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**THE PERSPECTIVE FROM TANZANIA ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF AND THE AFRICA UNION OF THE DEAF**

**Progress on the implementation of (UNCRPD) – The impact to date.**

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006, the CRPD was envisioned from the beginning of the treaty process as an instrument for promoting both human rights and social development. It is the first internationally legally binding instrument defining minimum standards for the protection of a full range of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of persons with disabilities.

The UN Convention and its ratification by many developing countries is perceived to have had a major impact on the visibility of disability as a human rights issue. The UNCRPD has been that many NGOs and DPOs are now using the principles in the Convention as a tool to help raise awareness and affect change.

At the international level, the UN convention has become an entry point for change which has drawn attention to disability among Government, CSO’s Human Rights Institutions and development partners, and the need to address disability issues is increasingly being recognized and expressed as a priority at policy level. However, CSOs point out that there is a need for profound attitude change, both within institutions and organizations at national and local levels and in the population as a whole, to ensure that people with disabilities are considered, treated, and respected as members of society on equal terms with other citizens. Only this way will they receive adequate support to become truly included and empowered.

**Current barriers.**

• Due to the difficulties of definition, generalized global statistics in disability are problematic and are best avoided.

• There has been still a paradigm shift from regarding Persons with Disabilities as objects to seeing them as subjects, able to take charge of their own development. The four models of disability (charity, medical, social and human rights) illustrate the complexity of the issue.

• The relationship between disability and poverty is complex and little researched, but persons with people in poor countries tend to be among the poorer sections of society. However, with improvements in development and standards of living the profile of disability changes, but the numbers of disabled people do not decrease.

• ‘The United Nations Disability Statistics Data Base (DISTAT) is the most comprehensive collection of existing disability statistics. The data contained therein are however scarce, random and inadequate for systematic analyses of disability issues. Published estimates of national, regional and global disability populations, therefore, are little more than speculation

• The charity model still persists in all parts of the world in response to the view that Persons with Disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable, and are in need of help, care and protection. Institutions for persons with disabilities have been established often as a result of the charitable model.

**Possible solutions.**

* Disability programming needs to be based on **researched data**, not rough estimates. Good data collection practices need to be part of any disability programme. The human rights of people with disabilities do not depend on numbers.
* The human rights model embraces aspects of the other three. Rehabilitation should be an equal partnership between people with disabilities and professionals. Self-empowerment, self-determination and equality must be the guiding principles of all work in disability.
* There is a greater *proportion* of persons with disabilities in industrialised countries than in developing countries. However, poverty cannot be measured only in material terms, especially in relation to disability. There is an urgent need for systematic research on the link between poverty and disability in poor countries.
* Persons with disabilities are the best advocates for the cause of disability, working in partnership with others committed to the issue. **Organisations of persons with disabilities** need to be supported to achieve better capacity in order to deliver more effective advocacy. The guiding principle of inclusive policies is ‘*nothing about us without us’*, ie. Persons with disabilities must be included in all policy formulation, through their representative organisations.
* It is important to pay close attention to **gender issues** in all efforts to make development inclusive. Women with disabilities and girls are often subject to multiple discrimination. Education is the key to development and the education of girls with disabilities must be a major part of the strategy to correct gender imbalances