**POLICY BRIEF ON SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

Disaster Risk Reduction is intrinsically linked to resilience, especially with climate change in the context of Goal 9, particularly targets 9.1, 9.4 and 9.a. Furthermore, target 9.cspecifically addresses access to ICT and the Internet.

**Introduction: Disability-inclusive resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate change**

Persons with disabilities are among the most affected by climate change and natural disasters. During extreme events persons with disabilities are at greater likelihood of facing death. Hazards can also be a cause of disability. Intersectionality with other vulnerabilities such as gender or age may worsen the effect of climate change on persons with disabilities.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Key issues identified as impacting the well-being of persons with disabilities as a result of climate change are:

* Decreasing food security and resulting malnutrition
* Decreasing access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
* Increasing emergencies due to extreme weather events
* Reducing access to infrastructure, shelter and basic services
* Increasing displacement / migration OR necessary migration not possible due to disability due to barriers, e.g. inaccessible transport and shelter, security especially for women and girls with disabilities
* Increasing human security and protection issues (including due to conflicts resulting from climate change)

Articles 11, 21 and 25 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) call for the inclusion, protection and safety of persons with disabilities, as well as having access to information and services during in emergency situations. Furthermore, persons with disabilities are included in DRR and climate change documents. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030” (SFDRR) contains five explicit references to persons with disabilities, and cites principles of universal design. Additionally, “inclusive” and “accessible” are used throughout the document creating a strong disability-inclusive DRR document. This includes the need for “universally accessible response” and calling for the media to disseminate accurate information in an “accessible manner.”

Persons with disabilities are explicitly referenced in the opening section of the Paris Agreement: “Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, “**persons with disabilities”** and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.”

**Key Recommendations**

* Climate resilience programmes and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies and policies should make disability a core, cross-cutting theme and must be included in the implementation of the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 so that they are both implemented in line with CRPD Articles 11, 21 and 25.
* Persons with disabilites must be systematically and meaningfully included across all aspects of the disaster-management cycle and provision made for cross-learning between the disability community, including DPOs, disability NGOs, and the humanitarian community, to ensure maximum benefit from all resources/knowledge.[[2]](#endnote-2)
* States should ensure that disability issues and needs form part of the training required for certification as a first responder or disaster relief professional.
* Ensure physical and informational infrastructure that incorporates universal design principles to improve the chances of safety and survival of all of society, including persons with disabilities.
* Strengthen disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction planning, including migrants and refugees with disabilities.
* Ensure proper assessment of people affected by disasters with the aim to identify persons with disabilities, including those with less visible forms of disability, such as psychosocial and intellectual disabilities and provide them with adequate support.
* Climate funds are being created to assist in mitigation, adaptation and building resilience in the poorest and most affected countries. Strong advocacy by and with persons with disabilities is needed to ensure disability inclusion is a key criterion in all climate funds.
* In the reconstruction phase following severe weather and other emergencies it is essential that universal accessibility standards are applied. This is important for all public buildings and spaces, water and sanitation points and for the homes where persons with disabilities live.
* Measure the number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disasters among the disability population and the number of least-developed countries and Small Island Developing States receiving special support that are focusing on persons with disabilities.

**Introduction: Accessible ICT and Internet access for persons with disabilities**

Persons with disabilities around the world frequently encounter lack of accessibility in built environments, transport and information and communication services, including relevant information and communications technologies (ICTs).[[3]](#endnote-3) These barriers often deny persons with disabilities access and inclusion into mainstream society. Yet the implementation of accessible technology is feasible and has benefitted the lives of persons with disabilities in countries such as Canada, Sweden, Germany, Mexico and New Zealand.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), establishes accessibility in a more comprehensive manner as a cross-cutting factor that enables persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life and is in Articles 2, 3, 4 and 9. To be a truly inclusive society, technology developed for use in emergency crises, employment, and in community settings must be developed to be accessible for persons with disabilities

**Key Recommendations**

* Increase governments, private sector and policy makers’ awareness of the need for accessible technology
* To effectively promote accessibility, the universal design concept and relevant technical standards should be applied in the earliest stages of development
* To harmonize standards through the exchange of good practices
* Support from governments on supporting ICT adapted to persons with disabilities
* To include persons with disabilities in all phases of the process: from policy-making of ICT accessibility to the implementation and monitoring of accessible websites.
* Establish mechanisms to evaluate accessibility of ICT systems, especially considering the rapid development of new ICT devices and program, for example, a digital social innovation platform that facilitates the collective awareness and digital inclusion of persons with disabilities in the urban & social landscape
* Strengthen research and development on accessible technology solutions for persons with disabilities
* Provide training for technology professions on accessible technology
* Lower the cost of assistive technologies
* Mainstream and advocate the use of universal design principles

1. Additional details from the HLPF 2016 paper “Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders,” (p. 56-57, paras 260-264) <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLPF/2016/2&Lang=E> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Refer to 2.5a at <http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. World Health Organization and World Bank, World Report on Disability, 2011. Geneva, 2011, p. 29 and p. 262-263. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)