



Sightsavers



#EqualWorld

A Promise in Peril

A global petition to world leaders by the Sightsavers' **Equal World** campaign

A call for transformative, accelerated and disability-inclusive action on the Sustainable Development Goals

#EqualWorld



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promised to ‘leave no one behind’, but progress is well off track.

Earlier this year, the UN Secretary-General wrote to world leaders inviting them to attend the SDG Summit with the aim of reigniting a sense of hope, optimism and enthusiasm for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He described it as ‘a unique opportunity to fundamentally change course’, UN member states were asked to **negotiate a disability-inclusive political declaration**. Each member state was also asked to make national and global commitments to help drive SDG transformation.

The ‘Promise in Peril’ petition and campaign launched on 12 June 2023, 100 days before the SDG Summit. It calls on world leaders to put a rescue plan in place to get the SDGs back on track and ensure people with disabilities are central to its development and delivery.

We have been campaigning in more than 20 countries, as well as at a global level, calling on world leaders to deliver transformative, accelerated and disability-

inclusive action through a political declaration and national commitments at the SDGs Summit.

Thousands of people, including leading disability rights activists and organisations of people with disabilities from national and global levels, have joined our campaign by signing this global petition.

“World leaders must ensure that the political declaration and all national commitments made at the summit focus on reaching those left furthest behind. This is our last chance to get the goals back on track. In order to bring about sustainable change, achieve the SDGs and create a more equal world, global decision-makers cannot continue to ignore the 16% of the global population who have disabilities. World leaders must act at the SDG Summit in September to rescue the SDGs and truly leave no one behind.”



Abia Akram, disability rights activist, founder of the National Forum of Women with Disabilities in Pakistan and Equal World campaign global ambassador

A promise in peril: The Sustainable Development Goals are completely off track – we need a rescue plan.

Dear world leaders,

In September 2015, UN member states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting ambitious and wide-ranging targets to end poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. Importantly, they promised to leave no one behind – a promise that included people with disabilities.

However, as we now reach the halfway point to the 2030 deadline, progress has derailed, and the SDGs are completely off-track.

The impact of COVID-19, global conflict and the escalating climate crisis are only making things worse.

The promise to leave no one behind is in peril.

So today, we call on you to ensure that the political declaration of the SDG Summit (taking place this September at the UN) and the national commitments you make at the summit focus on reaching those who are being left furthest behind.

This is our last chance to get the goals back on track.

We need transformative and accelerated action that is inclusive of people with disabilities and in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

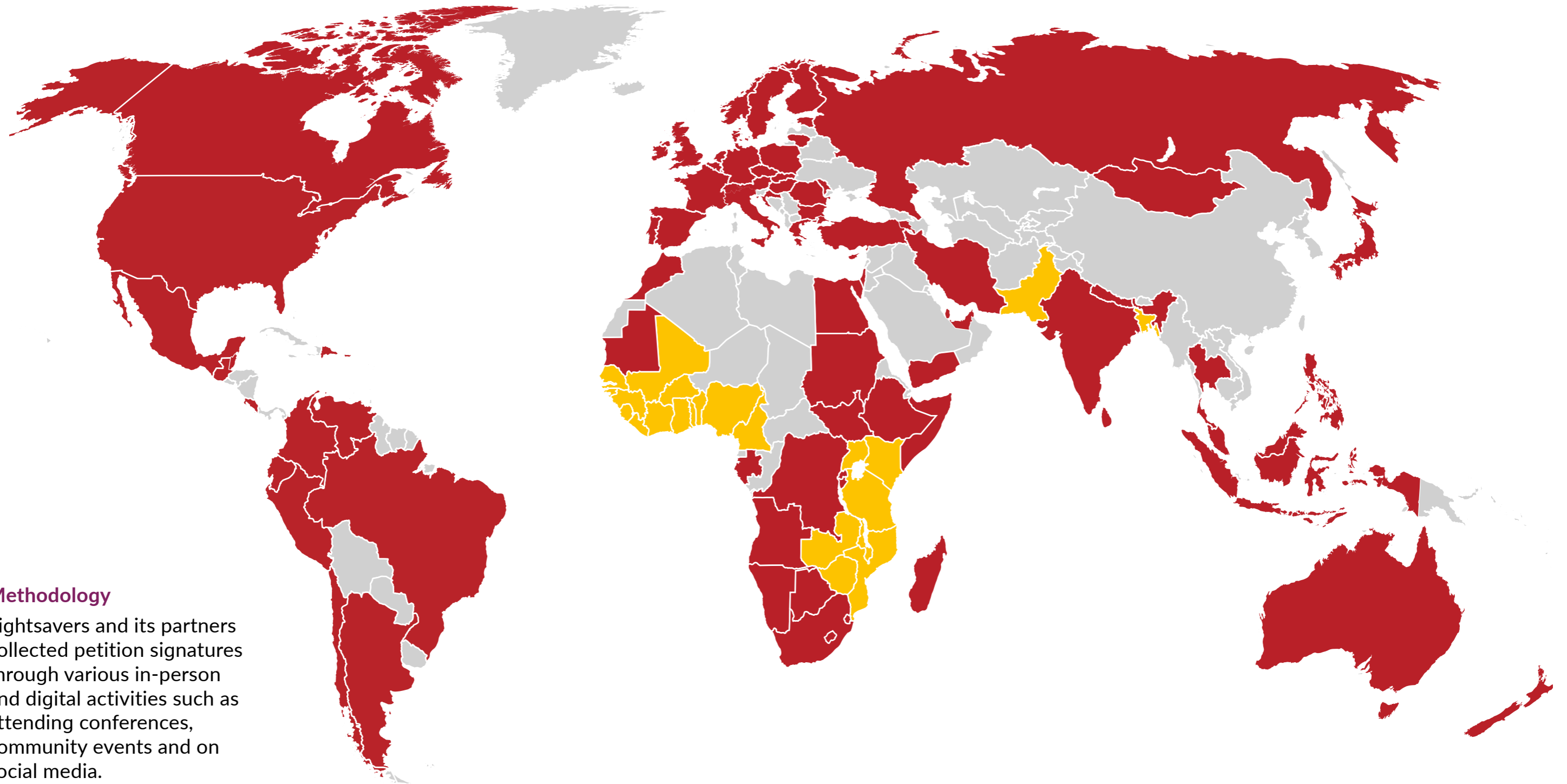
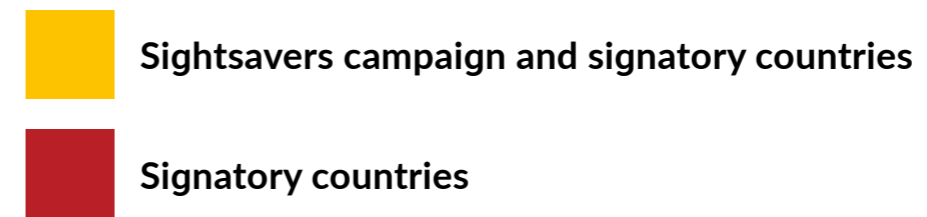
You must act now to rescue the SDGs.

#PromiseInPeril

Who signed our global petition?

48,063 people have signed our global petition.

Signatories came from **121** countries.



Methodology

Sightsavers and its partners collected petition signatures through various in-person and digital activities such as attending conferences, community events and on social media.

Signed on behalf of global and regional organisations:

European Disability Forum (EDF)
International Disability Alliance
International Disability and Development Consortium
International Paralympic Committee
Transforming Communities for Inclusion
Women Enabled International
World Blind Union

Signed on behalf of country organisations:

Visually Impaired Peoples Society (Bangladesh)
National Council of Disabled Women – NCDW (Bangladesh)
Campaign For Popular Education – CAMPE (Bangladesh)
Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation – BERDO (Bangladesh)
National Paralympic Committee of Bangladesh – NPC Bangladesh
Fédération des Associations de Personnes Handicapées du Bénin – FAPHB
ONG Handicap à Visage -Universel – ONG HanVU (Benin)
ONG Famille-Nutrition-Developpement (Benin)
Réseau Inclu (Cameroon)
Plateforme Inclusive Society for persons with disabilities (Cameroon)
CBM Cameroon (Cameroon)
Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l’Homme (Cameroon)
Association Deaf Rights – DERICAM (Cameroon)
Disabled People’s Organisation Denmark
Union Guinéenne des aveugles et malvoyants – UGAM
Fédération Guinéenne pour la Promotion des Associations des Personnes Handicapées
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development (India)
SDGs Kenya Forum (Kenya)
Kenya Female Advisory Organization
National Union of Organizations of the Disabled (Liberia)
Mental Health Users and Carers Association (Malawi)
Association of People with Physical Disabilities in Malawi
Malawi Union of the Blind
Visual Hearing Impairment Association – VIHEMA (Malawi)
Malawi National Association of the Deaf
Youth Act Alliance (Malawi)
Osi Joe Touching Lives Initiative (Nigeria)
Muslim Hands (Pakistan)
Aga Khan Foundation (Pakistan)
HANDS Pakistan
Pakistan Coalition for Education
AwazCDS-Pakistan/Pakistan Development Alliance
Economic Justice Network (Sierra Leone)
Volunteers Involving Organisations Network (Sierra Leone)
Community Initiative for Peace and Children Foundation (Sierra Leone)

Youth Leadership and Advocacy (Sierra Leone)
Disabled Organization for Legal Affairs and Social Economic Development –
DOLASED (Tanzania)
Tanzania National Network of People with HIV/AIDS – TANEPHA
Federation Togolaise des Association de Personnes Handicapées – FETAPH (Togo)
The Equal Opportunities Commission (Uganda)
National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda – NUDIPU
Dignify Girls and Women with Disabilities Association (Uganda)
Inclusion Uganda
Disability Rights California (USA)
Albinism Foundation of Zambia
Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations – ZAFOD
Thisability Hub (Zimbabwe)
Mkundi Foundation (Zimbabwe)

Signed as an individual:

Zakia Bari Mamo, Actress (Bangladesh)
Fahmida Nabi, Singer (Bangladesh)
Marcel Candide Hinvy, Journalist (Benin)
Sénateur Robert Oyono, Cameroon’s first senator with a disability (Cameroon)
Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Ghana)
Hon Kabinet Camara, Conseiller National (Guinée)
Sinead Kane, International Speaker, Lecturer, Solicitor, Athlete (Ireland)
Scader Louis, Disability Rights Advocate (Malawi)
Simon Munde, Disability Rights Advocate (Malawi)
Dr Abel Eigege, The Carter Centre (Nigeria)
James Lulu, Executive Secretary National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (Nigeria)
Dr. Zakariya Mohammed, OSSAP-SDGs (Nigeria)
Oluwatoyin Naiwo, Chartered Manager (Nigeria)
Prof. Uche Amazigo
Nadia Jamil, Actress (Pakistan/UK)
Prof Asad Aslam Khan, former National Coordinator of
National Committee for Eye Health (Pakistan)
Peter Sam-Kpakra, Development Secretary (Sierra Leone)
Laura Kanushu, Member of Parliament representing people with disabilities (Uganda)
Dr Femke Bannick Mbazzi, Academic (Uganda)
Sarah Bugoosi Kibooli, Commissioner Special Needs Education,
Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda)
Dr Patrick Ojok, Academic (Uganda)
Susannah Rodgers, Former Paralympic Swimmer (UK)
Nasper Manyau, Former Senator for Disability in the Parliament of Zimbabwe
Senator Annah Shiri, representing persons with disabilities (Zimbabwe)
Senator Ishumael Zhou, representing persons with disabilities (Zimbabwe)
Councillor Brian Malvin K Sithole, Zimbabwe Youth Council

Messages to world leaders

We asked people why they signed this petition. Here are some of their responses.

People with disabilities are up to **twice as likely** to live in poverty as people without disabilities.



“For me, the promise to leave no one behind is important because it is about inclusiveness. Inclusivity ensures that all people’s rights are upheld; their needs are met. This will drastically reduce or eliminate the gap between the rich and poor. The voices of the poor and people with disabilities will help shape the world to be a better place for everybody, not just for now but for future generations as well.” – **Becky, Uganda**

“The promise to leave no one behind is important because we are all one human family; each person has the same rights and needs as each other. This has to be recognised now and not in 300 years. Let us be the citizens who brought about this much-needed change and go down in history as the makers of radical change. Let us bring about a better world for our generations of children and grandchildren to live in.” – **Caroline, Ireland**

“The promise to leave no one behind is important because everyone deserves a better future, regardless of disability, class or social standing.” – **Brima, Sierra Leone**

“The promise to leave no one behind is important because it is a clear reflection of our commitment to the efforts to inclusivity and equality by making sure that individuals with disabilities are being actively involved in all aspects of progress and development in the society.” – **Wesley, Kenya**



People with disabilities tend to **earn lower wages** than people without disabilities.



Women and girls with disabilities experience **significantly higher** rates of sexual violence and abuse than women without disabilities.



“The pledge to leave no one behind is a commitment to end extreme poverty in all its forms and to act explicitly to ensure that those who have been left behind can catch up to those who have experienced greater progress. It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN member states to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and humanity as a whole.” – **George, Kenya**

“The promise to leave no one behind is very important because everyone must have a say in the development of society!” – **Jean, Cameroon**

“The promise to leave no one behind is important because it makes us all equal.” – **Scovia, Kenya**

“The promise to leave no one behind is important because it allows everyone to enjoy the same benefits and participate in different activities. It also promotes personal empowerment and helps people build tools to be more independent and improve their self-esteem.” – **Lusungu, Malawi**

“The promise to leave no one behind is important because everyone, including people with disabilities, SHOULD matter. No one should solely be valued on a narrow scale of outputs or economic contribution to society or be compared to people without disabilities on these two parameters. The justification for an inclusive environment for everyone should come from a place of love, not economics.” – **Florence, Kenya**

“My message to global leaders is: Do not just iterate LNOB in words, documents, and policies but make sure and show commitments through the work you do.” – **Narayan, Nepal**

“My message to global leaders is to take the need of persons with disabilities into account whatever the context, be it in development or a humanitarian crisis. They are an integral part of the world’s population and they deserve the right to live a better and safer life, enabling them to enjoy their potential.” – **Tidiane, Mali**



“My message to global leaders is: the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in our collective pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals should be recognised. Our commitment to leaving no one behind must be more than a slogan; it must be a steadfast commitment rooted in action and empathy. Their voices, aspirations and contributions must be acknowledged and integrated into every facet of our development agenda. It is essential that we create an environment where disabilities do not limit potential, where inclusion becomes the norm, and where barriers are replaced with pathways to success.” – **Siphiwe, Malawi**



“My message to global leaders is not to compromise on Sustainable Development Goals. Although the world is currently dealing with many problems related to COVID-19, the climate crisis etc. The Sustainable Development Goals shouldn't be forgotten. Taking necessary steps regarding the goals is a must for humanity.” – **Izmir, Türkiye**

“My message to global leaders is to prioritise implementing inclusive policies and initiatives that address the needs and rights of people with disabilities. It is essential to invest in accessible education, health care, employment, and infrastructure, creating an inclusive society where everyone can participate fully and equally.” – **Dilip, India**



“Let us remember that by embracing the principles of inclusivity, we fortify the bonds that hold our societies together. Each person's dignity is intertwined with our communities' collective strength. When we ensure that no one is left behind, we foster a sense of belonging, diminish divisions and forge unity that stands resilient against the challenges we face.” – **Sande, Uganda**

“My message to global leaders is... wake up, make an immediate course correction at home and abroad, and unite. We need to solve the problem multilaterally, bringing everybody together. But we need to have multilateral institutions with a stronger capacity of governance in order to be able to prevent and solve the challenges that we face.” – **Rosemary, Zambia**

Some people with disabilities die up to **20 years earlier** than people without disabilities because of health inequity.



Now is the time for action

Through this booklet, you've heard from Equal World campaigners on why your action at the SDG Summit is critical. You've seen how global action has been taking place to call on all world leaders to take action this September. And you've seen that thousands of campaigners from around the world are calling on you to take action.

The SDG Summit is your opportunity to get the SDGs back on track – making sure people with disabilities at the heart of the action.

We call on you to deliver an ambitious political declaration that includes concrete commitments to advance the inclusion of people with disabilities.

We call on you to commit to including people with disabilities in development progress. Their exclusion undermines the central promise of the SDGs.

World leaders from every country can make significant steps towards this by:

1. Putting robust legislation and policies in place that protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities, accompanied by clear accountability mechanisms
2. Disaggregating data on the basis of disability, alongside other factors of exclusion, to ensure that people with disabilities are represented in national statistics
3. Ensuring national budgetary processes are participatory, inclusive and aligned with the SDGs

Our Equal World campaigners have spoken.

Without your action, the promise to leave no one behind is in peril.

Now it is over to you.

The promise to leave no one behind is in peril. Act now to rescue the SDGs.

About Sightsavers

Sightsavers is an international organisation that works in more than 30 countries to prevent avoidable blindness and fight for the rights of people with disabilities. Our vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where people with disabilities can participate equally in society. For more information, please visit:

www.sightsavers.org

About Equal World

Equal World is Sightsavers' campaign to ensure disability rights are upheld around the globe. We campaign at global and national levels for political change that is inclusive of people with disabilities.

For information on the Equal World campaign, please visit:

campaigning.sightsavers.org

For further information, please contact Ross McMullan, Sightsavers global campaign manager: rmcmullan@sightsavers.org

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