

Report on the Nairobi Conference

I. Summary

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) hosted a conference to deepen dialogue between national, regional and global organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) in Nairobi, Kenya between 6 – 8 March 2014. The conference, titled “The post-2015 development agenda and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in Africa”, aimed to promote inclusive development in the future global development framework. At the end of the three-day event over 100 participants—from 13 African DPOs and cross-regional representatives from North and Latin America, Europe, Australia and Asia—adopted the Nairobi Declaration in the presence of high-level governmental representatives and UN agencies. The Declaration contains the priorities of the African continent within the context of the post-2015 development agenda and the challenges regarding the implementation of the UN CRPD.

The conference was organised by IDA in cooperation with the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), and funded by the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN PRPD), UNICEF, the Swedish International Development Agency and CBM.

II. General Description

There are an estimated one billion persons with disabilities worldwide—80 per cent of which live in developing countries. Persons with disabilities are overrepresented amongst those living in absolute poverty, face restricted access to health care, education and employment opportunities and, in many instances, are the first victims of violence and abuse. The conference provided an opportunity to address these issues by reflecting on relevant future development goals and advocacy work, in order to develop a strong and unified message regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda. The agenda prioritized issues such as advocacy work, a deeper commitment and cooperation between African DPOs on strengthening the implementation of the UN CRPD, humanitarian emergencies and political instabilities as well post-2015 related discussions. African DPOs also explored how to further cooperation with intergovernmental bodies and development cooperation agencies operating in African countries.

The conference facilitated the strengthening of unity amongst persons with disabilities in Africa and provided an excellent platform to discuss the challenges that persons with disabilities encounter. There was consensus among participants that advocacy efforts need to be strengthened and the rights of persons with disabilities must be mainstreamed at national and international levels, including among intergovernmental bodies and development cooperation agencies operating in African countries.

III. Participants

The core of the African disability movement gathered at the conference, together with national government representatives. Participants from 13 African countries attended, representing both national and regional organisations working to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Many of these organisations are lead by persons with disabilities themselves.

The conference was also attended by over 100 representatives from government, regional bodies and civil society. Participants included ministry representatives from Kenya and Malawi, government representatives from Uganda, representatives from the African Union, the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities UN Secretariat, UNICEF and numerous regional and international organisations of persons with disabilities.

IV. Themes

During the conference, participants assessed the situation of persons with disabilities in Africa, the implementation of the UN CRPD and issues related to advocacy on the national, regional and global levels. In addition, working group sessions were organised around the following thematic areas: 1) Ending poverty: Economic empowerment and social protection; 2) Access to education and health; 3) Living independently and being included in the community with a focus on community-based support services (mainstream and disability-specific services); 4) Accessibility; 5) Governance and political participation; 6) Women with disabilities; and 7) Children with disabilities.

The implementation of the UN CRPD in an African context was a priority on the agenda. Discussions were conducted regarding how to influence regional and sub-regional intergovernmental bodies and development cooperation agencies in order to promote the implementation of the UN CRPD and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The role and added value of African regional and sub-regional organisations in influencing national governmental policies, plans and development programmes were also highlighted and emphasised. UN CRPD Article 32, “Complementarity between global, regional and national advocacy to influence multilateral and bi-lateral development cooperation agencies” was one of the main subjects under discussion. Finally, the role of UN agencies in supporting national stakeholders to implement the UN CRPD in Africa was examined. The conference also included a session on capacity building for African DPOs and other stakeholders for their role in advocacy regarding implementation of the UN CRPD and inclusive development.

The conference was primarily organized to discuss the post-2015 agenda, exploring how that agenda can contribute to the improvement of the fulfilment of rights of persons with disabilities. Also, the expectations of African DPOs and persons with disabilities with respect to the post-2015 development framework were discussed. The participants worked on their advocacy plans for 2014-2015 and how African DPOs can advance the global agenda. They also made suggestions on how African national and regional governmental bodies should be lobbied in order to make the post-2015 agenda inclusive of persons with disabilities.

V. Nairobi Declaration

Participants of the conference agreed that the post-2015 development agenda must aim to change the “unacceptable realities that persons with disabilities encounter, particularly in Africa”. In order to achieve this, participants negotiated the “Nairobi Declaration”. The Declaration embodies the unified voice of persons with disabilities in Africa and is a clear representation of what persons with disabilities want reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. It calls on Member States to prioritise persons with disabilities when designing the future post-2015 development goals and to place particular emphasis on cross-disability issues, such as accessibility, the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes leading to inclusive policies and programmes.

The Nairobi Declaration expresses concern that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be realised by 2015 for the millions of African persons with disabilities due to the lack of inclusion and accessibility of related MDG programme and policy design, implementation and monitoring. The Declaration also expresses concern for challenges faced by persons with disabilities, including factors such as access to health, transportation, education and participation in decision-making processes, barriers to land ownership, employment and social protection, as well as to the full enjoyment of rights such as the right to open a bank account or access justice and the increased incidence of violence and discrimination, including multiple forms of discrimination. The Declaration also states disappointment regarding inaccessible schools and health centres and the non-inclusive education, livelihood, water and sanitation, and health programmes funded and implemented across Africa in the last decade, and notes that these have been wasted opportunities to advance inclusion of persons with disabilities. In light of these issues, the Declaration calls on African countries to take all necessary steps, including mobilising adequate financial and human resources, to ratify the UN CRPD and ensure that all development policies and programmes will be inclusive of and accessible to all persons with disabilities. Consequently, it calls for the post-2015 development agenda targets and indicators to explicitly include persons with disabilities, specifically with regards to: poverty eradication, education, health, gender equality and women's empowerment, employment and decent work for all, infrastructure, sustainable cities and human settlements, water and sanitation, governance and political participation, peaceful and non-violent societies and global partnerships for inclusive development.

Honourable Cabinet Secretary Samuel Kazungu Kambi from the Kenyan Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services delivered closing remarks at the conference expressing strong support for the Nairobi Declaration and committed to promoting it within the Eastern African Community and the African Union. In his speech he stated that he "doesn't believe in tomorrow, only today" and emphasized that the ministry would work with DPOs in a participatory manner "for the greater good for our greater people." High-level government participants from Malawi and Uganda made similar promises.

The following declaration has been adopted by persons with disabilities from Africa, representatives of national, sub-regional and Pan-African disabled people's organisations, on the 8th of March during the Nairobi conference "Inclusive post 2015 development agenda and UN CRPD in Africa", organized by the International Disability Alliance in partnership with the International Disability and Development Consortium, UNICEF and the UN Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

NAIROBI DECLARATION INCLUSIVE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN AFRICA

Preamble

WE, persons with disabilities from 13 countries in Africa and representatives of national, sub-regional and Pan-African disabled persons' organizations (DPOs), gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, the 6-7-8 of March 2014, at the conference "Inclusive post-2015 development agenda and UN CRPD in Africa,"

- a. Recalling that persons with disabilities should enjoy and exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights recognized in international and regional human rights instruments,
- b. Recalling that persons with disabilities should have a conducive environment to fully contribute to the development of their countries' economies, societies and communities,
- c. Recalling, as we have been denouncing all across Africa for so long and that the 2011 World Report on Disability's evidences¹ confirmed, that persons with disabilities experience deep inequalities in the access to education, health care, work opportunities, and face widespread barriers to mobility, communication and information leading to marginalization and poverty, and are at greater risks of violence,
- d. Recalling the aggravated discrimination and inequalities experienced by women and girls with disabilities, and mothers of children with disabilities
- e. Recognizing the importance of families in the provision of support and assistance for their family members with disabilities, especially those with high support needs,
- f. Deeply concerned that the Millennium Development Goals will not be realized by 2015 for the millions of African persons with disabilities due to the lack of inclusion and accessibility of related MDGs programmes and policies' design, implementation and monitoring,
- g. Deeply disappointed by all the inaccessible schools and health centers built and all the non-inclusive education, livelihood, water and sanitation, and health programs funded and implemented across Africa in the last decade that have been, every time, wasted opportunities to advance inclusion of persons with disabilities,
- h. Recalling that Africa is the continent most affected by conflicts and the second most affected by natural disasters² and that persons with disabilities are at greater risks of facing violence and gaps in protection in those situations,
- i. Recalling that some marginalized groups of persons with disabilities such as persons with albinism, persons with psychosocial disabilities, person with intellectual disabilities, and persons with epilepsy,

¹ http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/

² UN office for disasters reduction and preparedness

face life threatening violence and deprivation of liberty due to persistent beliefs and harmful cultural practices

- j. Encouraged by the growing awareness and political willingness following the adoption of the UN CRPD, as a human rights and development instrument, signed by 45 African countries and ratified by 35³,
- k. Recalling the commitment of African states towards the implementation of the African Union Continental Disability Strategy and ongoing process towards an African protocol on the rights of persons with disabilities,
- l. Recalling that all UN Members States, including African countries, at the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development of September 2013⁴ stressed the importance of *“ensuring accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development and of giving due consideration to all persons with disabilities in the emerging post-2015 United Nations development agenda,”*
- m. Encouraged by the growing attention to inclusion of persons with disabilities in the process leading to the post-2015 development agenda, from the Rio+20 outcome document⁵ to the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development outcome document⁶, and noting that the High level panel report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda⁷ and Open Working Group Co-chair focus areas⁸ are also a positive step towards inclusion of persons with disabilities,

Call on African countries to take all necessary steps including mobilising adequate financial and human resources to:

1. *Ratify and implement the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*
2. *Ensure that all development policies and programmes, will be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities in their diversity, including in situation of emergency and humanitarian crisis by removing barriers and ensuring access to the needed support services, such as qualified sign language interpreters, appropriate format, braille, personal assistance, and assistive devices, among others,*
3. *Ensure that persons with disabilities, including youth and older persons, as well as children and their families will be closely consulted and actively involved through their representative organisations in the design, implementation and monitoring of all programmes and policies that could impact their lives,*
4. *Contribute to the capacity development of the representative organisations of persons with disabilities to contribute to the empowerment of persons with disabilities and put them in a position to support States in making development inclusive,*

³ As of 6th of March 2014. www.un-enable.org

⁴ Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond

⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/>

⁶ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1590>

⁷ <http://www.post2015hlp.org/>

⁸ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

5. *Ensure that particular attention is paid to meaningfully include women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with high support needs, refugees and internally displaced persons with disabilities, who can be subject to violence and multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination;*
6. *Ensure that significant efforts will be made to strengthen research, including participatory research, and data collection with regards to rights of persons with disabilities that will allow adequate definition of programs and policies as well as adequate monitoring of the current and futures policies and programs.*

And to that effect call for the post-2015 development agenda targets and indicators to explicitly include persons with disabilities, specifically with regards to:

Poverty eradication

7. People with disabilities are over represented among the poorest. Mainstream social protection mechanisms are too often failing to be inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities and very few mechanisms have been developed to enable persons with disabilities to access the services they need.
8. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to eradicate poverty by promoting economic empowerment and social protection programs and policies that are inclusive of persons with disabilities as well as social protection schemes allowing persons with disabilities to cover the extra cost associated with their disability and to access support services, including for families of children with disabilities.*

Education

9. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from education is one of the biggest issues faced by persons with disabilities as it denies them the opportunity to develop their full potential on equal basis with others. While MDGs have allowed great progress in access to education in general, it is estimated that 90% of children with disabilities still don't have access to education.
10. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure that persons with disabilities access quality inclusive education as well as life-long learning with particular attention to accessibility, availability of interpreters and teachers qualified in sign language, assistive technology, braille, alternative and augmentative material and human assistance. We also want programmes to raise awareness and to provide support to parents of children with disabilities.*

Health

11. Persons with disabilities are facing huge barriers in access to health care, including rehabilitation, survival intervention, early childhood development, nutrition, water and sanitation, public health programs related to communicable and non communicable diseases, due to lack of accessibility in terms of infrastructure, information, and communication as well as adequacy of services, including support services, and are most likely to face catastrophic health expenditures
12. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure accessibility and adequacy of health care, access to assistive devices, as well as inclusion of persons with disabilities in the emerging health insurance mechanisms,*

Gender equality and women's empowerment

13. Girls and Women with disabilities are facing multiple discriminations in many areas of family and community life and are more exposed to violence.

14. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure that girls and women with disabilities are explicitly, adequately included and actively involved in all programs and policies aiming at gender equality and girls and women's empowerment,*

Employment and decent work for all

15. People with disabilities in their vast majorities are excluded from work and employment due to discrimination and prejudice, lack of accessibility, access to education, vocational training and financial services

16. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure that adequate legal frameworks will be adopted to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination and to promote equal access to decent work and employment, including adequate vocational training and that persons with disabilities will be fully included in all economic empowerment programmes and policies,*

Infrastructure, sustainable cities and human settlements, water and sanitation

17. African countries have very poor accessibility whether in terms of dwellings, services, water and sanitation facilities, transports, in cities, rural areas or refugees' settlements.

18. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure that all infrastructures and services, water and sanitation programmes and facilities, transport, information and communication technology programmes, in urban and rural settings as well as refugee settlements, are accessible for all persons with disabilities in their diversity,*

Governance and political participation

19. People with disabilities face multiple barriers in Africa with regards to access to justice, voting, standing for election, being involved in policies and programs' decision making processes

20. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure that legal frameworks and policies are in place to prevent discrimination, including denial of legal capacity, and to support access to justice as well as political participation of all persons with disabilities at all decision-making levels,*

Peaceful and non-violent societies

21. Children and adults with disabilities and their families are more likely to be victims of violence within the community and are disproportionately affected by conflict situation.

22. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to ensure that steps are taken to eliminate violence, abuse, exploitation and torture against persons with disabilities, with particular attention to women and children with disabilities*

Global partnerships for inclusive development

23. Not enough have been done to coordinate between African countries, UN system, bilateral and multi-lateral donors as well as non-state actors to ensure that development is inclusive, and that assistive devices and other needed services are available and affordable for all persons with disabilities in the region

24. *We want the post 2015 development agenda to promote global partnerships between states and non-states actors, Disabled Persons Organisations as well as international organisations to make development inclusive and to ensure access to needed assistive devices and support services.*

Nairobi the 8th March 2014

Annex: list of participants

- Ezekiel Kumwenda, African Federation of Deafblind, Malawi
- Fauzia Haji, Inclusion Africa, Tanzania
- Nickson Ochieng Kakiri, Kenya National Association of Deaf, Kenya
- Annie Robb, Pan African Network of People with Psychosocial Disabilities, South Africa
- Peter Anomah-Kordieh, African Union of Blind, Kenya
- Idriss Maiga, West African Federation Of the Disabled, Niger
- Hon. Rachel Kachaje, South African Federation Of Disabled, Disabled Women in Africa, Disabled People International, Malawi
- Dr. Elly Macha, Eastern Africa Federation of the Disabled, Kenya
- Hon Ms. Godliver Odmondi, Union of Disabled People Kenya (UDPK), Kenya
- Samuel Kabue, Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network, Eastern Africa Federation of the Disabled, Disabled People International, Kenya
- Jean Damascène Nsengiyumva, National Union of Disabilities' Organisations, in Rwanda
- Elizabeth Sifuma Khamala, Kenya National Association of Deaf, Kenya
- Patrick Gift Egessa, Uganda National Association of the Hard of Hearing, Uganda
- Robert Ssewagaudde, World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section Uganda
- Samuel Badege, National Organization of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, Rwanda
- Hazel Binta Nomsa Tobedza, Down Syndrome Association of Botswana
- Imed Ouertani, Organisation Tunisienne de Défense des Droits des Personnes Handicapées, Tunisia
- Nayiga Florence Ssekabira, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
- Martin Babu Mwesigwa, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
- Amina Salehe Mollel Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organizations, Tanzania
- Liapeng Francina Litseho, Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled, Lesotho
- Action Amos Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi
- Edson Ngirabakunzi National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
- Nkhasi Sefuthi Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled, Lesotho
- Isaac Tuggun Ghana Federation of the Disabled, Ghana
- Fredrick Ouko Alucheli, Action Network for the Disabled, Kenya
- Michael Njenga, Pan African Network of People with Psychosocial Disabilities, Kenya
- Fatma Wangari Haji, Inclusion Africa, Kenya
- Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Sightsavers Ghana
- Virginia Tracy Kamowa, Sightsavers, Malawi

- Edwin Osundwa, Sense International, Kenya
- Joseph Walugembe, Action in Disability and Development, Uganda
- Mohammed Gafar Mussa, Action in Disability and Development, Sudan
- Washington Opiyo Sati, Leonard Cheshire Disability East and North Africa Regional Office, Kenya
- Paul Mugambi, Handicap International Kenya,
- Shikuku Obosi Inclusion Africa Kenya
- Dagnachew B. Wakene “Thisability consulting” Ethiopia
- Hon. Safia Nalule Juuko, Ugandan Parliament Human Right Committee, Uganda
- Commissioner Malatji, South African Human Rights Commissioner, South Africa
- Amare Ayalew Kebede, Secretariat of African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, Ethiopia
- Vanessa Dos Santos, Down Syndrome International, board member International disability alliance (IDA), South Africa
- Yannis Vardakastanis, International Disability Alliance Chairperson, Greece
- Colin Allen, World Federation of the Deaf, IDA board member, Australia
- Gabor Gombos, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, IDA board member, Hungary
- Geir Jensen, World Federation of Deaf Blind, IDA board member, Norway
- Klaus Lachwitz, Inclusion International, IDA board member, Germany
- Latoa Halatau, Pacific Disability Forum, IDA board member, Fiji
- Maryanne Diamond, World Blind Union, IDA board member, Australia
- Nawaf Kabbara, Arab Organisation of People with Disabilities, IDA board member, Lebanon
- Patrick Clarke, European Disability Forum, IDA board member, Ireland
- Ruth Warick, International Federation of Hard of Hearing, IDA board member, Canada
- Javier Guemes, European Disability Forum, Spain
- Gitte Robinson, Danish Organisation of persons with disabilities, DPOD, Denmark
- Elizabeth Lockwood, CBM, USA
- Morten Eriksen, Atlas Alliance, Norway
- Irene Mwangi, CBM, Kenya
- Rosemary Nzuki, CBM, Kenya
- Ulrike Last, Handicap International, Eastern Africa
- Cathy Dimbarre Kpehounon, Handicap International Program Rwanda
- Ann-Marit Sæbønes, Atlas Alliance, Norway
- Petronella Masabane, African Union Disability Architecture focal point, Ethiopia

- Emanuele Sapienza, UNDP headquarter, UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Joanina Karugaba, UNHCR, Kenya
- Olivia Collins, UNICEF office in Somalia
- Rosangela Berman Bieler, Senior Adviser on Disabilities, UNICEF Headquarter