**The Path to Disability Inclusion across the Commonwealth**

“Since CHOGM 2022, CDPF, which represents 100 disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) or Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) in 50 Commonwealth countries, has been campaigning to improve the position of the 430 million disabled people who dwell in the Commonwealth.

55 Commonwealth countries have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Yet progress to promoting, protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities has been painfully slow.

Progress was made by CDPF seeking support for a Commonwealth Disability Inclusion Action Plan in the run up to CHOGM 24 in Samoa, with many Commonwealth organisations and Ministers showing support. However, this was not sufficient, though Paragraph 6 of the CHOGM 2024 Communiques expresses some progress.

“6. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring, protecting and promoting the full

realisation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with disabilities, to fully implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*UN*CRPD), and to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recalling the 2023 Report of the Commonwealth Roundtable on Advancing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Heads urged the Commonwealth Secretariat to prioritise and expedite the establishment of a High-Level Advisory Group of Persons with Disabilities together with representatives of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities from across the Commonwealth, to effectively support member states, in advancing the rights of people with disabilities. Heads commended the ongoing work towards the finalisation of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan, and the important role of National Human Rights Organisations in monitoring CRPD implementation.”

<https://commonwealthdpf.org/disability-inclusion-action-plan/>

Now the **Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of setting up a High-Level Advisory Group of Persons with Disabilities and enlist DPOs to send representatives to support the expert working group.** (See CDPF Nominations below).They are also writing **to Law Ministers to ask for nominations for expert country representatives to sit on a Country Working Group that has the authority to develop the final draft DIAP**. CDCPF members should help facilitate this process.

There is urgency in their work to produce a final draft of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. This will need to be ready by July to get on the Agenda of the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Fiji in February 2026. This would lead to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan being on the Agenda of CHOGM 2026 in Antigua and Barbuda in June 2026.

CDPF is putting forward Developing Disability Inclusion across the Commonwealth to be one of the three themes of CHOGM 2026. This would enable the development of a much better understanding of **the paradigm shift**  from **traditional /medical model** approaches to disability to a **human rights/ social model** approach required to implement the UNCRPD across all areas of human activity across the Commonwealth.

We call on those who support these ambitions to add their voice to that of the CDPF. We are gratified that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association have already lent their weight to this suggestion. CDPF would like to hear from other Accredited Organisations who would support putting forward this theme for CHOGM.

In order to support these activities in Antigua Barbuda CDPF and CPA are committed to gather data, information and case studies from across the Commonwealth in the following six areas:-

Reasonable Accommodation,

Accessibility,

Effectively challenging disability discrimination,

Implementing Disability Rights Legislation,

Universal Design and

Government effectively working with representative organisations of disabled people/people with disabilities.

CDPF call on all our members, Accredited Organisations and Governments to collaborate in all aspects of the above activities to build a data base and handbook to guide further implementation of the UNCRPD in the countries of the Commonwealth and for a successful CHOGM in Antigua in June 2026.”