Friday, 26th March, 2021

CDPF SEMINAR MODULE 6B

RICHARD: Good afternoon, good evening. Morning everybody. It's good to see you all again, Richard Rieser, General Secretary of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum and with me today are Sarah Kamau, our Acting Chair from Kenya and on audio, because she's had, she didn't want to do a video because she's not allowed to look at anything because of an eye injury, is Sruti, our Vice Chair. We have various film keeps and in innovation that started last week that's grown this week, we have got talking heads from you, the participants three of you have sent things in. I don't want to be inundated for next week, but next week's theme is stigma, but lots of themes restricted to 90 seconds, we will have to make restrictions if a lot of them come in, particularly if there are learning points in there, I'll mention that again at the end. Okay, I'm going to put up the screen for today's seminar, which... I'll just go to the top one. Right, as you can see we are following up on the film which last week on environment and humanitarian situations and the course book. We also sent you out a piece of work to get you ready for today which we'll come to in about 20 minutes, 25 minutes through this to get, so that what you did on that should help you to do the answers on the chat. So without more ado I'd like to hand over to our Acting Chair, Sarah Kamau, to do the introductions.

SARAH: Hello everybody. I want to introduce this session on humanitarian situation and by quoting a quote from the UN Secretary General, António Gutterres, that he made on the 26th February 2021. In this quote he said, "2021 is a make or break year to confront the global climate emergency. The science is clear to limit global." ‑‑ Richard there are some things I cannot see at the end.

RICHARD: Oh!

SARAH: Yeah, where our...

RICHARD: There is nothing on my screen blocking it?

SARAH: Yeah, the screen where...

RICHARD: What can't you read?

SARAH: Okay, "2021 is a make or break year to confront the global climate emergency", I can't see behind it, but I can see, "Science is clear to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°. We must cut global emissions by 45% by 2030, from 2010 levels. Today's interim report from the UNFCCC is a red alert for our planet. It shows governments are nowhere near the level of ambition needed to limit climate change to 1.5° and to meet the global, the goals of the Paris Agreement. The major emitters must step up with." ‑‑ I can't see that.

RICHARD: Much more ambitious emissions‑‑‑

SARAH: Ambitious emissions reductions targets for 2030 in their nationally determined contributions well before the November UN climate conference in Glasgow." This is what he says for humanitarian situations and issues of persons with disabilities response to humanitarian situations are very much affected by climate change impacts. That's the introduction. Welcome to this course. How should disabled people and DPOs and allies prepare for this now? It's what we are going to say in there.

RICHARD: Yes.

SARAH: The module. Welcome Richard.

RICHARD: Do you want to read the next two? Strategies...

SARAH: I cannot see ‑‑ okay major strategies can be ‑‑ the black line is becoming thicker. Okay, now it's gone.

RICHARD: Strategies for disaster preparation.

SARAH: Strategies for disaster preparation. Major strategies can be grouped under three sections: Advance preparation for disaster, immediate response to a disaster, and post disaster recovery. In advanced preparation for disaster, key points for disaster planning for disabled people include equal access to shelter facilities. Equal access to e vaccination and transportation. Equal access to disaster clean‑up and number four, accessible shelters. This accessibility includes physical accessibility, accessibility to communication, and communication in alternative languages and formats. Accessible paths. Accessible toilets, at least one for such centres. Accessible sleeping equipment, that's the beds that are provided. Access to food and healthcare needs, and assistive devices, storage, and parking space. There is also access to power for people who need to recharge power devices, especially assistive devices that need to be charged.

RICHARD: I'll just move that bar at the bottom.

SARAH: Yeah, the bar is ‑‑ end‑to‑end early warning systems deliver accurate warning information of potential hazards dependably and in a timely manner to both authorities and a population at risk, in order to prepare them for the danger and act accordingly to mitigate or avoid it.

RICHARD: There is one more page of it. I'll move it down. This is tedious with this screen. So, immediate response.

SARAH: Yeah, on the immediate response to a disaster. We have: 1, disabled people and other at‑risk groups need to be accommodated first not last. 2, development of an end‑to‑end early warning system is fundamental to save lives when disasters strike. Developing and maintaining all feasible channels of open communication within and across vulnerable groups. I can't see the words, but I see, "Groups."

RICHARD: Within and across vulnerable groups.

SARAH: Within and across vulnerable groups. Early warning systems should be accessible for disabled people and other groups, especially for those who are deaf and deafblind or have learning difficulties. Transportation ‑‑ establishment of a 24‑hour hotline for disabled people to call the local government, councils. Transportation during rescue must also be accessible. Then post‑disaster recovery. We need rapid assessment of socio‑economic status of all disabled people impacted by the disaster. Number 2, livelihood assessment, destruction, harmed by disaster, support needed to re‑establish... jobs.

RICHARD: Yeah.

SARAH: Number 3: Stable, reliable, continuous, easy to repay, micro‑financing systems to be available in local areas. Number 4, ensure that reconstructed infrastructure is not only more resistant to future hazards, but is also inclusive of vulnerable populations including disabled people, elderly people, and pregnant women. Disaster recovery efforts should strive to improve accessibility for disabled people.

RICHARD: Okay. Thank you very much Sarah. I want to just say something before we press on about this word, "Vulnerable." That appears several times in this list. I left it there because it's taken from some guidance produced by NGOs, not by DPOs I might say. The word, "Vulnerable", by and large we in the disability movement don't like it because it puts the blame, if you like, on us for the barriers which are created because people haven't thought ahead about what we might need to avoid us being put in a risk situation. Therefore we ‑‑ throughout the COVID pandemic we have rejected the word "vulnerable" and said that we are groups that are at high‑risk. I think the same thinking applies here in disasters. Nevertheless, we thought we would get those out there, which are if you like the guidance of what should be happening and then look at some of the reasons in a minute of how that has been applied. To start with then, some key facts about the climate crisis. Most of the increase in global temperatures since 1950 has been caused by human activity. So, while there are some causes of climate change that are natural, like volcanic eruptions and we have had in the past whole years, tens of years where there is a big ‑‑ Krakatoa, when that went up in the South Pacific in under the weight [inaudible] there was much lower temperatures throughout the world, less sunlight, and more rain. Particles in the atmosphere does make a difference, but generally it's the global warming and the rise of CO² that is causing the problems now. So, human ‑‑ burning of fossil fuels is the main reason for that. Just so people, so people hear that, do we understand what it means? It means that for millions of years ‑‑ you have to believe in and accept the theory of evolution ‑‑ that for millions of years different animals and plant forms lived on the earth, long before mammals or human beings were around, and that many of these died living in swamp conditions, they put on a lot of growth as well as plants, fell over and were covered in sand and mud and then were compressed into rock and became coal and oil. That's how it came. What you have in that basically is the plant which can store the energy from the sun through photosynthesis, storing it and that becomes the fossil fuel energy that we use. When you burn that it releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. So if you have got millions and millions of years of the sun's energy being released in just a few years, that's why we have this build up in carbon dioxide and it can't escape the atmosphere and it stops heat going back into space and that is what is leading to global warming and to then the warming up of the planet. To add to that we have the removal of forests and trees. Forests and trees actually soak up carbon dioxide so that is acting, that is an extra effect on it. All of this releases greenhouse gases causing the global temperature to rise. Concentration of CO² in our atmosphere, as of May 2020 is the highest it's ever been in human time. The second fact I want to talk about is the average temperature of the earth is determined by the greenhouse effect and the gases that attract the heat in the atmosphere. When the sun passes through that was we're the greenhouse gases absorb the radiation and prevent the heat from leaving the atmosphere. So that's the greenhouse effect. Without greenhouse gases the temperature of the earth would be far too cool. We need the greenhouse effect, just not too much. We need it to stop harmful radiation coming in and also to keep heat in the atmosphere so it's not too cold otherwise, without the greenhouse gas, we might be more like the climate on Mars where it goes down to ‑200° or ‑300° Centigrade. When we add more gases to it, it becomes harmful and causes overheating. So this burning of fossil fuels but also the release of methane, which is partly caused by animals. Over the last 100 years the average temperature on the earth has warmed by about 1° Centigrade. In our day‑to‑day lives we wouldn't notice this, accept occasionally when it's very hot and we're having more periods like that the temperatures are continuing to rise according to those who gather the data on its currently countries around the world are working towards a target set out in Paris, which we heard about at the beginning there, that aims to keep the global temperature rise to 2° Centigrade, or if possible 1.5°. Now, with the start of industries that burned a lot of fossil fuels like the steam engines, the railways of the first wave of industrialisation, the second wave where we burnt a lot of hydrocarbons particularly plastic, making plastics and such like, we had added this huge amount to the planet and then driving cars, factories, trucks, factories producing this and aeroplanes. So driving a smarter car, electric car or by cycle, powered bicycle, doesn't use any of that if the electricity is generated by non‑fossil fuel means. Fourth question, United States is the second largest contributor to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the US only has 4.4% of the world's population, yet it produces 25% of the greenhouse gases. If everyone in the world burned fossil fuels and lived the way those in the US do it would take four Earth's, not one to have enough resources for us all. Out of 60 developed countries or developing countries on the OECD index, the United States is 58th. Australia is not far behind in being not very good at controlling greenhouse guys. India approved a lot recently and is 11th top of the league of improving. There is more carbon dioxide in the air today than at any point in the last 800,000 years, we can tell that from the fossil record so we know where that is coming from. Of course, this extra heating is causing the ice that poles and in the glaciers and the ice fields to melt. An example, Glacier National Park in Montana in the United States, was filled 150 glaciers, glaciers are compressed snow that moves very slowly down valleys. When the glaciers were recounted in 2017 the number had dropped to 26. This melting ice will cause the sea level to rise increasingly affect people that live in areas that depend on melt water from glaciers for drink water. It's estimated that 4.4 of the world's population extreme weather events. Okay. Next fact. Steep rising sea levels, it's estimated that sea level is expected to rise between 0.5 and 1.5m by the end of this century, in 79 years. There is diagram here, I'll explain it shows the coast, in land and then under the sea a yellow block rising up from left to right, first of all, in 2000, at the top in 2010 shows that the sea is at the coast and settlements above that are relatively safe apart from when there is a storm surge. As the sea level rises where we have built our houses and our settlements becomes increasingly more at risk. So, by 2050, the projected high tide level is right up next to the houses on the coast and the tomorrow surge is going in land past those villages. The cities beyond are not being reached, however by 2100, the projected high tide level is well above the settlement level of the coastal settlements and the cities in land are now actually getting storm surges, it's estimated by this time that half the world's population will be affected more than three and a half billion people. So the sea level has written by 19cms on average, since 1870, that's in 150 years, or 8 inches. It doesn't sound a lot, depending on tides and where you are in the world, it can be a big, big difference. Already, we have heard in the film, from Kiribas, the impact it's having there where there is likely to be mass migration, it's probably the first country that will have Thomas migrate somewhere else, Australia is being looked at for them to actually go to. Ray forest destruction, this is another cause of major carbon dioxide release. Trees and forests are known as carbon sinks, that is they hold a lot of carbon in their leaves, trunk, and roots. When humans cut down rainforest they destroy by wildfires, large amounts of carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere this, as we have seen contributes to the greenhouse guys. 11% of all greenhouse cast emissions caused by humans is due to deforestation. Tropical forests are our incredibly effective at storing carbon providing at least a third of the mitigation action needed to prevent the worse climate changes in the world. Yet nature‑based solutions receive only 3% of all the funding that there is in the world at the moment for preventing climate ‑‑ right, now, Article in the Guardian you can look at it online and the reference is there from some vets and other statisticians looked at three and a half thousand events, climate events and deforestation and linked it to disease. What they are saying, it's pretty unequivocal, cutting down forests, and natural biodiversity, even if you replant it was soy fields, eucalyptus or something else, you cut down the biodiversity, what this research is showing that came out only this week, is that that increases the cross‑over from viruses in the wild to the human population and it also increases the most dangerous mosquitoes that carry the most dangerous form of Malaria and the things that kill those mosquitoes off are less. So to put it bluntly, chopping down forests will lead to more COVID pandemic, SARS, bola, HIV are all viruses that have crossed over from the animal population into human beings, it's all happened in the last 50 years as we are cutting down the forests. In addition, malaria, one of the main causes of disability in many parts of the world is on the increase. So, we need to really see the link between the causes of disability and what is happening in the environment. Another area that is affected are coral reefs being destroyed we might not think this is important, but the coral reefs are the richest part of the biome, where fishes and shellfish and other thing live which we often are dependent on, in the last 30 years half the world's coral reefs have died. Human activity as well, as increased temperatures contributed to coral reef breaching. What is this? It's when the allergy that live in the coral reef and which, algae that live in the coral reef and which live alongside, the tiny little creatures that form these chalk that makes the reef, they die. The fish and other coral that make this their home, to 2017 breaching of the great barrier reef of the East Coast of Australia, combined with the impacts of cyclones killed the coral. It's more effective than human made intervention. In the Maldives one of the member countries preserving the natural coral reefs is four times cheaper than building sea walls and maybe that's what needs to be done in other places if we can possibly do it, it will halt the impacts of the sea rise. Global temperatures increasing, so all societies will find it harder. It's estimated that there will be far more refugees by 2050, up to 200 million people will have to move from their homes because of these impacts. Climate change will increase these risks. They are not shared equally they are coming in coastal communities, poorer communities where there is less possibility to build flood defences and NASA data shows that 2019 temperatures were 1.8° Fahrenheit nearly a whole degree Centigrade warmer than the 20th Century average, so this is very recent. In fact the five warmest years from 1880 to 2019, that's 139 years, occurred in the last 6 years. Roughly 3.2 million people are currently impacted by land degradation world‑wide. Restoration is critical, but it will actually have a massively improved cost effect if we do it, for every dollar invested it saves $10 and makes benefits, benefits populations. All of this is leading to more civil society unrest, more land grabbing more ‑‑ I'm not saying it all down to that, a lot of it is down to ideology and we have to learn from the human rights framework to respect each other's views and not fight each other when we have different views, but the price tag of dealing with all of this is actually very small. GDP is the total wealth measured by anything that is paid for in terms of receipts and payments. It only ‑‑ only 0.2% of all the GDP in the world, 140 billion a year is needed to bring in the changes that are necessary to bring in non‑carbon generation of electricity to cut down aeroplanes so they are powered by electricity rather than fuel. Lobby your governments, it's one of the key issues that we as disability activists need to do from here on into November this year, so that our governments go to the cap 26 conference prepared to give a greater part of the global wealth that they control to controlling climate change. If we don't, as António Gutterres said, this is a "Make or break year." To reinforce this point I'm going to show you a film which David Attenborough is commentating on, made for the world wildlife fund [Video Playing]

GEMMA: Richard.

RICHARD: Yes.

GEMMA: Richard, hi. The slides are stuck. We are only viewing the one where people are up to their knees in the water on the, it talks about the US being the contributor.

RICHARD: Are they moving now?

GEMMA: Er... no, not yet.

RICHARD: How about the film?

GEMMA: We can hear the film.

RICHARD: All right.

GEMMA: But we are still‑‑‑

RICHARD: I think I'm going to have to come out of the PowerPoint and go into it. I can't think of what else to do.

GEMMA: Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you for pointing that out.

GEMMA: Thank you to grace, Joseph and others for pointing that out.

RICHARD: Sorry if you missed that the PowerPoint on will be up on the website and the film will be there, does that mean that the filming is not there either.

GEMMA: Not sure.

RICHARD: Umm...

GEMMA: You might just need to nudge it through. Here we go, I can see the film now, yeah. [Video Playing] how do we create a future in which both people and nature can thrive? This is the biggest question of our times. In the next few decades we need to do something unprecedented, achieve a sustainable existence on earth but how do we do it? We can start by understanding how we got to this point. 20,000 years ago humankind consisted of less than a million hunter‑gatherers across the global. We lived within the resources on offer. In balance with nature. A strategy that could, theoretically, last forever. But it wasn't an easy life. Nature determined our survival. We used our unique minds to challenge that reality. We learnt how to tame the wild, get more from the environment. Our population boomed, as did our demands. Every time a new problem arose we solved it, altering earth's entire surface in the process. Now we have changed the world so profoundly scientists have decided that earth has entered a new phase of its existence, welcome to the Anthropocene. The age of humans. The tables have turned. We now determine nature's survival. The planet is ours. There is just one problem we're now totally out of balance with nature and unless we get our balance back this age of humans is due to be short‑lived. So how do we deal with this problem? When you boil it down there is one underlying big issue. Our planet is becoming less wild. Our species has cleared three trillion trees, cultivated half its fertile land and now fishes across most of the ocean. In the last 50 years the populations of wild animals have reduced by 60%. We have replaced them with ourselves and our domesticated animals and plants. Today we and the animals we raise account for 96% of the mass of mammals and 70% of the birds on earth. There is very little wild left. This biodiversity loss is not just a tragedy, it's the single biggest problem we face. Without biodiversity the world, as we know it, doesn't work. Our planet needs its wild spaces, everyone one is a component in the global machine. Only if they are all healthy can the planet run smoothly. This wild world, a less wild world is less able to provide our needs, less able to maintain dependable weather and seasons, less able to absorb our impact. Biodiversity equals stability and stability is what we need most of all. Can we turn this situation around? Can we re‑wild the world? Well, may be, due to one key change. As societies develop something is happening that has never happened before. People are having fewer children. Globally since the year 2000, the number of people under 16 years old has hardly changed. The main reason our population is still rising is because people are living longer. If this continues our population may finally stop growing by the turn of the century. By investing in education and women's rights and raising people out of poverty, we could bring about 'peak' human even sooner. This changes everything. It gives us the opportunity we need to regain our balance. The plan for our planet is remarkably simple. Reduce our impact by making sure that everything we do we can do forever. For the biggest gains we could concentrate our efforts on four goals: phase out fossil fuels and replacing them with renewables. This will not only slow the warming of the planet and the acidification of the ocean but it will lead to clean air for all of us. Upgrading to efficient food production and reducing our consumption of meat. We will require far less space to provide for ourselves, leaving more for grasslands, reducing deforestation and our demand for fresh water, and feeding more people with healthier more affordable food. Working together to properly manage our oceans. A global network of 'no fish zones', and a treaty on the use of international waters would restore the health of the ocean so it actually produces more fish for us all to eat. Working hard to keep hold of the wild populations we still have, encouraging nature wherever we can. In the ocean, on land we know longer need, and even in our cities. If we make these changes we will be a long way to becoming a species in balance with nature ones again. We will have taken a remarkable journey from a mere people struggling to survive to several billion living long, healthy lives on a stable planet able to provide for all our needs. Only at that point will the Anthropocene, the age of humans be truly underway. At that point we will be proud to call it 'our planet'.

RICHARD: Okay. So some very powerful words there. I sent you all something in the week to get you thinking about these issues, you had a sheet to think about, we're on that seven photographs describe a flood in a Haitian city, hurricane typhoon devastating trees and houses, wildfires, mudslides, desertification, which isn't just caused by climate change but over grazing. Loss of habitat through trees and deforestation and rising sea level. So that's A, floods, B hurricane, C wildfires, D mudslides, E, desertification, and F loss of habitat and G rising sea levels. What I would like you to do now in the chat, we're going to do it in two sections, answer 1 and 2 first. What are the main or is the main threat to disabled people in pictures A to G? And 2, one thing to prevent the threat in A to G? So, if you concentrate on that and then we'll look at the wider issues in a minute. So I'm going to give you a minute to get those answers into the chat and if you have got interesting points to make, put them in. We may come to one or two of you to explain it to us. So what is the main threat to disabled people in the scenarios A to G, which I've outlined above, and one thing to prevent the threat to us as disabled people in A to G. Thank you, I'll be quite now.

RICHARD: Okay Gemma, I think we'll start having a look at what people have put in.

GEMMA: Okay. Hi everybody. We have got a lot of people saying, "Flood", out of all the answers we have got, most of them are flood. Nadia who is in the UK, said he also thinks wildfire. Floods and habitation and Elizabeth said, "Rising sea level."

RICHARD: Right.

GEMMA: Lesley‑Ann, in Trinidad, floods and number 2 is to build flood defences.

RICHARD: Flood defences.

GEMMA: Okay we've got some more coming in, disabled people being stranded and disaster relief strategies that take account of disabled people. Dorothy in Uganda said, "Lack of inclusion in the response", is the main threat. Floods and hurricanes from Emma in Dominica. Flood barriers and drainage. Liziwe in South Africa we have heard from before, the threat is disabled people will not be notified in time for the circumstances in A to G, thus stopping them responding quickly to the type of disasters. Prevention could be specialised alert systems. Joy, Nigeria said, building of proper drainage systems. Got ‑‑ build flood bridges, like of awareness among the duty bearers how to floods and hurricanes. Rachel in South Africa, all of them are a threat if there is no access to information, evacuation can be difficult. Amy, in Canada, disabled people not having a way to voice their immediate needs. Comprehensive plans by the government to prioritise disabled people in case of emergency.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Umm...

RICHARD: That's a good crop there. I think we'll go on to take the others and then maybe come to one or two people. I think you have started on the immediate things there a lack of information, disabled people not included in the planning, not thought about. All of these things are a threat and I think that's the right answer, depending on where you are in the world, but basically any disaster situation is impacting on disabled people more in many ways than others because we are less able to move away, be aware of what is going on, have our needs met. So I think that summarises what people have said, but then on 3 and 4, 3 one thing we could do to reduce climate change that causes these. We, as disabled people, what good we do most to change this. What are some of the other causes of these situations which are not directly climate‑based. I'll explain that when people come up with some answers to that. So, number 3, one thing we could do as disabled people to reduce climate change causes, how can we influence that? And 4, other causes of humanitarian situations.

RICHARD: Okay, I think we need to get two or three minutes of other answers and then move on.

GEMMA: Okay, so starting witness number 3, Kingsley in Nigeria said, abide doing the UN law on climate change and public sensitisation. Dorothy in Uganda said preserving nature and being responsible for our actions. Simon in Kenya said, reduction of greenhouse gases. I think Nadia said, eat vegetarian meals. Let's see... number 4, if we are doing that as well, wars, migration and poverty are three other humanitarian things. We could ‑‑ raise awareness amongst other disabled persons about climate change.

RICHARD: Yes, that's what I was thinking of. You know, what can we do, we need to get more disabled people off just thinking, oh we're just worried about access or getting the bus or having accommodation. We have to think wider as a disability movement, we have to get ourselves into civil society campaigns. Two reasons why: one, because it will add weight to it, but two, because those campaigns aren't particularly aware of our needs and they need to become aware of them, so it's a two‑way process. Any more on there.

GEMMA: Yep, yep, campaign for electric accessible free public transport, lesson your carbon footprint by riding together with neighbours to perhaps work or a lift clubs, cheaper and more safer. Create awareness on disadvantages of global warming. Stop dumping garbage and waste in the waterways. Have more disabled activists raising awareness and fighting for climate change, they can raise awareness of the issues disabled people‑‑‑

RICHARD: Who is saying that?

GEMMA: Grace in the UK.

RICHARD: Okay grace, do you want to come in on that, why you think it's so important?

GEMMA: Grace are you unable ‑‑ great.

>> I just feel like we don't hear very many disabled activists standing up for climate change, well I haven't heard of very many, we obviously have Greta Thunberg, but I feel like when they are trying to fix the issues of climate change they don't think about the impact of it and people with disabilities are in a good position to show an example of what can happen as a result of climate change, I think we just need to see more of it.

RICHARD: Yeah, I think you are absolutely right. A good example of that is the Glasgow coalition for disabled people having done a lot of really good work trying the COVID‑19 to demonstrate, I think they have got 5,000 people's views that they put forward, which has influenced the Scottish Government very significantly. So, where we as Disabled People's Organisations take up these issues and get all our members involved it can make a big difference, so thank you for that grace. I should just mention before we move on that another cause of humanitarian situations which is not directly related to the climate is that we live on a planet that is not dead yet in geological terms. We have plates of the surface that are moving. Some new ones being created and others slowly going underneath. Most of that happens in a timescale that is well beyond our lives, but when the tensions build up one plate against the other, suddenly they will shudder and give and that's what creates earthquakes and that's led to major disaster situations. The earthquake under the sea will cause a tsunami of tidal wave and that has led to major humanitarian situations, and as one plate goes under another, it ‑‑ the chemicals that are released into the earth's subsurface try to escape to the surface forming volcanoes, which also cause major problems. So, those are not things that we can do anything about except for early warning systems and that in hot spots people really shouldn't be living or their houses should be adapted so they can withstand the shock waves. Just as, in cyclone‑prone areas the houses should be built of brick and so on. So I just wanted to add that before we move on. What I want to do now is look at some examples of responses to situations. We're going to start in Bangladesh, in 2009, the centre for disability and development a Bangladesh NGO developed a working partnership with GBM and a local NGO to enable disabled people in their communities to cope with effective flooding and climate change at the household level the project partners provided targeted support for disabled people to access livelihood opportunities and register for government social protection. The addition until income enables disabled people to buy materials to raise the level of their houses and take measures to protect their water supply by installing concrete tube wells. These are really concrete things that they enable the communities to do, at the community level the project partners supported the establishment of self‑help groups of disabled people and community‑run Disaster Management Committees, these committees engage with the local government run disaster management committees to implement the plans in the community, which had come from the community. So, what was very important in that project, this is also about the same project, was developing the literacy and the self‑confidence of disabled people to run these committees and build their capacity the project partners overcame this by adapting the training and communication materials to simplify the language and use more images. Also they recruited staff from the local community to conduct the training in the local dialect. The community‑based Disaster Management Committee provided a critical structure. This model which has been developed over the last 20 years is really what we should be promoting. Community‑based disaster manage committees that have involved local disabled people. So, strong self‑help groups, there is a diagram on the right says, 5 key areas. Self‑help groups with government, for disability inclusion. Disability considered in local disaster plans. Schools, in the area, raising awareness. Hosting drills and providing shelter for the whole community. Substantial resilient livelihoods are developed. So that's the model. We have now got a little film about how that worked from CBM Australia who were part of recording that. [Captioned Video].

RICHARD: There is a bit about that film that I'll emphasise the flag were orange with a black square in the middle and 1 two or three were raised in villages to alert people of the risk threat, secondly there was a blind guy there using a mobile phone [Inaudible] so I think some useful lessons coming out of Bangladesh there. I now want to play a message from our Acting Vice‑Chair Dr Sruti Mohaptara from Swabhiman Odisha in Eastern India ‑‑ I'm pleased to welcome Dr Sruti Mohaptara ‑‑ sorry, I've done it again. I've got a record button so we can record this. I'm just trying to get the sound up so people know why I'm fiddling around. There we go, okay. [Video Playing] record button so we can record this.

SRUTI: Yes okay.

RICHARD: Okay, I'm pleased to welcome Dr Sruti Mohaptara from Swabhiman and also Vice Chair of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, to tell us a bit about the impact on disabled people, of humanitarian situations. I know that you and your organisation have worked in this area for some years. So what you are saying is based on your first-hand experience. So take it away Sruti.

SRUTI: Thank you Richard, thank you so much. My involvement started in the year 1999, when a cyclone washed away a third district of the area it was so devastating it was called a super cyclone, after we were involved in flood responses, many cyclones and then finally the COVID‑19 pandemic, each of the disaster which has happened, has brought to the fore that somehow, not ‑‑ somehow the needs of people with disabilities they get overlooked, or we can say that they really don't get as much [Inaudible] as the other groups like women, children, the groups are being considered even now you find a lot of focus on transgenders and tribal communities, but when it comes to people with disabilities we are noticing that in the humanitarian responses. So when people with disabilities they get impacted by a cyclone, or a flood, or a pandemic, the impact is many folds larger, as compared to the other people. For many there is a loss of livelihood, there is a loss of afford ability, loss of housing and many such issues, but when it comes to people with disabilities the biggest challenge is assistive devices, accessibility and reaching, and being able to reach out to the places where these responses are either being planned or are being distributed. You see, in the year 2006, ever since we have had the CRPD, government are trying to become conscious of this fact and they are trying to bring about changes in their policies, but if you look at it very thoroughly we will find that in most of the cases where ‑‑ in all the stages of following... following a disaster, the first phase is always rescue, the second is relief, the third is restoration, and the fourth is building back. In restoration and rehabilitation. In all these phases we have found in our different case studies that we did, or we experienced on the ground, success has come for people with disabilities when either persons with ‑‑ disabled people or Disabled People's Organisations have been involved in the initial process like the advance preparation for a disaster, like creating access to shelter. In the immediate response to the disaster like ensuring that apart from food and clothes that people also receive batteries for their hearing‑aids, batteries for their operate ed wheelchairs, or they get canes and crutches and all those basic needs are generally getting lost. Actually it is not possible also in a rush when you are being rescued, it's not possible to go around looking for the assistive device when you are in a hurry, somehow, to leave that place. In the post‑disaster recovery also, we have seen for example, in India, we have seen that whenever the DPOs have intervened, whenever disabled people have directly involved in the process, the building back has been accessible. The building back has been more affordable, and the building back has been inclusive.

RICHARD: Okay, just a couple more examples. On the Vanuatu and indeed Tonga, two Pacific island countries, Tropical Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu, a Category 5 cyclone in 2015 that time the strongest storm to ever reach the Pacific shores, despite I think winds of up to 160 miles an hour, despite the efforts of DPOs and the Gender Protection Cluster and the situation of disabled people following the cyclones were generally not captured informal mainstream assessments led by the National Disaster Office. To fill this gap a multi‑stakeholder group in collusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, collaborated to conduct a comprehensive survey. That's what I want to talk about here. It's these surveys, we heard it mentioned in the film from Bangladesh, that are really important to go around the locality that the disaster preparation committee does a survey, a household survey to find out where all the disabled people live with different types of impairments, which require different responses. The survey used the Washington Group questions. Now we will explain in much more detail in module 12 which I hope you will tune into, because it is important that we all understand how to gather data correctly, the findings of the survey provided evidence to demonstrate the meaningful participation of disabled people and to provide accessible evacuation centres and shelters. Making time for training and testing can be difficult in disaster circumstances, but data collection was essential in various cyclones that have occurred. I'll go on to the questions. These are the Washington Group questions, this is a short series there are a longer series they have been developed, basically, to ask what restrictions people have rather than what they can't do. Therefore, from that, it's a social model type approach that's taken. So, for instance, six questions in the short set are, do you have a difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses? Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps? Do you have difficulty with self‑care, such as washing all over or dressing? Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing‑aid? Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating? Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example, understanding or being understood. These are without aids and appliances, it's the important point. There are changes that we can make, but we want know what people are affected. Certainly in a disaster situation, as Sruti just said, you can lose your aids and a plans, we need to know who needs this without their aids and appliances. Okay. Humanity and inclusion supported disabled people in Kenya to work it in the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, the assessments are conducted with the Disability Inclusion Committee set up in the refugee camp, findings were presented to the agencies responsible and the result sing ‑‑ the repatriation desk, the construction accessible toilets, recruitment of secondary school teachers who knew how to teach inclusively. So, overcoming challenges before the establishment of these committees, the perspective of disabled people were not considered by the camp management. Disabled people were perceived as beggars and often not allowed to even enter certain parts for distribution. The key lesson participation of disabled people in training, monitoring, coordination meetings increases the impact of advocacy around accessibility and inclusion. Where are we going... sorry, I'm going backwards, I need to be going forwards. I'm now going to show a film about a refugee camp which has been caused by the humanitarian situation caused by the Burmese government's persecution of the Muslim minority, the Rohingya and I'll turn the sound down. [Captioned Video] turn the sound down so I can ‑‑ I'm going to go back to the beginning. Okay. [Captioned Video] Cox's Bazaar is on the boundary of Bangladesh and Myanamar.

       (audio Description).

I think okay, so I think the same lessons we learned in disasters also apply in refugee camps, so we can take that. So now we're going to the second chat session of the seminar. Two more questions, 5 and 6. 5, what do you think are the three most important things to do for displaced disabled people in camps or refuges? 6, what else should we do as disabled people to reduce humanitarian situations? So, two questions there. Number 5, what do you think are the three most important things to do for displaced disabled people in camps or refuges? And 6, what else should we do as disabled people and through our DPOs to reduce the, these humanitarian situations? I'll be quite again for a minute to give you a chance to get your points in the chat. I think we have enough time to take a few people actually speaking on these. So Gemma shall we start on number 5. What do you think are the three most important things to do for displaced disabled people in camps or refuges?

GEMMA: Okay, they are still coming in, but I'll go through them. Amy in Canada said, make sure they have access to their support people, family, friends if needed. Make sure their interpreters, having people to advocate for disabled people if needed. DPOs and Legal Aid. Umm... meeting medical needs. They need shelter, food, clothing, and water. Relief, healthcare, mental support. Provide their basic needs, meet their healthcare needs provide outlets to charge their devices. Create awareness, provide accessible services, e.g. Toilets and conduct a survey to understand further localisation needs.

RICHARD: Is that all from Amy?

GEMMA: No, sorry! Sorry, that was very bad of me sorry everybody else, that wasn't just Amy. That last one was Eric. I mentioned also from Laura, Lesley‑Ann, umm... and Kapanza.

RICHARD: Okay, carry on.

GEMMA: Okay.

RICHARD: Would, I would suggest if there are any new ones come up mention, if you can remember the ones you have already said, rather than repeating the same things.

GEMMA: Yeah, okay, hold on. Provision of appropriate assistive devices.

RICHARD: Yeah.

GEMMA: Accessible bathrooms, assistive devices registered so that they can be identified. Umm... creating a safe space for disabled people, give them accessibility aids and support a person's healthcare support. Basic needs, education, and good policies. Restore them what they have lost, building hope because most of them lost hope. Access to their assistive devices, access to medical care. Offer basic life skills and enhance self‑advocacy capacity. Umm... these are all for number 5. First and most importantly, they should be provided the necessary where‑with‑all in the camp that is necessary for survival. Funds hood be made available through stakeholders and government, intervention, and proper education on how to manage the disaster must be impacted.

RICHARD: Yeah. Now, the education, I think, is quite important because one of the things that many, many countries as reported in their reports as we have talked about in session 2 and so on and we'll look at in unit 9, there are segregated schools, special schools for disabled chin and mainstream schools for others. Camps do not have the facility to do that, therefore there is a particular bonus of developing inclusive education and as we saw in the film from Cox's Bazaar there was an attempt for the taped and non‑disabled children to get to know each other and work together, that's one of the good things that can happen. There are a lot of bad things that have led to people being in the camps but it can actually lead to going forward with people realising that disabled and non‑disabled children can be educated. Together. The staff need to be trained to do that and organisations like UNICEF that produce school in a box, those boxes need to have a range of things in them, which will mean that the they meet the needs of a whole range of children, rather than sort of say these are 8 to 10‑year olds and they will need this sort of equipment, no they won't, they will need all sorts of things if they need to learn about shapes, geometric shapes, they need to not just learn the abstract of it they need to have shapes they can feel so a wider range of children will be involved. If it's number work, they need number line and number square and number bricks that they can put together so that they can all learn a number, the number rules. Those sorts of things. When we are looking at a topic there needs to be a range of materials that can support them. That's the sorts of things that need to be thought about in camp the second thing is security from, for women and girls from gender attack, violence. Because social structures are often broken down it can be that in camps people are more vulnerable, so those who are running camp need to be very aware of this and create space for women‑only spaces where they can come and talk about these things so that the perpetrators are actually found and punished. Those were two things I would add to that. Let's go on to the wider question now, number 6, what else should we do as disabled people to reduce humanitarian situations.

GEMMA: Okay. So, Joseph said, be that forefront of fighting for our rights umm... then... teach the workers ‑‑ this is Abios, teach the workers at these places about what persons with disabilities need. Laura said, make the accessibility to access humanitarian response. Ethel in Malawi, reasonable accommodation in displaced areas.

RICHARD: Let's go to Ethel if she's available, we haven't had anyone from Malawi on this yet.

GEMMA: Ethel, are you able to join us?

>> Yes, I'm here.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Yay.

RICHARD: Great to hear from you Ethel, can you tell us what sort of reasonable accommodations you are talking about?

>> Mostly in Malawi, when disaster comes, it's mostly because of floods, it's the common disaster we usually face in Malawi, then it's card for persons with a disability to live in the camps where people are rest, because they are not necessarily facilities that, that can help them to live properly like any other person. Therefore, when I'm referring to reasonable accommodation they should provide facilities that can help persons with disabilities to live in such, in such places properly.

RICHARD: Brilliant. Okay. Thank you for that point, very useful. Have we got any more to do? Just a couple more and then we will need to go into the last bits to round up.

GEMMA: Yep, this is a good one?

RICHARD: Yeah.

GEMMA: Being part of advocates for responsible use of the natural environment. That's Abdul Wahab. I'm afraid I don't know... Abdul.

RICHARD: Can you get Abdul on?

GEMMA: Abdul Wahab are you able to talk to us?

>> Yes, I'm with you.

GEMMA: Hey, there we go.

RICHARD: Hi Abdul, where are you from?

>> I'm in Lagos, Nigeria.

RICHARD: Lagos, okay. Tell us what you were meaning by that please.

>> Yeah, like we said a short while ago, many of us are not involved in organisations that advocating for the use of the environment, so when we get involved, we have our own peculiar surroundings that may come when there are disasters like this, this can be factored into all the plans that are made to mitigate the effects of natural disasters on persons, on disabled people, you know what I mean.

RICHARD: Okay. That's something that you are going to do more of now, as a result of this, these sessions.

>> Absolutely, absolutely, I'm going to do it for organisations that I'm involved in, in this country for responsible environment and we will begin to work with them and learn on the job, as advocates for our group.

RICHARD: Good. So I hope that the key learning point of today has been that environmental issues and resolving them is a real responsibility for us as the disability movement. It not someone else's responsibility. We have a double whammy in the impact on just and then therefore we have to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. I was going to come on now to a, the three vox‑pops that people have sent in. The first one is Curt Allan [Video Playing] I am Curt Allan I'm [Inaudible] I'm visually impaired in my borough, it's highly industrialised with LMG plants and [Inaudible] both land and marine, the environmental impact from those operations and land erosion and both on land and in the sea, the impact that it's, that that has on me is not, I cannot practice my favourite pastime which is having a good sea bath, because accessibility to my favourite bathing area is very difficult and at times when I couldn't have a sea bath, I was bathing some time in oil, because I can't see the oil slick on the water. In my community, it has a population of approximately 32,000 people with six, approximately 600 being disabled persons. Also in my area we have a community emergency response team to deal with disasters, disasters that may take place in the community, but one of the setbacks is it only have one disabled person, that is me. So I'm now lobbying for the inclusion of more disabled persons to be trained and to be part of the Emergency Reduction Assessment Committee.

RICHARD: Thank you for that, very useful. So some of the things that go alongside what Curt was saying there, are we need to keep ourselves informed of the issues that will impact on us and our lives. We need to join, joint disaster preparedness committees, carry out situation and analysis such as was done in Tonga and Vanuatu and in Bangladesh and India. Identify potential threats, get local DPOs involved in disaster prevention and challenge climate change. Get disaster prevention measures in place. Know where disabled people live in your locality and what their access needs are and make sure rescue services have this information. Raise issues of concern with elected representatives. If you live in a risk area get homes more resistant to floods, earthquakes and so on and make sure all plans for evacuation and refuges take account of disabled people and their needs. Clearly around, the world things are improving. Let's hear now ‑‑ oh let's see here, see, and hear from an interpreter what Akimpelumi, from Nigeria has sent into us. I'll turn the sound down so we can concentrate on his signing with a voice over. [Video Playing] Akimpelumi Teniola from Nigeria. That's coming. [Video Playing] hi I'm going to talk about the climate change and how they would affect people with disabilities. There are a number of factors, but primarily how the weather can affect us for instance rain. While there is a shared desire and prayers for rain we do not want Monsoon rain with strong winds which can cause floods, we would prefer the normal amount of rain. I remember the awful rain we experienced back in 2010, especially where I live, as a place where I live is among mountains and there are no efficient gutter systems. In my garden where I have my own... I think vision cat, the flooding had impacted on just and they were all gone after the flooding they were my source of income and contributed to my economy in the sum of 3 to 5,000, the heavy rain washed that all away, we live in fear of the climate changes as even the minor changes can result in the loss of our source of income. It's worrying the governments need to get together with the developed countries to discuss and plan some sort of solution to ensure that the excess water is channelled away from causing floods.

RICHARD: Thank you. Our last video is from Shtruti Singh from deafblind Sense in India. I'll just play that and hopefully the sound will be back. [Video Playing] hello, everyone I'm [Inaudible] I'm from India. First thing I would like to share disaster, when disaster does happen we are not able to access the information on time and then the information is non‑accessible. So, this, even, it as shown us that people with disability are at greater risk. I will explain about the, when it rains heavy I'm not able to go from place to place, from road, because many times the manhole is partially open and it puts us at greater risk of falling inside. Even fire when it happens, we're not able to see the... but I smell it, it is stronger and things by that time. Also, when flood happen I was not able to, understand what was happening even when people round me are running around me and I was not able to understand why things were happening, because I was not able to see anything. This, all this puts us at a greater risk.

RICHARD: Very good. So we have three different perspectives there, which I think were very useful. We'll move on. I'd like to call on Sarah now, first of all before she reads this out to tell us a little bit about disasters in Kenya and what is happening there, as we have had quite a wide range of examples from across the morning wealth, the Pacific India, Bangladesh, Caribbean and now let's have a perspective from Africa as well. So, umm... Sarah, would you like to start on that and then read these lessons to be learned out after that.

SARAH: Thank you Richard. Yeah, I would like to say that in situations of humanitarian response and risks, Kenya has also had its own ups and downs, like earlier mentioned about the camps, the refugee camps in Kukuma and Dadaab, places where people have needed the humanitarian evacuation response have been taken and these camps may not be very accessible to persons with disabilities, they have very many people under there is need for, for even the amenities there to include amenities there to include, disability‑friendly amenities. We have in Kenya for example, the climate Change Act we have the disaster, we have the disaster management authority which deals with issues of responding when disaster comes, we have issues of flooding, for example, which requires persons with disabilities to be evacuated, and maybe put in evacuation centres, which then should be made accessible for persons with disabilities, with all the amenities, especially the basic needs like toilets, bathrooms, access to water available and accessible for persons with disabilities. So, some counties have also taken up the Act and have cascaded it down to their counties and have acted and we know that there is also a directorate of climate change that is hosted that Ministry of The environment and they have a response strategy that is also followed and within it measures to ensure that persons with disabilities are included. Implementation will have to be more seriously looking into, because when such disasters happen a persons with disabilities are forgotten or neglected in the process.

RICHARD: Thank you.

SARAH: Yeah, I can talk about the lessons learned from the cases that we have heard from the other countries.

RICHARD: Yeah.

SARAH: One of the major lessons we have learned is that inclusive disaster risk reduction and preparedness is quite necessary and in this sense disabled people and DPOs have a critical role to play in DRR and preparedness, which could be an entry point for disabled people to engage as positive contributors to their communities. Number 2, we have collecting and using disability disaggregated data for assessments and programming relevant, effective, and inclusive preparedness and humanitarian programming is informed by assessments and other data collection. Initiatives that include disabled people. The third lesson from the cases is that participation of disabled people and their representative organisations, in humanitarian response and recovery is important. Disabled people and DPOs can undertake any role in humanitarian response and recovery, for example, in context of mass displacement both community DPOs can put in place humanitarian programming, both as operators and by partnering with other actors. In camp settings, disabled people can also be supported to partner and self‑organise, in order to facilitate their participation in the decision‑making processes. Removing barriers to access humanitarian assistance and protection is another lesson we learned. Disabled people are the most effective and strongest advocates to call for the elimination of barriers, of ‑‑ to their access to services. It is important that actors progressively build their own strategies, resources, and expertise, in collaboration with disabled people, DPOs and actors focusing on disabilities to mainstream disability in their organisational values and culture. We also have number 5, influencing coordination mechanisms and resource mobilisation to be inclusive. Advocating for an inclusive humanitarian response for disabled people in a specific crisis can have positive outcomes. Practices so that meaningful participation of DPOs in coordination mechanism and resource mobilisation can be challenging for which capacity‑building are required.

RICHARD: Thank you very much Sarah. Just a word to finish, thank you for that, thank you for, I think a wide diversity of experiences we've had, but they are all going in the same direction, which highlighted in these points and that the wider issue is that we don't really have a choice as organised, organising disabled people and representatives we have to get involved both the local level and at the global level and everywhere in between. So, though as I said on Curt's film there, we need to think locally, think globally but act locally on this issue, if we all do that we will begin to make the change and if we all get all the people we influence and work with to do it if it will mucked ply, if they do it, so on. Governments and vested interests, particularly the oil industry and others have been dragging their feet for far too long and have brought us to the brink of disaster as António Gutterres said that beginning of this session, we really need to take this seriously and I would urge everybody to do whatever they can to influence their governments, DPOs and representatives to make sure that their country takes the strongest position on the climate change this November at the CAP, that will make a difference. I would also like to thank the three young people who sent in their videos, I would like more of them for next week please. We need them by the Tuesday as we are having a one day early, because it's a Good Friday celebration or Bank Holiday in many parts of the Commonwealth, so we are meeting on the first Thursday and, Gemma will send you the information about that on Tuesday. But if you are going to do a short film on, discrimination, can you make both what was the problem and how you dealt with it so it's not just negative and if it's about media stereotypes and how you have tackled those, then you can put those in as well and stigma. So we will be looking forward to receiving those from some of you, particularly those of you that haven't put one in yet. So I'm going to come out of the PowerPoint now and say everybody could actually unmute themselves and put their cameras on so we can just say a goodbye to each other and hope everybody has a nice, nice weekend. Really. Okay. So, thank you all for joining in. It's been good to see you all again and I'm glad so many faces we see week after week, which is good. We're going to have a positive message for you next week, we hope. It's got to go through the executive. So we will do that. But bye‑bye everybody. [End].