

The following declaration has been adopted by representatives of national, sub-regional, and Pan-African organizations of persons with disabilities on the 2-4th of September 2024 during the Nairobi conference organized by the African Disability Forum with the support of International Disability Alliance, Sight Savers, CBM global and CBM, and contribution from Light for the world and UNICEF.

NAIROBI DECLARATION

The rights of Persons with disabilities in a post-pandemic world: redefining inclusive development and humanitarian agenda in Africa

Preamble

We, representatives of national, sub-regional, and Pan-African organizations of persons with disabilities from 38 countries across Africa, have gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, from September 2-4, 2024, at the conference **“Persons with Disabilities in a Post-Pandemic World: Redefining Inclusive Development and Humanitarian Agenda in Africa”** to explore and redefine pathways and the central role of organization of persons with disabilities in building a future that is inclusive, resilient, and just for all.

- a. Recognizing that approximately 80 million persons, or almost 1 in 10 people on the African continent, are persons with disabilities,*
- b. Acknowledging the near-universal ratification of the UN CRPD on the continent, with all but one¹ African country having ratified the convention,*
- c. Welcoming the entry into force of the African Disability Protocol, already ratified by 16 countries,*
- d. Welcoming the African Union Plan of Action to End Attacks and Other Human Rights Violations Targeting Persons with Albinism in Africa,*
- e. Reaffirming relevant legal and policy frameworks at the national and regional levels, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and its respective Protocols, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare, and the African Model Law on Disability, as well as principles and policy guidelines contained in the other continental instruments and documents such as the 2002 AU Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (CPOA); and acknowledging the importance of the Second African Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2010 – 2019; and the African Union Disability Strategic Framework (2019),*
- f. Recalling the AU’s Agenda 2063 vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”, in particular Aspiration 1 on a “Prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development” whose key priority areas include social security and protection, including persons with disabilities,*
- g. Acknowledging the renewed commitment of governments to accelerate the implementation of the CRPD, including through strengthening disability-inclusive international cooperation during the Global Disability Summit co-hosted by Norway and Ghana on February 17-18, 2022,*
- h. Welcoming the Global Disability Summit 2025 and particularly the commitment of the co-hosts, Germany and Jordan, to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are fully integrated into*

¹ Eritrea has not yet signed the Convention. https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=en.

efforts to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda,

- i. Affirming the central role of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), as recognized in the CRPD, emphasizing their unique position as representative organizations and advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities, and accelerating efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities through their representative organizations are able to actively and meaningfully participate in policy making decision-making processes and implementation, including by allocating appropriate and sustainable resources to organizations of persons with disabilities,*
- j. Deeply concerned that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may not be realized by 2030 for millions of African persons with disabilities due to insufficient progress and the lack of prioritization of inclusion and accessibility in related SDG programs and policies,*
- k. Recalling the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities, who faced increased barriers to healthcare, education, employment, and social inclusion, as well as the compounded effects of climate change and ongoing conflicts, and the need for resilient, inclusive systems that protect and empower all members of society including the diversity of persons with disabilities,*
- l. Expressing concern at the compounded effects of climate change and ongoing conflicts on persons with disabilities, and the need for resilient, inclusive systems that protect and empower all members of society including the diversity of persons with disabilities, and acknowledging that persons with disabilities face heightened risks of violence and gaps in protection in these situations, including among refugees and displaced persons,*
- m. Recognizing that Africa is the continent most affected by conflicts and the second most affected by climate change and natural hazards, with 140 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2024, and reports predicting that by 2050, more than 20% of the African population will be exposed to severe and extreme droughts,*
- n. Gravely concerned at the intersecting crises, including ongoing fiscal crises across the world and the disproportionate impact it may have on persons with disabilities, including due to potential deprioritization of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in national budgets and international development cooperation,*
- o. Welcoming the adoption of the OECD DAC disability marker as a tool to increase accountability for the inclusiveness of development cooperation,*
- p. Acknowledging significant progress in disability data collection over the past decade on the continent,*
- q. Recalling that newly collected data confirm the persistence of deep inequalities faced by children and adults with disabilities in accessing education, healthcare, and work opportunities, as well as widespread barriers to mobility, communication, and information, leading to marginalization, poverty, and increased risks of violence,*
- r. Recalling the aggravated discrimination and inequalities experienced by women and girls with disabilities, and mothers of children with disabilities,*
- s. Noting that despite increased awareness, marginalized groups of persons with disabilities, such as persons with albinism, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, and persons with epilepsy, continue to face life-threatening violence and deprivation of liberty due to persistent harmful beliefs and cultural practices,*

- t. *Recognizing the crucial role of families and communities in providing support to family members with disabilities, particularly those with high support needs, while also acknowledging the significant gaps in care and support systems and the gender inequalities related to unpaid care,*
- u. *Drawing on the lessons learned from the pandemic we reaffirm our firm commitment to contribute a more resilient, inclusive, accessible, and equitable society for persons with disabilities in Africa and to ensure that our voices are heard and respected in all decision-making processes.*
- v. *We pledge to collaborate across sectors, regions, and communities to drive transformative change to build an inclusive, resilient, and just future for all.*

We appeal all African countries to:

1. *Implement fully the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring CRPD Compliance of national budget and public finance management system to make the most of available domestic and international resources in all sectors to remove barriers and provide support in line with the provision of the CRPD and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,*
2. *Ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,*
3. *Ensure that all development policies and programmes, are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities in all their diversity, including in situation of emergency and humanitarian crisis by removing barriers and ensuring access to the needed support services, such as qualified sign language interpreters, appropriate format, braille, personal assistance, and assistive devices,*
4. *Ensure that persons with disabilities, including youth and older persons, as well as children and their families will be fully consulted and actively involved through their representative organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of all programmes and policies that could impact their lives,*
5. *Contribute to the capacity development of the representative organizations of persons with disabilities to ensure the empowerment of persons with disabilities, including in the context of development and humanitarian assistance*
6. *Ensure that particular attention is paid to meaningfully include women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with high support needs, persons with albinism refugees and internally displaced persons with disabilities, who can be subject to violence and multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination.*

More specifically,

Inclusive data

1. *We call on states and development partners to ensure that disability data is more systematically collected, analyzed, disaggregated by gender, age and other relevant characteristics and used to inform decision making that impacts provisions in policies and programmes for realization of the rights of persons with disabilities.*

Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- 2. We call for continental ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We want to see increased funding, capacity strengthening, and increased participation of representative organizations of persons with disabilities in the process and utilization of the model law on disability to guide the domestication of the protocol and formulation of legislation in countries.*

Gender and inclusive development

- 3. We call for increased funding and awareness raising on the rights of women and girls with disabilities that leads to empowerment of and strengthened collaboration with representative organizations and networks of women with disabilities. We call for the development and implementation of gender responsive, inclusive policies and programmes, and the active and systematic involvement of women with disabilities in decision making processes pertaining to the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities.*

Poverty and inequality

- 4. We call on countries and development partners to strengthen data collection, analysis, and harmonization; enhance the enforcement and implementation of post-CRPD laws and policies; adopt CRPD-compliant budgeting to make the most of domestic and international resources for inclusion across all sectors and level of government; prioritize inclusion of persons with disabilities across sectors and programs; and improve coordination and collaboration among sectors and stakeholders.*

Inclusive social protection

- 5. We call on countries and development partners to strengthen the development of shock-responsive and inclusive social protection systems by expanding national coverage of disability management information systems, progressively increasing the coverage and adequacy of social protection support through a combination of cash transfers, concessions, and community support services for the survival, escape from poverty and inclusion of children, working-age adults, and older persons with disabilities. Additionally, we urge enhanced connections between social protection, health, education, and employment programs.*

Inclusive Education

- 6. We urge governments to address existing barriers and ensure quality inclusive education for children with disabilities, including increased government investment in inclusive digital education initiatives. We also specifically bring attention to the need to ensure access in rural areas, humanitarian settings, and in marginalized communities by addressing issues related to transport and providing accessible technology and training specifically addressing the different needs of these groups. In addition, we stress the need for indicators to be put in place to measure the effectiveness of programs aimed at improving access to education for children with disabilities.*

Inclusive employment

- 7. We urge for stronger enforcement of inclusive employment policies, with active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in monitoring progress. Policies should address root causes of negative attitudes toward the employment capacities of persons with disabilities. We call for supportive environments, focusing on housing, reasonable accommodation, assistive technologies, social protection, and career progression. Emphasis should be placed on the needs of women, youth,*

and those in rural areas to ensure equal access to employment and transportation.

Disability inclusive businesses

- 8. We urge intensified collaboration among stakeholders to develop inclusive policies, increase investment in capacity building, and support disability-inclusive employment. We call for raising awareness of disability issues and the benefits of inclusive employment within companies and organizations. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of collecting and analyzing inclusive data in labor surveys to track progress. Prioritizing accessibility, assistive technologies, reasonable accommodation, and training is essential to ensure the full participation and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities in employment.*

Disability inclusive development and meaningful engagement

- 9. We stress the need for action by way of collaborative efforts between stakeholders to develop and implement inclusive policies and practices. We call for increased investments in capacity building for businesses, organizations, and government agencies to support disability inclusion. We want governments to ensure the effective implementation of existing disability-related laws and regulations. We need systematic collection and analysis of data to inform policy decisions and measure progress and the immediate prioritization of accessibility measures in all aspects of business, society, and government.*

Conflict displacement

- 10. We urge governments, humanitarian organizations, and researchers to prioritize data collection on persons with disabilities across all stages of conflict and displacement to inform evidence-based policies. Humanitarian programs must be accessible and inclusive, addressing the unique needs of persons with disabilities. We advocate for investment in community-based rehabilitation to help persons with disabilities regain independence and fully participate in society. Continued advocacy and awareness-raising are essential to keep their needs central in conflict and displacement situations.*

Humanitarian and climate change

- 11. We urge governments, humanitarian organizations, and researchers to prioritize collecting disaggregated data on persons with disabilities by age and gender. Humanitarian programs, early warning systems, and disaster plans must be accessible, inclusive, and address the diverse needs of persons with disabilities, particularly children, women, and those with high support needs. We call for strengthened collaboration among stakeholders, with a focus on localization and involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities, which is essential to address the complex challenges faced by persons with disabilities in crises.*

Inclusive health

- 12. We call on the governments to ensure accessibility, availability, affordability, and adequacy of health care, including access to sexual and reproductive health services and mental health services, as well as repeal discriminatory laws that deprive persons with disabilities the right to make health decisions. We further urge governments to invest in training health professionals and families and deliberately target underrepresented groups in awareness campaigns, including women with disabilities, persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, and those in rural areas.*

Community inclusion care and support

- 13. We call on government and development partners to carry out data collection and in consultation with OPDs to document the needs for care and support of the diversity of children and adults with*

disabilities and their families as well as the existing informal community support practices and to invest in innovative programs building on social protection and community based inclusive development to find the best ways to combined formal and informal support to support effective participation of person with high support needs while reducing gender inequalities in the provision of paid and unpaid care and support.

Nairobi the 4 September 2024

