



Equality Towards a Common Future: DISABILITY INCLUSION



13TH COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S AFFAIRS MINISTERS MEETING

PARADISE ISLAND, THE BAHAMAS, 21-23 AUGUST 2023

www.commonwealthdpf.org
COMMONWEALTH DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM
C/O WORLD OF INCLUSION
78, MILDMAY GROVE SOUTH,
LONDON N1 4PJ

Welcome!

The Commonwealth promotes democracy and equality across its member countries with over 2.5 billion citizens. Over 450 million are persons with disabilities, mainly young people. The purpose of CDPF is to bring disabled people, regardless of type of impairment, gender, age, race, indigenous & geographical background, religion, political affiliation from all countries of the Commonwealth, together with a view to having one voice to advocate for promotion and equalization of opportunities for all disabled people.

To engage and influence the structures and organs of the Commonwealth and especially the Commonwealth Women's affairs Ministers, we are here - Dr. Sruti Mohapatra (India) and Ms Kerriyan Ifill (Barbados), Vice-Chairs of CDPF.



ABOUT DR SRUTI MOHAPATRA, INDIA

Sruti Mohapatra injured her spinal cord in a car accident. A brilliant student, frontline activist and an inclusive education expert, she is a wheelchair user who campaigns for equity and disability rights. She has chaired the Odisha State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and is a member of the National Focus Group in Inclusive Education of India.



ABOUT MRS KERRYAN IFILL, BARBADOS

Kerryann F. Ifill is a Barbadian politician. She served as President of the Senate of Barbados from 2012 to 2018. She lost her sight due to cataracts at the age of four before attending a school for the blind from the age of six. She is committed to the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities through education, employment and exposure.

The World has come a long way since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action nearly 25 years ago. The percentage of female parliamentarians has doubled since, yet only 42% of countries have give women the same rights to land ownership; and just 60% give women equal access to financial services. The gap is even greater for women in rural areas, women with disabilities, indigenous women and older women. CDPF Women call on Hon'ble Ministers and Parliamentarians of the Commonwealth to champion the cause of women with disabilities, protect their rights, prioritize their concerns and support them to become leaders.

Dr. Sruti Mohapatra

Head CDPF Delegation to 13th WAMM
www.commonwealthdpf.org

COMMONWEALTH DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM WOMEN'S DECLARATION (VERSION 1- 24.03.2023)

Disabled Women and Girls

The World Health Organization reports that 16% of the population are disabled people (1.3 billion people). The 700 million Disabled Women are not a homogenous group. They experience a range of impairments including and not limited to physical, psychosocial, intellectual, and sensory. They also include young girls and older women whose needs vary significantly. Women constitute 75% of the disabled people in low- and middle-income countries.

CDPF Women's Forum Declaration

The CDPF Women's Forum calls on Disabled Women and girls within the Commonwealth and their representative organizations to champion their rights, develop, speak about and prioritize their concerns and support them to become leaders. The CDPF Women's Forum also calls on the Commonwealth and member Governments to prioritize tackling the barriers disabled women and girls face, to develop long term strategies in areas that affect their lives, so that Disabled Women and Girls can enjoy life on an equal basis with non-disabled women. This requires particular effort to reach marginalised groups such as rural poor, indigenous and DeafBlind disabled women. The achievement of these broad aims requires the following specific provisions.

1. Access

- Disabled women and girls need access in all areas and the free supply of assistive technology to achieve their rights.

2. Gender equality, Equity, Non-discrimination and Resourcing

- The CDPF Women's Forum will seek to enhance measures to ensure disabled women and girls are equal before the law and are entitled, without discrimination, to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law.
- The Forum will endeavour to ensure that governments shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to disabled people equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds, by taking appropriate legal steps and to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided.
- Governments are called upon to achieve full gender equality in their policies, plans and programmes and ensure gender mainstreaming, gender responsive budgets and mechanisms to monitor and assess their implementation.

3. Work and Employment

- CDPF Women's Forum will endeavor to call on their governments to take measure to include disabled women and girls in employment and work within all sectors on an equal basis with others.
- Disabled Women must be able to access finances and to be meaningfully engaged in improving their livelihoods.
- CDPF Women's Forum calls on Commonwealth Heads of Government to make available opportunities for disabled women and girls within their governments to access work and employment on an equal basis with others.
- Governments should also fund organizations of disabled women and girls to operationalize their organizations and impact as many women at the grassroots as possible.

4. Political Participation, Public Life and Leadership

- CDPF Women's Forum calls on Commonwealth Heads of Government to support disabled women and girls to participate fully in all election processes and appointments to hold public offices. This will enable their issues and rights to be on the agenda when decisions are taken. It will also increase their numbers and representation in parliaments and other

COMMONWEALTH DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM WOMEN'S DECLARATION (VERSION 1- 24.03.2023)

decision-making levels, thus having meaningful inclusion of disabled women and their human rights at high level.

- CDPF Women's Forum advocate for an equal level playing field in the political space for disabled women who are disadvantaged by the multiple barriers during the election processes. These include campaigns, political parties' nominations, in accessible podiums and environment, communication (transport, language, in accessible communication formats, etc).
- The Forum will advocate for full and meaningful participation of disabled women and girls and require of them to be speakers and panellists during conferences internationally, regionally and others to represent themselves and their rights at all levels.
- The Forum calls for media to advocate on the role of women in political positions, as key agents for responsive government that promote sustainability.

5. Health and Gender Based Violence

- CDPF Women's Forum will call on Commonwealth governments to ensure disabled women and girls enjoy the right to the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability.
- It calls on governments to take appropriate measures to ensure disabled women with and girls access health services and facilities easily.
- Disabled Women should be in control of their sexual and reproductive health issues but not forced into sterilization on the basis of disability and informed consent on the services provided to be obtained. Violence against women is prevalent and more on disabled women and girls with, who experience gender based or sexual violence more than women without disabilities.

6. Education

- CDPF Women's Forum will advocate for governments to ensure an inclusive and quality education system is in place at all levels of education and life-long learning for disabled women and girls without discrimination and they are provided with the reasonable accommodation they require consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
- The Forum calls on governments to ensure curriculum are accessible and responsive to the needs of disabled women and girls.
- Vocational training at all levels must be enhanced and teachers should be prepared to train women and girls who are neurodiverse or with learning difficulties to attain skills that will enable them to be included in the communities they live in on an equal basis with others.

7. Situation of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

- CDPF Women's Forum calls upon governments to protect and ensure safety of disabled women and girls and prioritize their involvement, leadership during emergency situations.
- The response strategies should include them during the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of interventions.
- Communication on the risks should be made in accessible formats to ensure Blind and visually impaired people, Deaf and hearing impaired and learning impaired are included.
- The Forum will therefore advocate that Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs/OPDs) are meaningfully involved throughout the response period.
- The evacuation centres, refugee camp and internally displaced camps should be accessible for disabled women and girls.
- WASH programmes targeting women and girls as well as disability inclusive disaster risk reduction measures in the rescue centres should be put in place.

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8. Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection

- The need for adequate standard of living and social security for disabled women and girls is vital. CDPF Women's Forum calls on governments to provide and increase social protection programmes that are diversified to meet the needs of women and girls in all sectors.
- Affordable and accessible health insurance and social assistance should be targeted to meet the needs of disabled women and girls on an equal basis with others.

9. Awareness Raising and Advocacy

- Disabled Women and girls with have unique and diversified needs that need to be understood by all to ensure inclusion at all levels. CDPF calls on governments to include them in international, regional, national and local fora, where they discuss their rights and issues.
- CDPF will advocate and lobby for funding for them to attend meetings and conferences to present their issues and rights wherever women matters are being discussed.

10. Participation in Cultural Life, Recreation, Leisure and Sport

- Most cultural practices have discriminated against & discouraged women to participate in recreation, leisure, tourism, sport. CDPF Women's Forum calls on governments to recognize disabled women and girls by ensuring they take part in cultural life, put in place appropriate measures to ensure that they are inclusive, accessible and that they enjoy and access cultural materials, television programmes, films, theatre, etc on an equal basis with others.

11. Prejudice and Discrimination

- Prejudice and Discrimination against disabled women and girls is Disabilism that is deeply entrenched in all our cultures, reinforced by stereotypes, stigma and traditional beliefs. Focussing on Media, journalists and public relations professionals, CDPF Women Forum calls upon governments to challenge these views (Article 8 UNCRPD) amongst the general population at all levels.

12. Gender Disaggregated Data

- Disability disaggregated data is a major issue that needs to be addressed. CDPF Women's Forum calls upon governments to collect disability and gender disaggregated data to include the different types of impairments for planning purposes, ensuring that they are accurate and current.

13. Climate Change Impacts on Disabled Women and Girls

- Climate change impacts disproportionately affect Disabled people. Disabled Women and girls are more susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change. The mitigation and adaptation measures are not always responsive and inclusive of disability rights especially for women and girls. CDPF Women's Forum calls upon government to involve disabled women and girls to be part of the Conference of Parties discussion so that their rights are entrenched in the decision taken at a high level.
- Governments must address on priority the water crisis and menstrual health management among disabled women and girls.

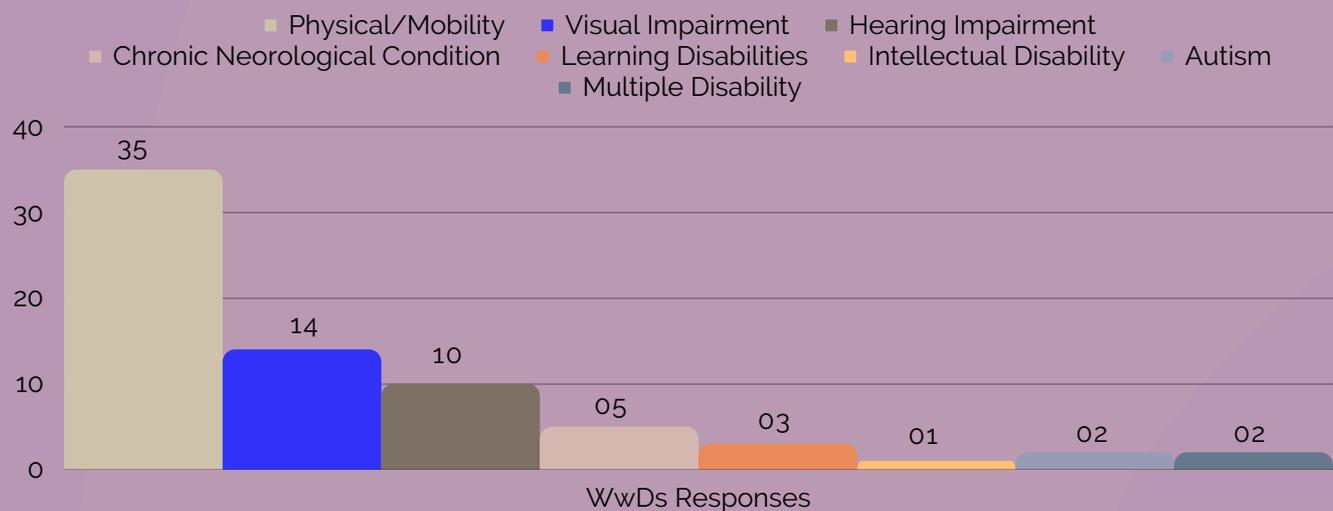
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NUMBERS OF CONCERN!

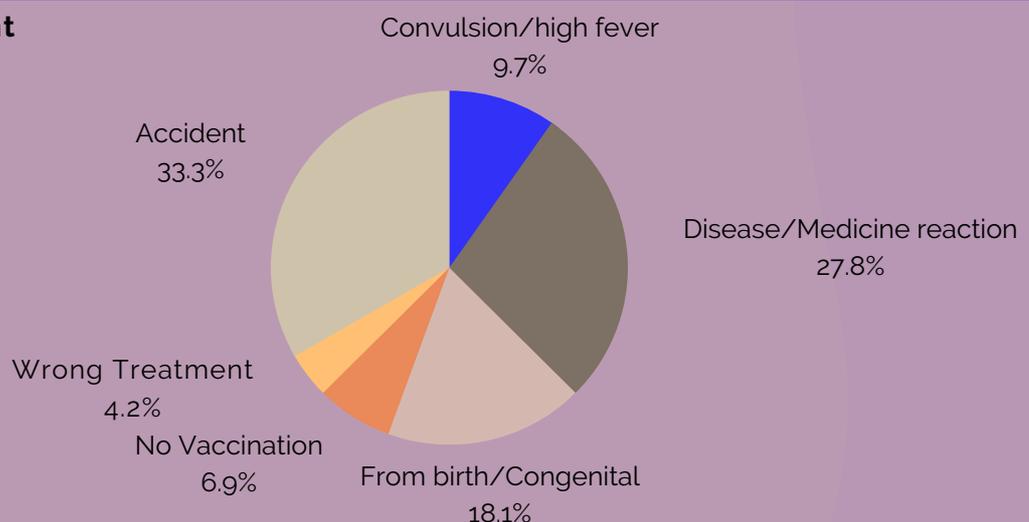
- 3.2% of the world's population is affected by some form of blindness and visual impairment. That's eight times Canada's population*!
- 9% of the world's population have a disabling deafness and hearing loss. That is to say all of the inhabitants of the European Union!
- 2.6% of the world's population have an intellectual disability (IQ below 75). It covers the number of inhabitants in Brazil!
- 1.6% of the world's population need a wheelchair on a daily basis. That is 'Mexico's population'!

The **CDPF survey** was undertaken by Vice-Chair CDPF and 72 responses were gathered from 24 member countries of Commonwealth. The nature of impairments covered included

- Locomotor/Mobility impairments
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Learning disorders
- Autism
- Mental Illness
- Chronic neurological disorders
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities



Cause of Impairment



EDUCATION SDG 4 : UNICEF, 2021

Compared with children without disabilities, children with disabilities are:

- 24 per cent less likely to receive early stimulation and responsive care;
- 42 per cent less likely to have foundational reading and numeracy skills;
- 25 per cent more likely to be wasted and 34 per cent more likely to be stunted;
- 53 per cent more likely to have symptoms of acute respiratory infection;
- 49 per cent more likely to have never attended school;
- 47 per cent more likely to be out of primary school, 33 per cent more likely to be out of lower-secondary school and 27 per cent more likely to be out of upper secondary school;
- 51 per cent more likely to feel unhappy;
- 41 per cent more likely to feel discriminated against;
- 32 per cent more likely to experience severe corporal punishment.

(Source: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/nearly-240-million-children-disabilities-around-world-unicefs-most-comprehensive>)

HUNGER-POVERTY-EARNING SDG 1-2 and SDG 8 : UN, 2018

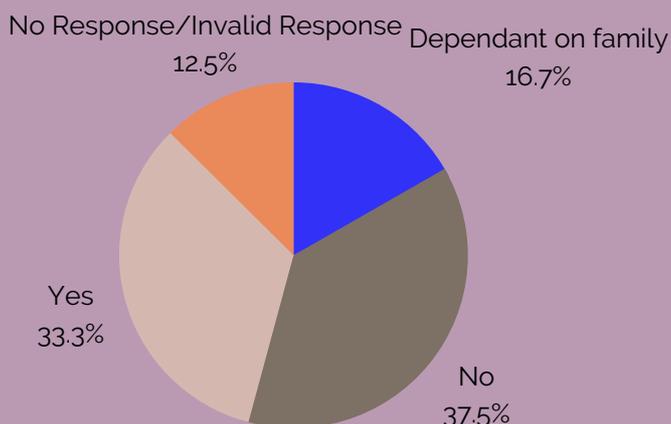
UN report Disability and Development:

- Persons with disabilities, and their households, are more likely to live in poverty. The evidence is based on hunger indicators, traditional poverty indicators (income, household expenditures, asset ownership) and multidimensional poverty, that is, the experience of multiple deprivations by the same households or individuals.
- Data showed that a higher percentage of persons with disabilities was living under the national poverty line.
- Persons with disabilities bear extra costs associated with health care, transportation, personal assistance or assistive products, and modified residences, among others. The result is that among two households with the same level of consumption (or income) – one with a member with a disability has a lower standard of living.

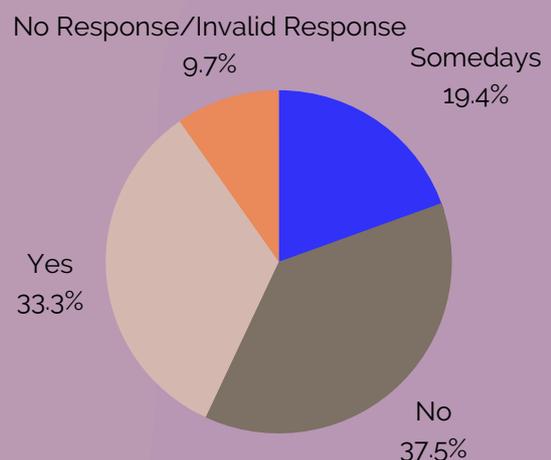
(Source: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/07/disability-report-chapter2.pdf>)

CDPF Survey, 2023, corroborated the above statements. About 67% women with disabilities are dependant upon others for their basic needs as they earn nominally. 66.7% Women and girl child with disabilities in the Commonwealth do not eat three meals a day.

Can you afford to cover basic needs in your current income?



Do you eat three full meals a day?



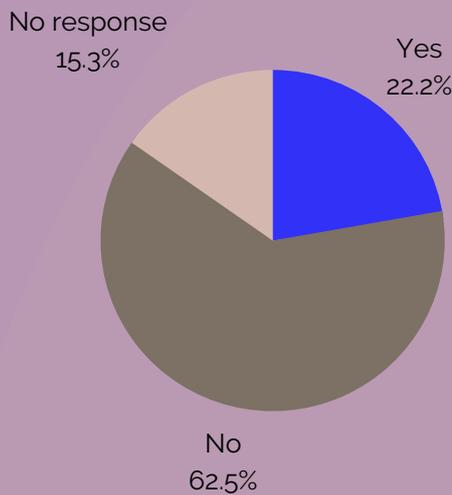
HEALTH SDG 3 : WHO, 2023

- An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability. This represents 16% of the world's population, or 1 in 6 of us.
- Some persons with disabilities die up to 20 years earlier than those without disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities have twice the risk of developing conditions such as depression, asthma, diabetes, stroke, obesity or poor oral health.
- Persons with disabilities face many health inequities.
- Persons with disabilities find inaccessible and unaffordable transportation 15 times more difficult than for those without disabilities.
- Health inequities arise from unfair conditions faced by persons with disabilities, including stigma, discrimination, poverty, exclusion from education and employment, and barriers faced in the health system itself.

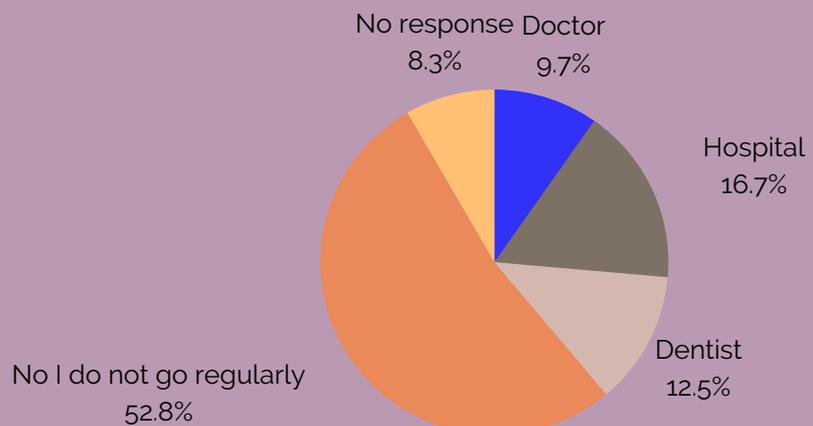
(Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>)

HEALTH SDG 3

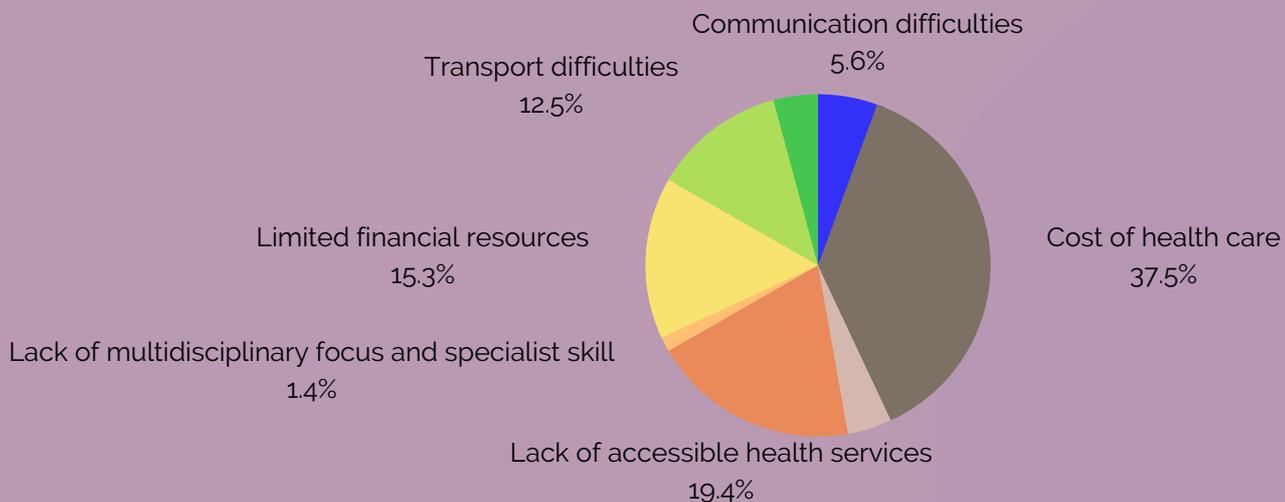
CDPF Survey, 2023 : Are the health care facilities and services barrier free?



Do you regularly visit doctors/hospital/dentist?



If you answered NO to the question above, why don't you regularly visit doctors and hospitals?



WOMEN LEADERS IN CDPF EXECUTIVE



Chair
Sarah Muthoni Kamau
United Disabled Persons
Kenya



Vice-Chair
Dr Sruti Mohapatra
Swabhiman, Odisha,
Eastern India



Vice-Chair
Kerryann Ifill
Barbados Council of the
Disabled



Treasurer
Scader Louis
Federation of Disability
Organisations in Malawi
(FEDOMA)



**Women's
Representative**
Gaudence
Mushimiyimana Rwandan
Organisation of Women
with Disabilities



**Indigenous Peoples
Representative**
Diethoro Nakhro,
National Centre for Promotion
of Employment for Disabled
People, Nagaland, India



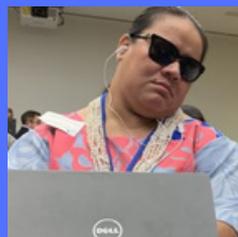
Africa
Alina Thandiwe Mfulo,
Disabled Persons South
Africa



Africa
Patience Ogolo-Dickson
Advocacy for Women with
Disabilities Initiative
(AWWDI) Nigeria



Africa
Rachel Chomba
Zambia Federation of
Disability Organizations
(ZAFOD)



Pacific
Faatino Utumapu, Nuanua
O Le Alofa, Samoa



Asia
Abia Akram
Special Talent Exchange
Programme, Pakistan



Asia
Mohua Paul
Access Bangladesh
Foundation



Asia
Rasanjali Pathirage
Disability Organisations
Joint Front DOJF Sri
Lanka

CDPF IN CHOGM 2022 AND COSP 2023

CHOGM 2022 KIGALI, RWANDA

Excerpts from Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum message to delegates at CHOGM, Kigali 2022

CDPF understands that disability is socially created as disabled people have physical, mental, sensory and psycho-social and other long term impairments that in interaction with attitudinal, environmental and organisational barriers disable them.

Our priority is to get sufficient funding for DPOs/OPDs to function. We need to represent the views and voices of the diversity of disabled people to their Governments across the Commonwealth, in line with Article 4.3 and 33.3 of the Convention. To make progress with implementing Disability Rights and the UNCRPD, DPOs/OPDs need long-term core support to function and develop the democratic structures and build capacity for disabled people to work with their Governments to bring this about.

COVID has taught us all how inadequate our public health arrangements are. The inadequacies of Government responses are in many areas of the Convention. Inadequacies of Welfare Support (Article 28), Work (Article 27), Health (Article 25), Education (Article 24) Emergencies (Article



COSP 2023 NEW YORK, USA

The 16th session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD (COSP16) took place at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 13 to 15 June 2023. CDPF held three side meetings during proceedings. Please find documentation of the meetings below.

1. Evaluating DPO/OPD Collaboration with State Parties on Implementing Elements of the UNCRPD across the Commonwealth.
2. Developing ways of creating Equal Access for Disabled Girls and Women to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and Greater Equality.
3. Disabled Youth Involvement, Awareness, Empowerment and Leadership in DPOs/OPDs across the Commonwealth



LOOKING FORWARD TO : CHOGM 2024

CDPF in looking forward to developing a more equal and inclusive Commonwealth urges Heads of Government to prioritise:

1. The adoption of a Disability Inclusion Protocol- To ensure disability Equality and Access is part of All Commonwealth deliberations, activities and policies and not just an add on.
2. Small proportion of national income to be reserved for funding for DPOs to be representative, to be able to participate and express their voices in all national, regional and international meetings impacting lives of the disabled.
3. Compared to non-disabled men, disabled women are three times more likely to be illiterate (WHO, 2022). Governments across the Commonwealth to prioritise education of girls and women with disabilities.
4. People with disabilities make up an estimated 16% of the world's population and 80% are of working age. The right of people with disabilities to decent work, however, is frequently denied. People with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, face enormous attitudinal, physical and informational barriers to equal opportunities in the world of work (ILO, 2020), For dignity of living, decent livelihood and income to be guaranteed. Governments to prioritise employment in terms of skill development, jobs and self-employment opportunities.
5. Disabled people, especially disabled women and girls are disproportionately affected during humanitarian emergencies and in situation of risk (UN, 2020). Environmental emergency to prioritise girls and women with disabilities voices in policy formation and during implementation.



COMMONWEALTH DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM (CDPF)



The purpose of CDPF is to bring disabled people regardless of type of impairment, gender, age, race, indigenous & geographical background, religion, political affiliation from all countries of the Commonwealth, together with a view to having one voice to advocate for promotion and equalization of opportunities for all disabled people. CDPF Has 95 Disabled People's Organisations DPOs in membership from 50 Commonwealth countries.

To engage and influence the structures and organs of the Commonwealth and especially the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

In light of the adoption UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) by the General assembly in December 2006, the recognition by Commonwealth Heads of Government, in their statement in Kampala in November 2007, of the need to adopt, ratify and implement the UNCRDP throughout the Commonwealth and the continuing inequalities and exclusion disabled people face throughout the Commonwealth, we resolve to set up a Commonwealth Disabled Peoples' Forum.

CDPF has constituted a Disabled Women's Forum with members beyond the CDPF Executive Committee. This ensures the voices of disabled women is amplified within the Accredited Commonwealth Women's Forum, has wider reach of women, establishes linkages and networks with mainstream women's organizations and movements like Commonwealth Women Forum and UN Women.



General Secretary

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