

Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum

Newsletter No 6, November 2021



CAP 26, climate catastrophe and disabled people.

Many of our member organisations especially in Small Island Countries are on the sharp end of the consequences of global warming making it all the more necessary for these states to be supported in having inclusive emergency plans well thought out, consulted upon with DPO/OPDs and properly resourced. Article 11 of UNCRPD and SDGs support this approach. We have some really good materials on Environment and disability at <https://commonwealthdpf.org/training/module-6/>

Events at CAP 26 with a focus on disability include:

- Friday, 05 Nov 2021, 12:30—13:45 (CET) - [Disability-Inclusive Climate Action: Rights and obligations](#)
- Friday, 05 Nov 2021, 16:30—18:45 (CET) - [An inclusive planet: inclusion, mental health and climate change](#)
- Thursday, 11 Nov 2021, 10:30 - 12:00 (CET) - [Disability, Resilience and Inclusion in our Cities – inclusive design and community-led urban solutions for disability-inclusive climate resilience](#)

The failure to include persons with disabilities in the world's efforts to combat the climate crisis has [dramatic consequences](#). Due to inaccessible disaster preparedness plans, systemic discrimination, and widespread poverty, people with disabilities are left behind in relief and response efforts. The impact of climate change – from rapid onset disasters such as typhoons and wildfires, to more gradual changes such as droughts, temperature increases, and sea level rise – have disproportionate effects on the lives, well-being, and livelihoods of persons with disabilities all over the world.

One recent example is the report published by [Human Rights Watch](#) documents the higher risk of heat-related illness and death to persons with disabilities and older people in British Columbia, Canada. This report clearly shows how the lack of a disability-inclusive approach when designing adaptation policies and plans leads to the exclusion of persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities may also be adversely affected by responses to climate change. Policies to reduce carbon emissions, such as carbon pricing schemes or bans of carbon intensive products, are often designed without considering the rights, perspectives, and requirements of the disability community, and do not address the differential costs and burdens that these changes may impose on individuals with disabilities.

These types of ableist climate mitigation policies create barriers for persons with disabilities and reinforce social inequities. For example, increasing the price of gas to encourage more

frequent use of public transportation would be discriminatory against persons with disabilities if the public transportation is not accessible to them.

Like all residents of this planet, persons with disabilities have a responsibility to play an active role in combating the climate crisis. But they face many challenges to fulfill this responsibility. Information on the climate crisis and ways to address it are not often provided in accessible formats such as sign language for deaf persons, or plain language for those with intellectual disabilities. Recycling processes are often inaccessible for many groups including blind persons.

As the world moves forward with measures to combat climate change, it is vital that States and other actors design and implement disability-inclusive policies that enhance and protect, rather than undermine, the human rights of persons with disabilities.

“Documenting the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities is one of my priorities,” said Gerard Quinn, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. “We need to show the world how persons with disabilities pay the highest price for climate-irresponsible policies. Furthermore, persons with disabilities typically have little opportunity to influence these policies. This needs to be changed immediately. This is even more important to the future as we try to build more resilient and inclusive communities. No climate action would be considered legitimate and efficient without meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.” IDA

Covid 19 on going issues.

Country	Deaths	Infection rate Percent of Population who have been infected	Fully Vaccinated Percent of Population who have been vaccinated (2 jabs)
India	452.3k	2.47%	20%
United Kingdom	138.5k	12.44%	67%
South Africa	88.6k	4.91%	18%
Canada	28.5 K	4.39%	74%
Pakistan	28.2k	0.57%	16%
Malaysia	27.9k	7.23%	69%
Bangladesh	27.7k	0.95%	11%
Sri Lanka	13.5 k	0.95%	11%
Nigeria (comparison)	2.8k	0.10	1.2%

The weekly statistics we put out on our website show that Covid continues to be a major problem though many world leaders are following Boris Johnson in pretending it is nothing to worry about and we have cracked the problem with vaccination. The only problem,

which does not bode well for the cash transfers required from developed to developing countries to get rid of fossil fuels and stop deforestation, is that cash transfers to COVAX are far from adequate.

By 18th October 848,299 people had died of Covid 19 across the commonwealth. 17 % of world deaths. Given the Commonwealth represent 40% of the world's population a lower average rate. However, this will be no comfort to the large numbers of families who have experienced Covid elated bereavement or the larger numbers who have been infected and do not know what the long-term effects will be. Large population countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria have infection rates below 1% and have low vaccination rates. So new variants could still accelerate the pandemic. Covid has shown world leaders that they must think globally and act locally. Something many STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO To REACH UNDERSTANDING. So civil society, including DPOs, must mobilise from the grass roots.

Global Summit on Disability

It is with pleasure that the Secretariat of the Global Disability Summit (GDS) announces the launch of a new website ahead of the Global Disability Summit (GDS) 2022.

[Brief informational piece on the GDS22 consultations \(word format here\)](#)



This Secretariat is housed within the International Disability Alliance.

The website will contain all the most up-to-date information on the Summit. It will also track a set of global commitments, originally made at GDS2018, to help bring about the critical inclusion needed for the 15% of the world's population with disabilities.

Structural bias in day-to-day life often leads to the seeds of discriminatory thought. Through this website, we want to celebrate the progress towards disability inclusiveness ahead of the Summit. By following all past and future commitments and supporting stakeholders to achieve the promises they have made, the GDS Secretariat will be able to provide substantive inputs and coordination to world changing discussions.

You can visit the website at www.globaldisabilitysummit.org and follow us on Twitter @GDS_Disability to get the most up-to-date information.

The Government of Norway, IDA and the Atlas Alliance will co-host the second Global Disability Summit (GDS II) the 16th and 17th February 2022. This Summit will further accelerate the implementation of the CRPD, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the previous commitments made during the first GDS in London in 2018. WHO Regional Office for Europe, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the EDF organise a high-level European Regional Disability Summit, focusing on

international cooperation on 8th February 2022. The aim will be to discuss how international cooperation in the broader European region can become inclusive of persons with disabilities. An outcome document proposing future commitment and solutions will be presented for adoption during the Regional Summit and presented at the GDS.

We want to hear your recommendations for making international cooperation in the European region disability inclusive. We welcome your input and ideas through this [survey](#) by 22nd November.

Ghana have joined as a co-host and there is a regional pre summit meeting in Accra on 1st and 2nd December

summit@ida-secretariat.org

CDPF Online Disability Equality Capacity Building Course a Great Success.

Make up of Course participants The 428 from 41 Commonwealth countries:- Nigeria 74, India 66, South Africa 43, Kenya 36, Bangladesh 32, Rwanda 30, Uganda 25, Zambia 19, Ghana 10, Sri Lanka 9, UK 9, Malaysia 8, Mauritius 7, Canada 6, Dominica 6, Tanzania 6, Belize 4, Namibia 4, Barbados 3, Eswatini 3, Gambia 3, Malawi 3, New Zealand 3, St Lucia 3, Trinidad 3, Fiji 3, Guyana 2, Jamaica 2, Lesotho 2, Mozambique 2, Nauru 2, Pakistan 2, Tuvalu 2, Antigua Barbuda 2, Botswana 1, Maldives 1, Solomon Islands 1, St Kitts 1, Tonga 1, Vanuatu 1, St Vincent 2 . Age breakdown 59 % aged 35 years or under. Gender breakdown 54% identifying as female.

Evaluation by participants We sent out 2 evaluations, one after the first 7 modules (126 respondents) and one at the end of the 14 modules (45 respondents) . See Table below for results. These show a consistently high average scoring out of 10 . Course Book, Presentation and Seminars rating was very similar between the first and second part of the course, ranging from 8.4 and 8.7. The Accessibility and Administration on both the first and second part of the course was 8.8 and 8.9. These are average scores and there was considerable individual variation on the scores. (See Figures 1-5 below). The Modules are again remarkably similar in score and all range between 8.4 and 9.00 out of 10. The lowest scoring Module was 11 Anti Racism and a number of participants did not see the relevance to them living in Black majority countries. However, we thought in the light of Black Lives Matter it was important and we took a historic roots of Empire approach. The next two lowest scoring were Module 1 Models and Assistive Devices (M4) both with 8.5. In the middle of the score range with 8.6 come Respect for Law (M7), Children (M8) and with 8.7 Environment (M6) and Influencing Government (M14). The most highly rated 7 Modules were Data (M12), Building DPOs (M13) with 8.8, Health (M3), Employment/Trade (M5) and Inclusive Education (M9) with 8.9, UNCRPD/SDG (M2) and Women and Girls (M10) with average score of 9 out 10.

Levels of Involvement Overall 341 participated in 1 or more online seminar. 184 in 6 or less and 157 in 7 or more. 11 participated in all 14 seminars. All who attended 1 or more seminars will get a certificate. This will specify if they attended at Basic (6 or less sessions,), Intermediate (7-9 Sessions), Good (10-12 Sessions), Excellent (13-14 Sessions) Level. We were able to identify 277 participants who attended. 154 Women (55.6%) and 123 Male (44.4%). 59.3% (162) were aged 35 or under and 40.7% (111) aged 36 or over

Accreditation 87 submitted Course for accreditation. These were graded and assessed as follows Basic (1 module) **8- (9.1%)**, Basic + (2-7 Modules, 2 pieces) **27-(31%)** , Intermediate (8-9 modules, 2 pieces) **10- (11.5%)**, Advanced (10 modules 3 pieces) **16- (18%)**, Excellent (12 Modules 4-7 pieces work) **23- (26%)** or Outstanding (Consistently gone beyond above criteria) **3 – (3.5%)** Level. Overall 60 women (70.5%) and 25 men (29.5%) submitted work for accreditation.

Next Moves Given the time scale we were under, financial constraints and level of involvement, CDPF Executive consider this Course was well worth running and had multiple benefits for the CDPF and for disabled people across the Commonwealth. We have the resource on-line and we need to disseminate widely connection to it around the Global Disability Movement, but more particularly to DPOs across the Commonwealth. So we propose the following moves and are seeking funding to support these.

A) Publicise the on-line resource widely;

B) Copy the resource, with a users' guide onto multiple USB sticks and distribute in bulk to our DPO member organisations to distribute to the local level DPOs in their countries;

C) Translate the resources into multiple key languages in different parts of Commonwealth e.g. Portuguese, French, Hindi, Urdu, Swahili and other widely used languages;

D) Develop a properly funded on-line training wing of our organisation, capable of providing on-line Disability Equality Training, consultancy and advice jointly with representatives from DPOs in the country to their Governments on Implementing the UNCRPD and SDGs for Disabled Peoples Rights.

E) Develop in each country a cadre of Disability Equality Trainers to spread the knowledge and understanding to disabled people in their country.

Access to on-line modules is now open and are available on the

www.commonwealthdpf.org/training website :

Modules

1. [Models and Thinking About Disability – Implications for Action.](#)
2. [The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Sustainable Development Goals and their Impact on Disabled People's Human Rights.](#)
3. [Health – focusing on Mental Health and Covid-19.](#)
4. [Innovation – focusing on Improving Access and Assistive Devices.](#)
5. [Trade – focusing on Improving Livelihoods and Employment.](#)
6. [Environment – focusing on the Impact of Humanitarian Situations.](#)

7. [Respect for Law – focusing on Eliminating Stigma and Discrimination.](#)
8. [Youth and Disability Rights in collaboration with Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network.](#)
9. [Inclusive Education.](#)
10. [Women and Girls.](#)
11. [Anti-Racism, Equality and Respect for Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities.](#)
12. [Data of Disability.](#)
13. [Building DPOs – Campaigning and Increasing OUR voice.](#)
14. [Influencing Government.](#)

CDPF General Assembly 2022 to be an on line event.

We will be writing to all affiliated DPOS Full and Associate members to elect 2 or 1 delegate to represent them at the CDPF Virtual General Assembly . We want gender balance and affiliates to think seriously about putting forward younger delegates. Delegates will need to have access to the internet and zoom. Captioning and International Sign and other access needs will be met.

This will have 6 phases

Phae1 Delegates chosen from Affiliated Full member DPOs, Affiliated DPO Associates by Affiliated Organisations.

Phase 2 Rule changes circulated to delegates with on-line explanation of process and introduction to CDPF by Chair and Gen Sec.

Phase 3 Request for nominations for Executive Positions-Caucuses held in regions-Caribbean, Pacific, Africa, South Asia of delegates to agree regional reps. Election statements circulated for consideration for all candidates for positions

Phase 4 Elections

Phase 5 Two events of 2 hours delegates can attend one or other on annual Report Finances and Future Work Plan amendments

Phase 6 Results of Elections, Agree Work Plan, Approve Membership List , Approve Organisational changes.

Dates will be fixed and circulated soon.

The Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (Formerly Dfid) of UK Government are consulting on updating their Disability Strategy.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfids-disability-inclusion-strategy-2018-to-2023>). The CDPF are facilitating a meeting with FCDO on suggestions for future strategy on 30th November(1 to 3 pm, GMT). This will be by invitation only as there is only capacity for 20 invitees. FCDO is holding other meetings with DPOOs in Kenya on morning 30th November in Nigeria on 15th and 18th November and Bangladesh on 22nd November. Our meeting will cover representatives of CDPF, ROFA in UK and selected reps of other Commonwealth countries not covered above. However, all members and their organisation can respond to the consultation to Harriet Knowles of FCDO (harriet.knowles@fcdo.gov.uk)

CDPF make the following key point you may wish to consider making:

1. The UK Government have cut £17 billion from their Overseas Aid budget in 2021-2023 at a time of Covid and Climate Crisis when they should have increased it. They claim that as Covid had cost UK Budget domestically they felt justified in making the cut which has dramatically hit a number of crucial projects that disabled people were the beneficiaries. They have now said they will restore the cut in 2024, but the money lost will not be replaced.
2. The Climate crisis and the need for vaccinating everyone in the developing world requires more funding now and into the future.
3. Progress on Women and Girls economic empowerment and education must be prioritised as this is the most effective way of accelerating the drop in population growth and empowering Women. More must be done to systematically tackle Gender Based Violence and especially for disabled women and girls who are 2-3 times as likely to be victims than non-disabled women and girls.
- 4.DPOS need training on developing their capacity to project manage, account for expenditure be financially secure and to have good governance, accountability and run democratically.
5. New projects need to be co-produced with disabled people having THE MAJOR SAY Nothing About Us Without Us. We know what the issues are. We do not need a lot of research. We need funding to secure our organisations to hold grant and

project manage. The major focus must now be on getting Governments to implement the UNCPD and SDG Goals.

COVID and CRPD Human Rights legal advocacy follow up

“I am writing this follow up as a part of a collective of human rights organisations working to redress profoundly inequitable global COVID vaccine/therapeutics access that is being aggravated by certain wealthy States’ protection of pharmaceutical company monopolies over production. As inadequate and unequal global supply of COVID vaccines/therapeutics can prolong and aggravate the pandemic in ways that disproportionately and severely harm the rights of persons with disabilities, we would appreciate the chance to hear from members of the Commonwealth Disabled People’s Forum regarding this issue. We have been discussing filing a request to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability to conduct an inquiry into grave or systematic violations of the rights of people with disabilities in the Global South by States in the Global North that have opposed measures that would increase universal and equitable access to COVID healthcare technologies (vaccines, therapeutics, etc). Of course, we must do this in partnership with civil society groups/DPOs that have been monitoring this pandemic's impact on people with disabilities to ensure that the issues DPOs wish to bring to light are covered and the demands DPOs wish to make are included using language that reflects their own work in this regard. We have so far engaged with DPOs in South East Asia, South Asia, the Pacific region, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

In an effort to inform this work, we would be grateful if CDPF would consider sharing with member DPOs the list of questions below, along with a general request for feedback on the proposed advocacy action. We would circulate the resulting proposed legal advocacy filing back to CDPF for

inputs, comments, and continued discussion. The proposed questions are:

1. How has the prolongation of the pandemic because of lack of vaccine access in 2021 particularly/disproportionately impacted persons with disabilities?
2. Are certain persons with disabilities at greater risk for severe COVID or comorbidities given their healthcare needs?
3. What has been the particular/disproportionate impact of pandemic lockdowns on persons with disabilities in 2021?
4. What systemic forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities have been aggravated by the pandemic in 2021?
5. How has the government addressed data gaps regarding the impact of the pandemic on persons with disabilities?
6. How has the government addressed the prioritization of persons with disabilities for COVID vaccines and treatments?
7. Is there discrimination in crisis/triage standards of care regarding access of persons with disabilities to scarce resources, such as ventilators?

8. How has the government addressed the prioritization of caregivers for COVID vaccines and treatments?
9. How has the government addressed the needs of persons with high support needs and/or comorbidities given the pandemic?
10. How has the government addressed the needs of persons with disabilities in institutions during the pandemic? Those experiencing homelessness?
11. How has the government addressed the need to guarantee the right of informed consent with respect to COVID healthcare for persons with disabilities?

The networks engaged in this work include ESCR-Net – International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights <<https://www.escr-net.org/about/who-we-are>>, the Global Network of Movement Lawyers <<https://movementlawlab.org/global>>, the People’s Vaccine Alliance <<https://peoplesvaccine.org/>>, and the International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations <<https://www.inclo.net/about/>>. The Human Rights Law Network <<https://www.hrln.org/>> in India, a member of several of these collectives, has played a leading role in this effort through its Disability Rights Initiative <<https://www.hrln.org/initiative/disability-rights-initiative>>.

Led by persons with disabilities themselves, the *Disability Rights Initiative (DRI) of the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN) *is recognized as the only one of its kind in providing a comprehensive range of socio-legal support services to India’s community of persons with disabilities. Together with all HRLN Units, the Disability Rights Initiative team has built country-wide alliances with national DPOs and NGOs. It has also cemented state-wise alliances with grassroots DPO movements of disabled persons. HRLN partners with coalitions and social movements for providing free legal aid and legal literacy programmes throughout India. This coalition comprises of NGOs, social movements, academics, students, activists, researchers, judges and lawyers in 24 states in India, dedicated to the use of the legal system to advance human rights, struggle against violations, and ensure access to justice for all.

ESCR-Net – International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, connects over 280 NGOs, social movements and advocates across more than 75 countries to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all. ESCR-Net seeks to strengthen the field of all human rights, with a special focus on economic, social and cultural rights, and further develop the tools for achieving their promotion, protection and fulfillment.

The *Global Network of Movement Lawyers (GNML)* is part of Movement Law Lab (MLL) and is a network of lawyers around the world committed to using law to defend, protect and strengthen social movements. The mission of this Network is to build a mutually supportive community of

movement lawyers around the world, improve our strategies and tactics in real-time, and also serve as a forum for movement lawyers to dream well beyond the present moment.

The *People's Vaccine Alliance (PVA)* is a coalition of organisations and activists united under a common aim of campaigning for a 'people's vaccine' for COVID-19. This would be based on shared knowledge and freely available to everyone everywhere – a global common good. The alliance's members include Free the Vaccine, Global Justice Now, Public Citizen, the Yunus Centre, Frontline AIDS, Amnesty International, Oxfam, Sum Of Us and UNAIDS.

The *International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations* is a network of 15 independent, national human rights organizations from different countries in the North and South that work together to promote fundamental rights and freedoms. Thank you very much for your time and attention". Fernando Ribeiro Delgado Strategic Litigation Working Group Coordinator

If you wish to participate send you contact details, organisation and country and answers to the questions to Fernando Ribeiro Delgado Strategic Litigation Working Group Coordinator at the following fdelgado@escr-net.org Richard Rieser General Secretary CDPF

Higher Level Political Forum. DPOs in countries listed get involved in your Government delegations.

The following is a brief update on the 2022 High-level Political Forum that will take place in July at the UN in New York. The HLPF is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and has a central role in the follow-up and review of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) at the global level. The theme for the HLPF in 2022 is "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." Additionally, the 2022 HLPF will review SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

Forty-five countries are presenting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the 2022 HLPF include the following: Andorra*, Argentina**, Belarus*, Botswana*, Cameroon*, Comoros*, Côte d'Ivoire*, Djibouti, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, El Salvador*, Eritrea, Eswatini*, Ethiopia*, Gabon, Gambia*, Ghana*, Greece*, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Italy*, Jamaica*, Jordan*, Kazakhstan*, Latvia*, Lesotho*, Liberia*, Luxembourg*, Malawi*, Mali*, Montenegro*, the Netherlands*, Pakistan*, the Philippines**, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal*, Somalia, Sri Lanka*, Sudan*, Suriname, Switzerland**, Togo***, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates*, Uruguay*** *Countries with one asterisk * are second timers, those with*

two asterisks ** are third timers, those with three asterisks *** are presenting for the fourth time, while those without asterisks are presenting for the first time.

10 Commonwealth countries are taking part. To engage and participate in the HLPF, please join the [CRPD Forum listserv](#) for engagement opportunities via the SGPwD. To engage in sustainable data work, please join the [disability data listserv](#). We'll also share opportunities via our UN TG listserv.

Read [more about VNRs](#), including from previous years. Please find attached the **Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities Paragraph 89 Report** that provides an overview of the SGPwD's contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since 2016.



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BOTSWANA ACCESSION TO THE CONVENTIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Botswana Government of Botswana has Accession to the Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the 11th August 2021. This is a mile stone for persons with disabilities in this country as this reaffirm the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities in this country to be guaranteed their full enjoyment without discrimination. The good thing is that Botswana is working on the Disability Act which is a bidding instrument. We have come up with a National Strategy for persons with disabilities, which is aligned to the National Development Plan. The winter parliament has just approved the Policy for persons with disability.

Botswana Federation of the Disabled (BOFOD) is very happy about the development.

Compiled: **Wabotho Chimidza**

4th November 2021

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