

Annex 2 - Reflections from the Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network

The Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network (CCYDN) appreciate the opportunity of having CCYDN representatives join the DIAP advisory group and contribute in the deliberations with the Expert Working Group (EWG) on this important work. CCYDN's advise, suggestions and advocacy have been focused on improving the meaningful political participation, inclusion, advocacy and rights of children and young people with disabilities within the DIAP commitments and delivery.

Throughout the process CCYDN have requested for due consideration to be given to reference the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as children and young persons with disabilities' rights cannot be implemented without the core child rights-based principals being part of the DIAP impactful application of CRPD. The UNCRC is a universal application to the rights of children and young people with disabilities, enhancing their protections and recognition that they are rights-holders. Meaningful participation mechanisms available to children and youth with disabilities are not always fully integrated into adult decision-making, or local and central government structures and this needs to change. The DIAP has the opportunity to improve pathways for children and youth with disabilities meaningful political participation in policy processes and law-making to influence decisions on the issues which impact their daily lives and futures. CCYDN to this end have advocated for a third track approach focusing on children and youth with disabilities providing accountability and transparency on the progress of commitments implementation of DIAP in regards to their disability rights and inclusion.

The DIAP presents an opportunity to reflect and improve practices, systems and structures for an disability inclusive Commonwealth for all. The DIAP needs to consider all stakeholders including youth with disabilities-led networks and organisations, civil society organisations supporting and working with children and young people with disabilities to ensure DIAP does not leave those who are underrepresented further behind. CCYDN have emphasised there are many groups who are further marginalised and not represented adequately, having limited opportunities for their advocacy. leadership and participation in the Commonwealth. Amongst these underrepresented groups which need to be considered are rural and maritime communities, those with learning disabilities/ intellectual disabilities, deaf blindness. These are examples of disability communities where DIAP can be fundamental in disability inclusion delivered equitably and closing the gaps of disparities within the disability Commonwealth communities at grassroots.

This year marks twenty years since the adoption of the CRPD and CCYDN hope through the DIAP deliberations there is a shared comprehension within the Commonwealth Heads of States of the urgency of fully implementing the CRPD. Through a progressive inclusive approach that is integrated within legal systems, government strategies, national and local level delivery and in collaboration with all stakeholders; the DIAP can prompt positive impactful change on the real lives of children, youth and adults with disabilities, their families and communities in the Commonwealth.