is to identify more effectively which problems exist in relation to the accessibility of public space and to explore which solutions might be possible.

The following are a number of good examples in the area of awareness and promoting expertise in the field of accessibility:

* The Trade Association of Dutch Architects is developing a 'Design for all' masterclass for architects and clients. The 'Building the Netherlands’ organisation is including this masterclass in its Academy curriculum.
* In the second half of 2018, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Chief Government Architect will organise a meeting with universities and universities of applied sciences focussing on accessibility in curricula.
* 'In the buildings in Utrecht everyone must be able to do what he/she has come to do in accordance with their designated use.' That is the ambition of the Utrecht Accessibility Standard which the municipality has developed to embed accessibility criteria in development processes during maintenance, renovation or construction. The Standard is an example of awareness and the development of expertise which can be spread more broadly throughout the building sector.
* The Playground Group, along with a test team of children with and without disabilities, advises playgrounds on how to make their facilities more accessible for all children. The Playground Group is the result of an initiative taken by the Dutch Foundation for Disabled Children.

#### Work

People with disabilities are more than twice as likely to have no work as people without disabilities and receive insufficient support in finding and keeping jobs. Within the Work line of action the goal is to give people with occupational disabilities more opportunities for a regular job in order to contribute to an inclusive labour market. In this way the government continues to build on the current efforts being made towards the creation of an inclusive employment market. Within the framework of this task, the government works closely with municipalities, the Employee Insurance Agency, the National Client Council, IederIn (Everyone In, an association campaigning for inclusivity) and social partners (trade unions, the employers' association AWVN, and the business organisations VNO-NCW, MKB-Nederland). Concrete measures focus on:

1. **More employment opportunities**

The government, employers and employees agreed in the '2013 Social Agreement' to increase employment opportunities for people with occupational disabilities.

Milestones:

* Employers in the government sector must take incremental steps every year to create 25,000 extra jobs in 2024.
* Employers in the market sector must take incremental steps every year to create 100,000 extra jobs in 2026.

If the agreed numbers are not achieved, the quota scheme will take effect. An annual target for sheltered employment applies for each municipality.

The government believes it is important for people with disabilities who are currently side-lined to be given more opportunities to find work, preferably regular work and, if that is impossible, sheltered employment. The government wants to promote this by introducing a wage dispensation instrument in the Participation Act. This gives employers a simpler set of instruments to take on people with disabilities and ensures that work done by employees on the basis of a wage exemption is financially worthwhile. Municipalities must use available resources to support disabled people to find work. On 26 April, the Wage Dispensation general memorandum of 27 March 2018 was debated extensively in the House of Representatives.[[6]](#footnote-6) During this debate, members asked for a more detailed examination of various points in anticipation of the preparations of the bill. This detailed examination is currently being worked on. During the process, the government and all parties involved, including client organisations, will examine how this instrument can best be structured.

1. **Improved employee services**

People in incapacity schemes often find it difficult to find long-term work again on their own. For some of them their training does not link up with the available jobs being offered. That is why an extra 30 million euros will be made available for personal services by the Employee Insurance Agency to people on benefits in connection with the Resumption of Work of Partially Disabled Workers and the Incapacity Insurance (Young Disabled Persons) Act. Another 30 million euros will be made available for a training experiment that can help people to resume work. On top of this, a project was started at the end of 2017 by umbrella organisations of schools for secondary special education and practical education, employers and municipalities to improve cooperation in the region and create a smoother transition from school to work. The project will last until the end of 2019.

1. **Improved employer services**

Employer support at regional level is very important for matching hard-to-place job seekers with employment opportunities. The regional work placement branches are making agreements with this in mind. The 'Match with Work' programme focuses on the coordination of employer services in the employment market regions and, after the summer, the State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment will inform the House of Representatives about the progress made by this programme. Specifically in the field of care, the Working in the Care Sector Action Programme is helping to increase the opportunities of work in the care sector for people with disabilities, coached by the Employee Insurance Agency and the municipalities.

1. **Improved granting of work provisions**

Provisions at work, such as a sign language interpreter, a job coach or workplace adaptations can help employees with disabilities to find long-term employment. In practice there are a number of barriers that hinder the deployment of work provisions. That is why we want to focus more keenly on what the bottlenecks are and what solutions are needed to resolve them. The Employee Insurance Agency has put together a special team to realise improvements between now and the end of 2019.

**Specific examples in the field of Work:**

* A single front office will be set up at the Employee Insurance Agency for interpreting facilities. A bill to regulate this will be submitted to the House of Representatives in mid-2018. Experts in the field and interest groups are being involved in implementing this bill.
* The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights has observed that supervision by a job coach is essential for some of the target group. The government also considers personal supervision to be an important instrument in supporting people with an occupational disability. Job coaching is a resource that can be used by the municipalities and the Employee Insurance Agency. The Programme Board has published a brochure entitled 'Getting started with job coaching'. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is monitoring the use of job coaching within the framework of the Participation Act.

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#### Education

Within the Education line of action the goal is to ensure that all children have access to education which is suitable for their needs. Another goal is to ensure that pupils and students can find support and supervision more easily. This can be assisted by a good working system of appropriate education.

Measures within this line of action will focus on:

1. Identifying and reducing barriers for pupils and students in terms of accessibility and interpretation of education.
2. A study, together with those in the field, to determine the specifics of more inclusive education.
3. Improving the connection between education and care.

With regard to the first and second elements, the substantive focus will be specifically on the following.

Primary and secondary education: the aim is for parents, schools and teachers to provide more clarity about the meaning of more inclusive education, to encourage cooperation between various schools and to create more opportunities for tailor-made solutions.

Secondary vocational education: the aim is to continue improving the extra support for everyone who needs it in practice, for example by raising awareness about the support and making it easier to find.

Higher education: the aim is to improve the provision of information to students and counselling at universities of applied science and other universities.

In connection with the above aspects we are starting the following dialogues and pilots:

**Dialogues in education:**

* **In primary and secondary education** a dialogue is starting with schools, partnerships, care organisations, parents and pupils. The aim is to set an agenda together in the summer of 2019 with regard to the steps to be taken after that.
* **In secondary vocational education**, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science is involving the FNO Youth Panel, JOB, the secondary vocational education council, secondary vocational education institutions, secondary vocational education students and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport in an exploration of the barriers faced by students in secondary vocational education.
* **In higher education**, the Association of Universities of Applied Science, the ISO and LSVb student's unions, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, Handicap + Studie and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science are going to discuss the bottlenecks in the spring of 2018, to establish what could be improved and decide on a joint approach on the basis of this analysis and the findings.

**Experiment with integrated educational facilities:**

* Over the coming years the focus will be on more integrated facilities which will offer several types of education within a single school. An experiment will be started in the 2018-2019 academic year to remove the statutory barrier to offering integrated education to pupils from special and mainstream schools. As of 1 August 2018, we will make this possible for an initial group of no more than 10 initiatives. In the next academic year the number of initiatives can be expanded (to a maximum of 20) if there is interest in doing so. Schools and education councils are involved in setting up the experiment. The effects on the quality of educational support and accessibility of the provision in the region are being monitored.

**(Follow-up) counselling pilot in secondary vocational education:**

* Young people with disabilities deserve attention in terms of (follow-up) counselling to guarantee successful studying and a long-term position on the employment market. During the course of 2018, pilots will be implemented in the region to experiment with this cross-domain follow-up counselling.

The third part will be worked out in detail before the summer. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and the Media will then send a letter to the House of Representatives outlining their ambitions for detailing the brief in the Coalition Agreement to organise the harmonisation of education and care more clearly and simply. In the process attention will be paid to making the financing of care during educational hours clearer and simpler. An assessment will also be made as to how parents and schools can best be supported, for example through the improved deployment of client supporters and Education Care consultants.

#### Transport

Within the Transport line of action, the goal is to ensure that people with disabilities who need to travel are able to use public transport more and more independently and that transport for target groups is improved. It is also important that the various forms of target group transport are improved and have better connections with each other and with public transport. Most forms of public transport and target group transport have been decentralised to local or provincial authorities. At those decentralised levels, work is being done to improve mobility for people with disabilities. The highest priority is the need of people with disabilities themselves, with whom close consultations are taking place. That is taking place, for example, in various consultation groups in which people with disabilities are also represented.

We are taking the following measures:

1. **More accessible stops and stations**

In recent years, a great deal of work has been done on making public transport independently accessible. Via ProRail's accessibility programme, for example, 540 million euros excl. VAT has been made available to make stations accessible. The State has also spent an extra 87 million euros on bus stop accessibility. However, public transport accessibility can still be improved. For that reason new target figures for the accessibility of various elements of public transport are to be determined, in particular the accessibility of bus and tram stops. Administrative agreements with decentralised government bodies about the new target figures are expected to be made in the autumn of 2018. The

Public Transport Accessibility Decree and the Public Transport Accessibility Regulation will be amended in 2019 to take account of these new target figures.

• An important milestone is that, by 2030, ProRail will have made all stations accessible via the accessibility programme. This programme is made up of various parts.

• Correcting the height and distance of platforms to create level boarding areas in almost all cases.

• The construction of lifts and/or ramps.

• 'Various measures', including measures already completed for people with visual disabilities at stations, such as the placing of guide lines.

1. **A higher level of user-friendliness and more integrated target group transport**

To achieve this, we will tackle a variety of themes in the target group transport and public transport action programme.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management is focussing initially on using the development of mobility as a service (MaaS) specifically for this target group. Relevant conditions are being studied in two of the MaaS pilots. The emphasis is on offering opportunities for travellers to have more control over the way in which they reach their destination and return home.

The continued development of the target group transport and public transport action programme is a task for the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in close consultation with people with disabilities. Their needs must be taken into account when developing concrete measures in the action programme.

* Consultation with experts has revealed, among others, the following needs:
* improved information on public transport accessibility;
* a less rigid distinction between various forms of target group transport (Social Support Act transport, Valys, student transport, Long-term Care Act transport);
* avoiding a situation in which the deployment of neighbourhood buses renders the use of public transport impossible;
* where possible, more attention in public transport for forms of disability other than motor disabilities, namely visual, auditory, mental and psychological disabilities;
* one-off eligibility assessment for target group transport;
* personal control and choice as to which form of transport is most suitable at which time;
* a simple way of paying to simplify combination trips (combination of public transport and target group transport);
* greater reliability and predictability of target group transport and improved treatment while on public transport.
* The initial activities performed within the framework of the action programme will focus on:
* improving information on accessible travel;
* exchanging know-how so that good practices are copied widely;
* standardisation of data on target group transport;
* proper connections with transport under the Social Support Act and a single travel card for Valys transport.

**Specific examples in the field of Transport:**

* Initiatives to improve and renew target group transport in combination with public transport are taking place in numerous municipalities and regions. For example control centres have been deployed at many locations to enable people to organise their journey at one central place, even if they intend using different forms of transport. There are also new examples of tenders, for example simultaneous tendering of student transport and Social Support Act transport, or the linking of target group transport and public transport as is the case in the Valys tender.
* Dutch Railways is taking a number of important requirements into account when procuring new rolling stock, such as level boarding so that people with disabilities can get on and off a train without assistance being required. Dutch Railways is also taking other measures, such as designating priority seats.
* The information on accessible travel will be improved. In 2018 Dutch Railways, in cooperation with ProRail, will provide information on accessible travel in its travel app.

#### Participation & Accessibility

Previously we assessed which specific tasks need to be carried out in the areas of Living, Work, Education and Transport. In addition to this there are challenges and opportunities in many other areas for giving people with disabilities more opportunities to participate in society. We are using specific measures in these fields as well:

1. **More accessible sports**

People with disabilities participate less frequently in sports and are less frequently members of sports clubs than people without disabilities. We want sportsmen and women with disabilities to be able to join clubs and enjoy sport. This is to be part of the Sports Agreement. We are also including an accessibility incentive in a scheme for businesses that build and maintain sports facilities. In addition, there is the NOC\*NSF Active without Limits programme.

* One of the programme’s milestones is to have a national structure of approximately 43 regional partnerships in 2019. The idea is to match supply and demand in terms of sports and exercising for people with disabilities. In addition, the provision of sport and exercise activities at 430 locations is to be improved (on average ten locations per partnership).

1. **Reducing barriers to participation in culture**

Some cultural facilities and activities are still not accessible for people with disabilities. Studies have shown that people with (physical) disabilities participate less in cultural activities than people without disabilities. The government believes it is important for people with disabilities to be able to use cultural facilities on an equal footing and participate in cultural activities. The aim is to reduce the differences in participation in culture between people with and without disabilities.

Current measures for making the culture sector more inclusive focus on, among other things, assessing requests for refurbishment/building permits for cultural institutions in terms of accessibility, sharing knowledge via the National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts and financing projects in the field of cultural activities via the Cultural Participation Fund.

Extra efforts will also be made within the framework of this programme. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science is aiming to have for a joint approach to the accessibility of culture with those involved in the field and interest groups. This year, a round-table meeting will be organised on this matter in order to identify bottlenecks and determine follow-up steps.

1. **Increasing the number of accessible websites, portals and apps**

Websites, portals and apps are not always accessible for people with disabilities. We want people with disabilities to be able to make appointments themselves (and without assistance), for example care-related appointments, and to be able to do their own shopping online more easily. Public and semi-public organisations are therefore being obliged to take steps to comply with accessibility requirements and must publish an accessibility statement on this. One key initiative is to make accessibility a spearhead in the care sector.

* Another milestone is the entry into force of the Digital Accessibility Decree on 1 July 2018. The Decree stipulates that government body websites and mobile apps must comply with the Decree on the following dates:
* By no later than 23 September 2019 for websites which have been published since 23 September 2018;
* By no later than 23 September 2020 for websites which have been published since 23 September 2018;
* By no later than 23 June 2021 for mobile applications.

1. **Greater use of understandable information methods**

The government is using the 'Tel mee met Taal' (Count with language) action programme to provide an extra impetus to combating and preventing functional illiteracy which may, for example, be related to a (slight) mental disability. This programme is also producing good ideas for making the provision of information by the government and other parties more understandable. These ideas are being taken up and publicised more widely via the UN Convention programme.

For example, a competition was organised between 10 groups of functionally illiterate people who were asked what problems they encountered in daily life and what solutions they had found. Together with the two winners, an assessment is now being made as to how these ideas can be implemented.

1. **Making all voting booths accessible and suitable support when voting**

The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has announced two measures, also on behalf of the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport, to improve the accessibility of the election process for voters with disabilities:

* One important milestone is a change in the law as of 1 January 2019 which regulates that all polling stations must be accessible to voters with physical disabilities.

In addition, consultations will be held in the coming period with the relevant interest groups/organisations, such as the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights and the Dutch Electoral Council, to assess the possibility of allowing help to be given in the voting booth to voters with mental disabilities, such as assistance provided by a member of the polling station staff. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is expected to inform the House of Representatives about the outcomes of these consultations at the end of this year.

1. **A continued focus on accessible media and libraries**

We consider it important that people with disabilities also have access to books, newspapers and magazines, as well as to television programmes. To guarantee this as much as possible legal frameworks have been put in place and various parties are taking initiatives.

**Libraries**

Under the System of Public Libraries Provisions Act, the National Library of the Netherlands is in charge of making available a library provision for people with reading disabilities; this is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. With a view to implementing this the National Library of the Netherlands is subsidising the 'Reading that Fits' Library Service and has commissioned the provision of (digital) library services. People who have stated that they have reading disabilities can register with the 'Reading that Fits' Library Service (Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen) to borrow books, newspapers and magazines in an adapted reading format (audio books, Braille, large print, combination reading), and for specific services such as relief and tailor-made reading.

Various other services are offered for people with disabilities by and via the public libraries, such as 'reading that fits' and large print books, as well as reading aloud activities. A campaign is also being carried out to update the accessibility guidelines for public libraries as from 2018. This will give libraries specific tools to improve the accessibility of the building, the collection, the digital services, the physical services and communications.

To ensure that information, general reading matter and teaching material is accessible from the resource as much as possible, various interested parties have drawn up an action plan.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Broadcasting stations/networks**

Under the Media Act, broadcasting stations/networks are obliged to provide subtitling for programmes for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The national public broadcasting stations have a legal obligation to add subtitling for people who are deaf and hard of hearing to 95% of Dutch programmes. This is done via Dutch public sector broadcasting, NPO. Nationally operating commercial stations/networks are required to do the same for 50% of their programmes. In this way the Dutch government is doing more than European regulations prescribe.

The public broadcasting stations/networks are working continuously to improve the quality of subtitling. In addition, sign language is available during a number of programmes broadcast by national public broadcasting stations/networks.

Dutch public sector broadcasting offers spoken subtitles on a voluntary basis and has been a leader in this field for many years. The nationally operating commercial stations/networks offer spoken subtitles on a voluntary basis.

Dutch public sector broadcasting also offers audio description on a voluntary basis. The aim of the Dutch government is that Dutch public sector broadcasting will gradually and voluntarily provide audio description for an increasing number of programmes.

#### Care and support

Almost all people with disabilities use care and support services. For some people this means medical care by, for example, a GP or hospital. For others it means support from the municipality, for example by applying for aids. Alternatively care may be provided by the care insurer, for example in the form of a district nurse. Although care and support may be temporary in nature and aimed at healing and recovery, a significant proportion of the group will require life-long and life-wide care, and support at home or in an institution. Care and support is provided under the Social Support Act, the Youth Act, the Healthcare Insurance Act or the Long-Term Care Act.

For people with life-long and life-wide disabilities, good accessibility, affordable and high-quality care and support are primary preconditions for being able to participate in society. People with (life-long) disabilities should experience recognition and acknowledgement of their need for access. This requires implementation based on organising the necessary expertise and cooperating optimally on the client's behalf. Such implementation does not end at the limits of care, but creates a link to support services in other areas like living, education, work and income, on the basis of what clients have to say, and supports them in being able to take control; it also minimises uncertainty and bureaucracy for clients.

As a consequence the government is focussing totally on improving care and support. This continuous attention is being translated into numerous activities in various programmes and care agreements. In the line of action within the framework of this programme we want to be transparent about what concrete measures are being taken in this respect to help improve the lives of people with disabilities.

1. **Improving access to care and support**

Even if people have life-long disabilities, and it is evident that they need care and support all their lives, there is no automatic guarantee as yet that the care in question can be accessed. People have discovered that they have to demonstrate time and again that they have disabilities, for example because short-term eligibility assessments are used which lead unnecessarily to uncertainty and offer people insufficient prospects. Alternatively there may be insufficient opportunities to carry out a full assessment of what broad-based care and support is needed. The assessment of what care and support is needed sometimes requires specialist knowledge. This is not always available to the assessors.

For that reason, on the basis of consultations with the people affected, we will be working together with our implementing partners to assess what is needed to improve access to care and support from this perspective. The aim is to provide disabled people with the right help to enable them to participate in other areas of society according to their wishes and abilities.

* Milestone: On the basis of a survey which we want to complete before the end of 2018, an assessment will be made to determine what steps have been taken to actually realise this.

The recently launched '(Ont)regel de zorg' ([De-]regulated care) programme also contains measures to reduce the administrative burden for care users. Consequently, access to care will also benefit from the focus of this programme.

1. **Removing bottlenecks relating to aids provision**

Problems which clients experience in connection with applying for and using aids, adaptations to the home and moving house must be resolved. We believe it is very important that no-one has to wait, without verifiable reasons, for weeks for a suitable aid, and their participation in life be hindered. Access to aids or adaptations to the home and the rules which apply to moving house must be properly arranged. It has to be clear to everyone who they have to contact. In the process, bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork must be prevented.

That is why, based on studies into bottlenecks in the Social Support Act 2015, agreements were recently made with the Association of Dutch Municipalities to take measures in the following areas: improving communications by municipalities, amending and encouraging the use of the Aids Procuring Handbook, acting faster in the event of emergencies, improving the process of passing on aids and improving the use of possibilities for escalation and the power to push through decisions on complex issues. A lot of clients also use aids provided under various acts (Social Support Act 2015, Healthcare Insurance Act and Long-Term Care Act). That is why a survey will be carried out in 2018 into possible improvements that can be implemented across those acts. Measures will be taken on the basis of the specific points for improvement, including agreements with the responsible parties.[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. **Extra investment in client support**

Client support under the Social Support Act 2015 or the Long-Term Care Act can play an important role in supporting people with disabilities to participate in society according to their own wishes or capacities. In the Coalition Agreement, it has been agreed that extra investments will be made in independent client support to help clients progress in various areas of life (including social support, care, income and work).

Using the available resources we want to work on improving client support via three lines of action. Firstly by organising client support at the initial point of access, irrespective of whom is contacted to request support. Secondly by improving awareness of client support so that those who stand to benefit know that it exists. Thirdly we want to improve expertise, where appropriate with knowledge of specific target groups. Pilots will be organised in relation to case management specifically for the Long-Term Care Act.

The analysis of the possible improvements will be detailed in consultation with municipalities, providers, care administration offices, the professionals and, of course, the people involved. This will provide a basis for real steps to be taken in the coming years to improve client support in accordance with the three lines of action referred to.

1. **Care for young people and life-wide care for the disabled**

Other action programmes can also help improve care and support for people with disabilities.

The Care for Young People[[9]](#footnote-9) programme contains various measures to improve the help and support provided to children and adolescents in a noticeable and measurable way. The measures in question relate to children and adolescents with disabilities.

The Youth Act gives municipalities the explicit duty to promote participation in society and independent functioning of young people aged up to 18 who have mental, physical or sensory disabilities, chronic psychological problems, or psychosocial problems. The lines of action in the Care for Young People programme relate to improved access to youth care for children and families, to ensuring that as many children as possible are raised at home, to offering all children chances to develop optimally, to provide better support to vulnerable youth people in terms of them becoming independent, to provide better protection to young people if their development is jeopardised and to invest in the skills of youth professionals.

The disabled care and complex care programme will be presented after the summer. The disabled care and complex care programme relates to the provision of suitable care and support for people with disabilities who need life-long and life-wide care and support, and for their next of kin. The programme will focus on improving the quality of care provided, it’s appropriateness to the care requirement, on improved care and support for specific groups, and on more support for the next of kin.

#### State as an organisation

The government sector wants to be an accessible organisation within an inclusive society. This is something that the State has been working on for some time. The aim is to work on improving the accessibility of the State as an organisation (employer and service provider) for people with disabilities. This not only means providing physical access to government buildings and websites, information and systems, but also that the State as an employer is open to any employee, with or without disabilities, to work according to their abilities. Technology can be used to facilitate and support employees with disabilities whilst working. In the coming years the government sector wants to focus on four themes within this line of action, namely good employment practices, buildings and surroundings, information and procurement. It is doing this by working together with employees who actively want to contribute ideas and participate, whether they have a disability or not.

1. **An employment action plan for each ministry**

The State wants to be an attractive employer. The same also applies, of course, to employees with occupational disabilities. This can be done by providing them with equal opportunities and access to positions within government. The second evaluation carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, however, shows that the government did not achieve the 2016 jobs target. A number of problems were encountered during the realisation. That is why measures are now being taken. In the autumn of 2017, all ministries were asked, upon activation of the quota scheme, to draw up action plans to create jobs for this target group. The government will determine solutions intended to resolve the problems before the summer.

1. **Accessibility and user-friendliness of government offices**

The government believes that government buildings becoming physically accessible should happen as a matter of course. In practice, however, that is not always the case. In order to improve the accessibility of government buildings, a number of activities have been initiated. Measures are being taken to further improve accessibility in ministry buildings in The Hague. As a result the Central Government Real Estate Agency is exploring whether there is cause to take measures in the rest of the real estate portfolio it manages. In connection with the execution of the Accessibility Action Plan for the building trade, the Central Government Real Estate Agency is also assessing the extent to which its own standards and their application can be refined.

1. **All government websites accessible**

Information from national government is intended for all Dutch people. That is why it is extra important to make this information accessible to everyone. Although the accessibility of government information and communications is being worked on, the government wants to increase the focus in the coming years. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is monitoring compliance with the accessibility requirements for government websites. In addition, the accessibility requirements will be agreed more specifically in government contracts for the procurement of digital resources and products (such as websites and apps).

* The entry into force of the Digital Accessibility Decree on 1 July 2018 is another milestone for the national government. The Decree stipulates that government body websites and mobile apps must comply with the Decree on the following dates:
* By no later than 23 September 2019 for websites which have been published since 23 September 2018;
* By no later than 23 September 2020 for websites which have been published since 23 September 2018;
* By no later than 23 June 2021 for mobile applications.

1. **More socially responsible procurement**

When procuring products, services or works the State takes account the effects on the environment and on social aspects. This is referred to as socially responsible procurement, or sustainable procurement. Socially responsible procurement offers the possibility of contributing, via procurement, to the realisation of policy goals, such as the creation of jobs for hard-to-place people.

## Concrete steps together

#### Implementation strategy of the programme

The implementation strategy initially describes how the programme will continue to build on earlier initiatives taken to achieve the ambitions of the UN Convention. It goes on to describe how numerous partners are cooperating in this programme to enhance the effect of their individual efforts. Last but not least, it describes how the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is coordinating its implementation.

1. **Additional concrete steps on the foundation laid**

This programme is not the first work done on the implementation of the UN Convention. All the relevant legislation and regulations were audited in the run-up to its ratification. On this basis, the Act on Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Disability or Chronic Illness was extended and amended and the Accessibility Decree was introduced. Article 2a of the Act states that governments, companies and organisations 'must gradually ensure general accessibility for persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses, unless that constitutes a disproportionate burden'. The Decree calls on all sectors to draw up action plans for activities and measures to increase accessibility.

Following ratification of the UN Convention, an initial implementation plan was drawn up together with a large number of parties and organisations. This plan contains the first steps taken by national government, municipalities, organisations and companies with a view to jointly achieving the ambitions in the UN Convention in practice. Following on from that, the Accessibility for the building industry action plan was drawn up and published on 18 January 2018.

Various campaigns also took place between 2016 and 2018 to create more public awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities come up against and how things could be done differently.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The implementation programme and the activities implemented in this plan have laid the foundations for the further implementation of the UN Convention. This basis is the starting point for taking further, concrete steps to be made which we are doing by drawing up our lines of action, lines of action which connect all the parties involved. After all, in many cases, it is the actors at local and/or regional level who are responsible for implementation. We are also reinforcing and enlarging a movement which has already been initiated by a large number of municipalities, organisations, companies and sectors. We are using good examples to encourage parties and sectors that are lagging behind and could use some help developing an approach. This plan contains activities and measures, but is also an invitation to develop and implement additional ideas together with all these parties, including the administrative partners and the people concerned.

However, more is required than just action. The UN Convention also contains tasks which cannot be incorporated into phased plans in the short term, but which are of great value. For that reason, subjects will be put on the agenda which require reflection and social debate, in addition to the concrete activities in this programme. One example is the question of what inclusivity actually means within certain themes, such as issues relating to independent control, autonomy and self-determination in the lives of people with disabilities. As the coordinating official, the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport will invite relevant stakeholders to discuss this.

1. **Not by the government pressing a button, but by working together with partners**

**With experts by experience**

The most important partners when it comes to working on an inclusive society are, of course, those actually affected. Within each line of action we therefore focus on having a proper dialogue with these experts. The lines of action will be further developed and implemented with those concerned. In this way we can create tailor-made solutions for making society more accessible.

The discussions with experts who have gained their expertise by experience take place wherever a difference can be made and where existing policy has been initiated or intended policy is being developed, locally with municipalities, in sectors with companies and sector associations and within government with the policymakers working on the relevant themes.

As the umbrella organisation, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport can be held accountable for involving the experts by experience and discusses this matter on a regular basis with the Alliance of cooperating organisations of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

**Supportive activities in relation to expertise by experience:**

* We are initiating a number of activities to support the implementation of 'nothing about us without us' in practice:
* The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is helping fellow ministries and others within a line of action where necessary by organising dialogues with ‘experts by experience’.
* The Alliance of cooperating organisations of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses is organising a project to make the input from ‘experts by experience’ stronger and more professional when it concerns the drafting of policies for people with disabilities. It is doing this, for example, by organising training sessions, setting up a support desk and developing a remuneration policy toolkit.

**With parties in the lines of action**

In terms of the content of the lines of action, the focus is on what needs to be done in the country. The difference is made by the many parties who are working on these themes on a daily basis. The activities carried out are intended to lead to results which make a difference in the daily lives of those concerned. How that should be done can only be successfully determined in cooperation with the parties involved on a day-to-day basis. During this programme cooperation and a connection will be sought with schools, transport companies, sports clubs, building and developing parties and many others. The national government is responsible for the agenda, encouraging and facilitating, depending on what is needed for a certain theme.

**Examples of cooperation in the action lines:**

* *With municipalities*: together with local partners a municipality can be a motivator of the inclusive society. By local partners we mean entrepreneurs, project developers, as well as local experts by experience, client councils and Social Support Act councils. There are plenty of opportunities to remove barriers locally outdoors, in the shopping centre or the sports club canteen. Municipalities and regional parties can also play an important role in the fields of living, working and education.
* *With sectors*: parties can also collaborate within a sector. For example, they can improve the services offered throughout the sector to clients with disabilities as well as accessibility of facilities or premises. Alternatively, they can create an inclusive workplace where someone with a disability is appreciated as a colleague.
* *In the area of transport*: within the transport region, cooperation can come about between a transport provider and experts by experience. Together they can, in phases, improve the accessibility of stops or the provision of information to travellers.
* *In the area of education*: various schools in the region can work together to increase the opportunities for pupils with disabilities in terms of learning and studying.

**With administrative partners**

The partners who were there at the very start will continue to play an active role in realising the programme’s ambition. The Alliance of collaborating organisations of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses (on behalf of experts by experience), the Association of Dutch Municipalities (on behalf of municipalities) and the business organisations VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland (on behalf of the business community) contribute, based on their own roles, responsibilities and possibilities, to the ambition which we want to realise with this programme. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport regularly discusses the progress jointly made with those parties.

The contributions by the partners to the ambition are:

1. Cooperation with frontrunner municipalities

The Association of Dutch Municipalities selects, in cooperation with the Alliance, 25 municipalities that are taking the lead in terms of implementing the UN Convention. A number of frontrunners are selected for all themes of the lines of action. The Association of Dutch Municipalities wants to give frontrunners the opportunity to get a ‘behind-the-scenes’ impression of each other in order to learn from each other, to become inspired by differences in approach, to learn from the problems they come up against and to share success factors with each other.

Frontrunner municipalities will also involve other municipalities, either from the region or specifically on identifiable themes, in their development towards a more inclusive society. The Association of Dutch Municipalities publicises successes and lessons learned via its web page and other means of communication so that all municipalities can learn from this.

1. All for one and one for all effect

Besides the group of frontrunner municipalities, there are other municipalities which are working on the

UN Convention or are striving to do so much more actively. The Association of Dutch Municipalities makes sure that they are supported as they try to achieve this ambition, by establishing links with other municipalities, for example by initiating learning networks and organising work visits. In this way the Association of Dutch Municipalities creates an 'all for one and one for all' effect so that eventually all municipalities will work to create a society in which everyone can participate. Information will become available for all municipalities via fact sheets, brochures and guidelines in order to increase the municipalities’ knowledge about the UN Convention and the underlying themes.

1. Local inclusion agendas

The municipalities have a legal responsibility to work on creating an inclusive society and the implementation of the UN Convention has been laid down in the Social Support Act, the Youth Act and the Participation Act. Municipalities can fulfil that responsibility by drawing up local inclusion agendas. The Association of Dutch Municipalities therefore wants to focus specifically on supporting the creation of a local inclusion agenda. The aim is to increase the quality of the local inclusion agendas. In order to obtain more insight into the development of the initiative among municipalities, the Association of Dutch Municipalities also wants to carry out a scan of the coalition and municipal agreements concluded after the recent local council elections. The scan will reveal which municipalities have included the inclusion agenda or a similar plan in their agreements.

1. Setting up local accessibility pilots

The Association of Dutch Municipalities, municipalities and experts, the VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland are cooperating to develop a local approach to make shopping and entertainment areas accessible. Setting up a series of pilots in shopping areas, along with an intensive and direct approach to businesses and people with disabilities, will result in recognisable and specific guidelines which can be used at other locations.

1. Action plans in various sectors

In addition to disseminating knowledge, the VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland actually want to provide practical solutions and good practices for businesses to increase their accessibility and, with that, the quality of their services. The ambition of the VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland and the sector organisations is to use action plans to reach at least 50,000 affiliated businesses in the retail trade and hospitality and recreation industry before 2020 with information and guidelines on increasing accessibility.

With all other frontrunners

The approach based on the lines of action and the efforts by the administrative partners represent an important contribution to the move towards a more inclusive society. A lot more is going on, however. That is why the government is looking to cooperate with many other parties who share the ambition and goal of this programme and can help to achieve concrete results. We are doing this by looking for links with other on-going initiatives and the good practices they have developed.

Numerous excellent initiatives are taken in society to increase accessibility and the opportunity 'just to participate'. These frontrunners are approached by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and together we assess how they can continue developing and implementing their ideas with specific support from this programme. The initiatives in question may strengthen the approach of the lines of action, but may also relate to new issues which have not yet been identified. This creates a ripple effect that will continue to strengthen the move towards a more inclusive society.

1. **Coordination of the implementation**

With this programme the government is working on creating a society with a minimum of barriers. A society in which people with disabilities are also more able to participate, and make more choices themselves than is currently the case, about how they want to structure their lives. This task is a government-wide responsibility because accessibility and participation affect all areas of our society. The whole of society is responsible for implementing the UN Convention. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport, being the coordinating minister, is the central point of contact. He puts specific themes and content from the UN Convention onto the agenda of the government and elsewhere.

One of the State's tasks is for the UN Convention to be put on the agenda of all relevant policy programmes, legislation and regulations. Every minister can be called to account with regard to their own themes in the context of implementing the Convention. This means that every minister continues to be responsible for their own policy field and the related communications. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport coordinates the process by monitoring the overall ambition of the government and by combining and linking up all content-related results, for example by sharing knowledge and information, setting up a communications strategy and distributing good practices, but also by bringing parties together where necessary.

The same task applies to municipalities, companies and organisations in sectors in which sector associations can play an important umbrella role. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is placing the UN Convention task on the map and, in doing so, is collaborating with parties who can play a role in continuing to raise awareness throughout the country. Together with fellow ministers and closely involved partners, the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport, as the coordinating Minister, encourages and supports the implementation of the Convention.

The aim is to ensure that the UN Convention becomes part of the DNA of government bodies, companies, organisations and people who have a responsibility during its implementation to ensure that people are aware of the problems that people with disabilities come up against in practice and to make it even easier for people with disabilities to engage and remain in discussions about the question of what they need for full participation.

1. Who does what within the programme?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Action items | Coordination |
| Lines of action |  |  |
| 1. **Building and Living** | * Clear guidelines for accessible renovation/building work * Encouraging sufficient suitable and available homes * Studies into extra accessibility requirements in the Buildings Decree for new-build apartments * Inventory of bottlenecks in relation to accessibility of public space. | The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations  On elements:  in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport |
| 1. **Work** | * More jobs * Improved employee services * Improved employer services * Improved granting of work provisions | The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment |
| 1. **Education** | * Identifying and reducing barriers for pupils and students in terms of accessibility and curricula. * Exploration of more inclusive education * Improving the connection between education and care. | The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science |
| 1. **Transport** | * More accessible stops and stations * A higher level of user-friendliness and more integrated target group transport | The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment  On elements:  in collaboration with The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport |
| 1. **Participation & Accessibility** | * More accessible sports * Reducing barriers to participation in culture * Increasing the number of accessible websites, portals and apps * Greater use of understandable information methods * Making all voting booths accessible and suitable support when voting * A continued focus on accessible media and libraries | The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport  (coordination)  On elements: The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations & The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science |
| 1. **Care and support** | * Improving access to care and support * Removing bottlenecks relating to aids * Extra investment in client support * Care for young people and life-wide care for the disabled | The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport |
| 1. **State as an organisation** | * An employment action plan for each ministry * Accessibility and user-friendliness of government offices * All government websites accessible * More socially responsible procurement | The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations |
| **Municipalities** | * 25 frontrunners among municipalities * Organisation of learning networks/all for one and one for all effect * Support setting up local inclusion agendas | Association of Dutch Municipalities |
| **(Business) sectors** | * Action plans in various sectors (reach 50,000 business people) * Setting up local accessibility pilots | VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland |

1. **Overview of legal instruments for the implementation of the programme**

**The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities**

Drawn up on 13 December 2006 at the head office of the United Nations in New York. Ratified by the Netherlands on 14 July 2016. The purpose of the present Convention is 'to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity'.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**The Act on equal treatment on the grounds of disability or chronic illness.**

This act is intended 'to promote participation on an equal footing in society and protect people against discrimination on the grounds of a handicap or chronic disease' and obliges government bodies, organisations and companies to carry out effective modifications (Article 2). In addition, the Act requires governments, companies and organisations to gradually ensure general accessibility for persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses (Article 2a). These obligations apply unless the provisions constitute a disproportionate burden for the implementing party.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Accessibility Decree**

The Accessibility Decree calls on sectors to describe, in an action plan, how their sector is working towards improving accessibility for people with disabilities or chronic illnesses. These action plans are sent to the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport so that he can monitor progress within the sectors.[[13]](#footnote-13)

**Statutory responsibility of municipalities (Van der Staaij-Bergkamp amendment)**

Municipalities have an important role to play in the implementation of the UN Convention, primarily because they have been given more tasks and responsibilities with regard to people with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Under this amendment, municipalities must describe, in the plans to be periodically adopted on the grounds of the Social Support Act 2015, the Youth Act and the Participation Act, how they want to work on implementing the UN Convention on the basis of the local situation. More specifically this can be developed into a local inclusion agenda. Those submitting the amendment explicitly stipulated that people with disabilities, and the organisations representing them, be involved in drawing up the policy.[[14]](#footnote-14)

## Monitoring

The ambition of this programme is that people with disabilities should be able to participate in society in a way that reflects their own wishes and capacities, just like any other person. The main purpose of the programme is to bring about a clear decrease in the number of barriers people with a disability come across and which hinder their participation. Monitoring will focus on the effect of everyone's efforts within this programme to take the necessary steps to achieve this ambition and realise this primary goal. Monitoring the programme generates knowledge and insights which can be used to adjust the efforts made under the programme in the interim, if necessary.

We monitor the effects of this programme in various ways:

**Experiences of people with disabilities are at the centre**

A central monitor will be in place, monitoring the question as to whether people can participate in society based on their own desires and capacities. This is a monitor of the programme's overall ambition. This monitor will use the experiences of people with disabilities as the starting point. In this monitor we focus explicitly on the sum of experiences of people in daily life, for example in the fields of living, work, education, transport and facilities in people's own surroundings. The key question in this monitor is: are the people themselves finding that they can participate better according to their wishes and capacities?

* The milestone is to put together a baseline measurement before the end of 2018 which can be used as a basis for monitoring the development of people's experiences during the programme. When setting up this baseline measurement, existing data on people's experiences will be used as much as possible.

**Progress of measures in the lines of action**

The lines of action of the programme are specifically monitored. These monitors provide an insight into the progress of the measures in each line of action and the realisation of the programme's goal. A key question in this monitor is: are results being achieved which mean that people are experiencing fewer barriers? An assessment is made for each line of action as to how best to present a picture of which results are being achieved. How that is done will vary from one line of action to the next. Sometimes the focus will be on actual figures on results achieved and sometimes on how the target group experiences a result. Examples include the number of regular jobs for people with disabilities, experiences of pupils and students in education, the percentage of accessible journeys (by train), the percentage of accessible voting booths or an indication of the number of accessible websites and apps.

**Process indicators for the implementation strategy**

In addition, there are process indicators which give an indication as to whether this programme's implementation strategy is helping to realise the ambition and achieve the programme's goal. These indicators provide an insight, for example, into the question of whether the national move towards accessibility and participation is actually taking place. Among other things this involves an assessment of the cooperation which arises in the lines of action between the national government and local partners and whether a proper dialogue is taking place with experts by experience. However it also assesses, for example, the number of municipalities that include the development of inclusion agendas in their municipal agreements and the number of action plans from the sectors, including the number of businesses reached with these action plans.

**Operationalisation**

Monitoring will be operationalised during the term of the programme. In doing so, attempts will be made to cooperate with parties who can access relevant (practical) knowledge and data to support the monitoring activities.

We realise that the various elements of the monitoring activities may not necessarily provide a clear picture. Although buildings may be physically more accessible or information presented in a more understandable form, the experience of people with disabilities themselves may still be that they cannot participate in society on an equal footing. During the programme, therefore, more and more attention must be paid to the dialogues with target groups who can hold up a mirror to us as we try to answer the question of whether we are doing the right things.

What is more, with a view to monitoring, it is important to realise that the work resulting from the UN Convention is an ongoing task which will continue to exist after this term of government. This programme provides a targeted impetus for 2018 to 2021. Monitoring the programme will create more knowledge about additional or remaining barriers which hinder participation. It will also give us a better understanding of what additional work and measures are still needed to remove these barriers.

## Planning schedule

**Planning schedule**

By implementing the UN Convention we want to create a different way of thinking and acting in society. With this programme, we provide a specific and targeted impetus for 2018 to 2021 for the central task of creating a better and more inclusive society.

The measures shown in the lines of action each have their own planning schedule. Where possible information has been included in the lines of action as to when (interim) results can be expected. As indicated in Chapter 2 of the programme, attention will also be paid to long-term tasks ensuing from the UN Convention.

As promised the House of Representatives will be informed about the programme's progress annually. This will be done before the summer of each year.

1. 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Netherlands 2017' Annual Report of the Institute for Human Rights [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 'Confidence in the Future' Rutte III coalition agreement dated 10 October 2017, p. 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The preamble to the UN Convention states: 'Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others,' [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A commitment has been made to submit an annual progress report to the House of Representatives and a periodical International report to the UN committee for this UN Convention. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Explanatory Memorandum to the Convention Sanctioning Act p.11: 'The Convention indicates that work will have to be continually carried out on (additional) progressive realisation.' [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Parliamentary Papers II, 2018-2019, 34352, 98 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A round table has been set up which is participated in by the following institutions: Oogvereniging, Vereniging Onbeperkt Lezen, Dedicon, National Library of the Netherlands, NUV, VIVIS (Visio and Bartiméus partnership), Kennisnet and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Parliamentary Papers II 2017/18, 32 805, no. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Parliamentary Papers II 2017/18, 34 880, no. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Examples are Participating with a disability/National government (<https://www.zeteenstreepdoordiscriminatie.nl/wie-doen-mee/campagne-meedoen-met-een-handicap>) and The Netherlands Unlimited/ Dutch Association for the Disabled (<http://www.nederlandonbeperkt.nu/>) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. http://bit.ly/vn-verdrag [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://bit.ly/wgbh-cz [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. http://bit.ly/besluit-toegankelijkheid [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. http://bit.ly/vdstaaij-bergkamp [↑](#footnote-ref-14)