**Covid-19 and Disability Rights : Where Now ?**

**Richard Rieser, General Secretary Commonwealth Disabled People’s Forum**

**Presentation ROFA CDPF Seminar 2ND November 2020**

The CDPF also calls on governments to take the following longer-term steps to avoid future human rights emergencies:

1. Actively involve persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, and civil society, in planning the recovery process and emergency deinstitutionalisation plans.

2. Allocate adequate financial and human resources to support the transition from institutions to the community, in line with Article 19 of the CRPD.

**A. De-Institutionalisation**

CDPF calls for :-

1.Develop an emergency deinstitutionalisation plan in line with Article 19 of the CRPD and General Comment No. 5: Right to independent living (2017) of the CRPD Committee.

2.Implement an immediate no-admissions policy to large- and small-scale institutions.

3.Closely monitor the situation in institutions and release data and information on the number of infections and fatalities in institutions.

4.Guarantee immediate, unfettered access to independent national human rights authorities, including NHRIs and NPMs, to all institutions, ensuring safety protocols and procedures are in place to enable independent monitoring and direct communication between monitors and residents.

5.Provide immediate access to food, PPE, social distancing measures, and appropriately trained staff.

6.Provide accessible information in multiple formats about the state of emergency.

7.Ensure full access to healthcare on an equal basis with other citizens.

8.Implement immediate measures to ensure that residents can contact law enforcement and complaints mechanisms, and to ensure contact with family and friends.

9.Ensure that persons within institutions have access to mental health supports and services.

10. Prevent family separation and institutionalisation of children (or parents) due to COVID-19 pandemic.

**B. Disabled People living in the Community**

1. Guarantee full participation and meaningful involvement of disabled people and their representative organisations at every stage of the response.

2. Safeguard community-based services including personal assistance, home supports, and assistive technology.

3. Provide information about the state of emergency in multiple, accessible formats.

4. Enact emergency measures to ensure adequate and affordable food and medication distribution throughout the country, including rural and remote areas.

5. Provide immediate financial assistance to disabled people to cover the additional cost of living and the rise in the cost of food, medications, and other essential supplies.

6. Work with private sector companies such as supermarkets to ensure that food is delivered to the homes of disabled people, who are unable to leave, and encourage them to allocate dedicated times for vulnerable shoppers, including persons with disabilities.

7. Investigate and hold accountable police and other security services which abuse, injure, or kill disabled people.

8. Put in place necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities who are in situations of risk, especially during curfews, lockdowns, shielding orders, or shelter at home orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. Ensure all security briefings and reports take into consideration the perspectives and rights of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. Ensure police officers and security forces are trained to take into account the specific needs of disabled people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**C. Denial of access to healthcare**

1. Guarantee full participation and meaningful involvement of disabled people and their representative organisations at every stage of health policy making.

2. Prevent denial of health information, health care, or health services on the basis of impairment. Provide access to justice for those who have been denied access to healthcare.

3. Disabled People, including persons living in institutions, enjoy the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of impairment .

4. Require health professionals to provide healthcare and health information to disabled people on an equal basis with other citizens, including persons in institutions.

5. Raise awareness of disability rights among health professionals, including the right to access information and give free and informed consent to medical treatment

6. Ensure access to specialised health services including rehabilitation.

7. Guarantee free or affordable healthcare, food and medicine, and prohibit discrimination against disabled people in the provision of health insurance

8. Provide health information and services as close as possible to people’s own communities, including in remote and rural areas.

9. Ensure that health information and services are age- and gender-sensitive.

10. Provide information about healthcare in multiple, accessible formats.

**D. Education**

1. With up to 1.6 billion children locked out of education recognise that disabled children, girls and poor children were least likely to continue learning or to return to school.

2.Governments need to make every effort to get all children back to school

3.Develop inclusive and engaging teaching to meet children where they are in terms of learning

4.Strengthen education workforce with teachers leading child-centred teams drawing together parents and community to enhance learning

5.Expand the scope of education technology to provide teacher training and learning at home in future lockdowns.

6. Ensuring all learners get access to online or radio learning.

7. Protect and enhance funding especially for reasonable accommodations and support for disabled learners.

8. Mobilise international resources to fill the resource gap internationally to achieve SDG 4 has increased to $150 to $450 billion.

9. Cancel loans and debt servicing to low income countries

10. Improve organisation focused on learner’s achievements at every level.

**Note** This list of requirements draws on the recent report of the **COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitoring Group** <https://integratedcarefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Disability-Rights-During-the-Pandemic-report-web.pdf>

**And**

**Save Our Futures White: Paper Averting An Educational Catastrophe For The World’s Children** <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/save-our-future-averting-education-catastrophe-world-s-children#:~:text=The%20white%20paper%2D%2D%2DSave,the%20international%20community%20commit%20to%3A&text=Focus%20education%20technology%20where%20it,technology%20continues%20to%20exacerbate%20inequality> .