

## **Integrating disability rights into climate action – now!**

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**There is an urgent need for the recognition of an official disability constituency in the intergovernmental climate negotiation process.** This will allow persons with disabilities to bring their perspectives and experience to climate policies, as mandated by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Paris Agreement.

Around the world, persons with disabilities face disproportionate impacts from climate change, with these challenges often intensified by poverty and systemic gaps in protection. Those in the Global South are particularly at risk. A nuanced understanding of how disability intersects with factors like gender, indigenous identity, socio-economic status, and geographic location is critical to addressing the unique challenges faced by these communities.

By making disability inclusion a cornerstone of climate strategies – and ensuring that persons with disabilities are at the forefront of leadership – we can build resilience, achieve equity, and drive climate justice for all. **Immediate action is essential.**

### **Disability-inclusive climate action - Main objectives**

#### **1. Disability-inclusive climate policies and outcomes**

Climate policy must specifically refer to persons with disabilities, the barriers they face and the solutions required. COP29 must deliver positive outcomes for all women and girls, Indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs), people with disabilities, older people, children and youth, people living in poverty and people that are otherwise marginalised. By doing so such action will also strengthen the 2030 and post-2030 Agendas.

#### **2. Meaningful participation in climate negotiations**

For climate policy to become fully inclusive and effectively implemented, persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (OPDs) must be meaningfully involved. This is an obligation of States under Article 4.3 of the CRPD, while Articles 12 and 7.5 of the Paris Agreement call for gender-responsive and participatory adaptation – which inherently intersects with disability. Disability leadership is required at local, national, regional and international level. Recognition of an official Disability Constituency within the UNFCCC mechanism is essential.

#### **3. Accessibility**

Participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity requires full accessibility. This means providing physical access as well as access to information and communications in decision-making processes, and Reasonable Accommodation where required. Accessibility is also key for sustainability – infrastructure, transportation, and job opportunities must incorporate universal design to ensure long-term success especially within the new green economy. Accessibility is future-proofing, and must be recognised as an investment, not a cost.

## **Disability-inclusive climate action - Key UNFCCC workstreams**

### **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) should be guided by human rights obligations, principles, and standards in their preparation, content, and implementation. By integrating disability-specific considerations, NDCs will promote equitable climate resilience to support member states ambitions on emissions and adaptation to the impacts of climate change, critical for achieving global climate targets and ensuring sustainable development. This involves enhancing accessibility, representation, participation and resources in climate decision-making processes, while also addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities, especially on girls and women with disabilities.

#### Recommendations

- In public participation and engagement commitments, make specific reference to persons with disabilities as people most at-risk and who bring unique expertise and actively engage with OPDs when developing and implementing NDCs, to ensure meaningful consultation and the voices of persons with disabilities are heard and incorporated.
- Adhere to existing laws and standards on accessibility when committing to build and retrofit infrastructure
- In budget planning, include ringfenced budget for accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation, to ensure participation of all of society

### **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)**

The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) must be based on equity, recognising that persons with disabilities are among those disproportionately impacted by and least responsible for climate change. NCQG frameworks must include the requirements of persons with disabilities in all areas of work, which allocating specific financial resources where required. This approach will help bridge the implementation gap ensuring that climate finance reaches and involves all marginalised groups.

#### Recommendations

- Allocate dedicated climate finance for disability-inclusive adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as loss and damage. This funding should be of quantity and quality to fully meet the needs of those who are most marginalised and at risk, and be fully accessible to all persons with disabilities in affected communities.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities, in all their diversity, are represented in decision-making processes for NCQG climate finance
- Promote transparency and accountability to track how NCQG resources benefit disability-inclusive initiatives and communities. In particular, improve existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks by developing indicators and disaggregating data to that tracks disability inclusion in climate finance.

## **Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)**

A disability-inclusive Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) will mean that adaptation strategies, which are too often neglected politically, are accessible and effective for all, including persons with disabilities. By incorporating disability leadership into adaptation planning, strategies will have more impact and communities will better understand the value of disability inclusion.

To achieve this, it is crucial that the work under the UAE-Belem work programme is guided by human rights and international human rights treaties such as the CRPD and contains disability-inclusive indicators.

### Recommendations

- Ensure physical and informational accessibility in adaptation strategies, including the UN Early Warnings for All initiative
- Promote leadership roles for persons with disabilities in adaptation decision-making, especially at local level
- Enable persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to directly access adaptation funding, in line with the Localisation agenda
- Develop effective indicators through the UAE–Belém work programme to track inclusion of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. These indicators must disaggregate population data by gender, age and disability, in line with the Sendai Framework.

## **Gender Action Plan (GAP)**

The Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender (ELWGP) and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) must reflect and respect the rights and requirements of all persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities. These groups often face more risks during climate events and are less involved in decision-making.

### Recommendations

- Integrate disability rights by prioritising the participation of persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups, taking an approach that considers intersecting identities
- Provide equitable access to resources and opportunities in climate action for all persons with disabilities, especially for women and girls with disabilities
- Maintain agreed human rights language and promote awareness and challenge stereotypes at the intersection of gender and disability

## **Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP)**

Disability inclusion in the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) is important to make sure everyone benefits from the shift to a greener, sustainable, low-carbon economy. As new jobs and industries grow, persons with disabilities have equal right to access training and opportunities. By making the process fair and removing barriers, we can create a better future for all.

Capacity strengthening is essential to enable countries, especially in the Global South to develop and adopt climate technologies tailored to the needs of local communities, including targeted to persons with disabilities. This must include

disability-inclusive decision-making and empowering communities most affected by climate and transition policies.

#### Recommendations

- Ensure the JTWP is anchored to international human rights treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and ensure participatory decision-making, including representation of persons with disabilities.
- Ensure persons with disabilities have access to innovative and sustainable technologies, green jobs and training
- Remove barriers that stop persons with disabilities from joining new industries
- Create policies that support workers with disabilities during the transition

#### **Loss and Damage**

The Loss and Damage Fund must ensure that persons with disabilities receive the support they need during climate crises and after climate-related disasters. These individuals often face greater risks and challenges during and after such events, so it is crucial that the Fund has adequate finance, at the necessary scale to provide resources and assistance that are accessible and tailored to their needs. Decision making processes must be transparent and fully participatory.

#### Recommendations

- Identify and address the specific funding requirements of persons with disabilities by meaningful consultation with the relevant representative organisations of persons with disabilities
- Ensure that all Loss and Damage funding is disability inclusive, while dedicating specific funding streams to that will meet specific requirements.
- Meaningfully involve persons with disabilities in planning and decision-making regarding mobilisation, access and allocation of funding, including those related to recovery efforts