

Cotonou Declaration

- A. **Considering** the commitment of our States to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity, in accordance with the purpose of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),
- B. **Considering** the renewed commitment of governments during the Global Disability Summit held in Oslo, Norway on February 25-26, 2021
- C. **Noting** with hope and vigilance, the commitment of world leaders to leave no one behind in achieving the objectives of the 2030 agenda, but also and above all, their desire to help the most vulnerable populations as a priority;
- D. **Encouraged** by the reaffirmed commitment of African leaders to Implement the CRPD and the Continental Disability Action Plan through Agenda 2063, commitment reinforced by the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of January 29, 2018,
- E. **Noting** the strong contribution of international cooperation in the development of our countries,
- F. **Noting** the permanent concern of this international cooperation for the respect of Human Rights in development,
- G. **Bitterly deploring** that the overwhelming majority of people with disabilities still live in ignorance, exclusion, poverty and dependency,
- H. **Recalling** the aggravated discrimination, violence, abuses and inequalities suffered by women and girls with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities,
- I. **Deeply** concerned about all the inaccessible schools and health centers built as well as all the non-inclusive health, education, economic empowerment, water and sanitation programs funded and implemented that have been, every time, missed opportunities to advance the inclusion of people with disabilities,
- J. **Deeply concerned** by the inaccessibility of the buildings housing our administrations, schools and health centers, our means of transport as well as our modes and means of communication and information.

WE, leaders of representative organizations of people with disabilities in Africa, gathered in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, on the occasion of the BRIDGE ODD-CRPD training, urge:



African governments to:

1. Adopt inclusive budgets, clearly indicating the share reserved for taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities in all sectors and the financing of disability-related costs and the equality rights of persons with disabilities enshrined respectively in Articles 28 paragraph C of the CRPD and 6.3 of the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the rights of persons with disabilities;
2. Put in place and/or strengthen an effective mechanism, endowed with sufficient powers, to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities as well as the transversality of the issue of disability in all development actions;
3. Establish or strengthen inclusive quality education for all children, with a focus on children with disabilities, in all their diversity, in accordance with Articles 24 of the CRPD and 16 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as objective 4 of the 2030 agenda . Particular attention should be given to children with disabilities from underrepresented groups, such as children with intellectual disabilities, children with autism, deaf and deafblind children;
4. Engage in the process of progressive transformation of our environment to enable the use of all goods and services by all persons with disabilities, in line with Article 9 of the CRPD and Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda;
5. Take measures to find, obtain and maintain employment for people with disabilities in both the public and private sectors in accordance with Article 27 of the CRPD and SDG 8 of the 2030 agenda.

The African Union, regional and sub-regional organizations to:

1. Ensure better involvement, full and effective participation of representative organizations of persons with disabilities in the development, implementation and monitoring of programs and policies at all levels;
2. Harmonize data collection systems on disability based on the Washington Group tool plus albinism in all data collection operations;
3. Ensure the representation of persons with disabilities within the governing bodies of the African Union, regional and sub-regional organizations.

International cooperation, Technical and financial partners



1. Ensure that the inclusion of people with disabilities is part of the financing conditions of development projects in order to guarantee that they can benefit from it on an equal basis with others
2. Increase their support for building the technical, institutional and organizational capacities of DPOs, in order to enable them to effectively fulfill their roles of guiding and monitoring the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 agendas;

Done in Cotonou, August 31, 2022,

The participants