



Khartoum, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## Launch of the European project “Bridging the Gap” in Sudan

**The European Union, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and the Spanish Cooperation join their forces with the Sudanese institutions and the civil society for the promotion of the rights and of the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities.**

“Sudan has a good potential for achieving development and social justice with the ongoing cooperation with European partners and national organisations of persons with disabilities” With these words, His Excellency the former Ambassador Mubarak Rahamtalla declared the official opening of the European project “Bridging the Gap: Inclusive policies and services for equal rights of persons with disabilities” during a ceremony held in Khartoum on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

The initiative, funded by the European Union, co-funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and coordinated by FIIAPP (Spanish cooperation), aims to promote the rights and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in five low- and middle-income countries, namely Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan. The responsibility of the implementation in Sudan is held by the Italian Cooperation which, as recalled by the Italian Ambassador mr. Fabrizio Lobasso “has been committed to the inclusion of persons with disability since its very early days”. The Ambassador also underlying that with Bridging the Gap “we are witnessing a real NET, in the sense of a conjunction of virtues and values of whom Sudan is an example. We should consider disability as a key to unlock our enhanced understanding of life”.

The Head of EU cooperation in Sudan, mr. Jannik Vaa, welcomed the “gender-balanced representation in the room” and added that “Bridging the Gap is a ground-breaking project with important potential to improving together our best practices for inclusion”.

The Project Director, mr. Federico Martire from FIIAPP, explained that “Bridging the Gap aims to strengthen the capacities and skills of the public institutions and to empower the organisation of persons with disabilities in the participating countries, as well as promoting the mainstreaming of disability in international cooperation”. “In Sudan, Bridging the Gap focuses on the universal access to employment on equal conditions for persons with disabilities in line with the provisions of article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, added the Country Coordinator for Sudan, mr. Stefano Sozza (AICS).

The Country Action Plan for Sudan has been drafted involving all relevant national and international actors and in close partnership with the Ministry of Welfare and the National Council of Persons with Disability. Mr. Ahmed Bdraldeen, Secretary General of the Council, recalled the relevance of the “nothing about us without us approach”, highlighting the importance of partnership and consultation of persons with disabilities in inclusion-related matters in Sudan.

Following the event, Bridging the Gap is going to kick off its activities, firsts of whom will be a training for promoting the self-employment of women with disability and mothers of children with disability in Gedaref State, alongside a preparatory study for the future development of an inclusive database for matching demand and offer of employment in the country.





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**FIIAPP**  
COOPERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA

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