



BRIEF
Donor's Round table Discussion on Disability Inclusion
Kabul – Afghanistan
May 2019

People with disabilities are among the **most marginalized**, are excluded in **community life** and are often **simultaneously deprived of opportunities**. They experience disadvantage because of disability and face a host of barriers in their bid for self-determination and agency.

Afghanistan has signed different legal policies and international frameworks which show the State's willingness to address the needs of people with disabilities and to promote their equal access and inclusion. These include the signing of **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with**

One objective: Inclusion

Access to services (health, education, livelihood, social protection etc.) is the heart of fighting poverty. Breaking the barriers that prevent access can have a direct impact on improving a person's quality of life and enhancing their level of economic, social and cultural inclusion. This is why a multi- sectorial approach is needed.

Disabilities (CRPD)¹ in 2012, which highlights what States should do to promote the realization of rights and is seen as both a human rights instrument and a development tool that is cross-disability and cross-sector. Afghanistan is also keen on implementation of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**² which explicitly include

disability in goals #4, 8, 10, 11 and goal # 17 specifically highlights importance of collecting disability disaggregated data. With support of UNDP, the country is on process to develop nationalized targets and indicators for monitoring SDGs implementation.

In 2019, Afghanistan joined the **Charter on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action** and has developed various policies and strategies and in which, access to services for people with disabilities is addressed. These include Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), the Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS) and the strategy on Inclusive Education.

These are positive efforts to applaud and more needs to be done make these provisions a reality. For this to happen, **conscious efforts** should be made to ensure that no one is left behind through ensuring the **removal of barriers to participation**, including removal of institutional, attitudinal barriers, **recognition**

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>

² <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

of diversity, tailored approaches and promoting meaningful participation of people with disabilities - which form the core dimensions of inclusion and contribute to reduce inequality.

Key gaps and areas of action in the government and the disability movement

1. Gaps between the ascension to international instruments, development of policy and strategies and their actual implementation and monitoring.

Since the signing the CRPD in 2012, the government of Afghanistan has not submitted the State Report on the status of its implementation. The last Afghan National Disability Action Plan (ANDAP, 2011) was developed through concerted efforts of various stakeholders, but there was no dedicated budget to accompany its implementation.

The development of the National Disability Strategy started in 2018, through a consultation process with disability is yet to be finalized. This process is led by State Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled. An action plan for its implementation will need to be developed and should be linked to budget allocations for its aspiration to be met. This strategy is proposed to run from 2018 -2027.

The National Law on the Rights and entitlements of People with Disabilities has been effect from 2010. Some of it clauses are not in line with the CRPD, such as the Article 6 and 7 which promote the medical model to determine who is considered to be disabled and eligibility criteria which discriminates around groups of people with disabilities in access to social protection from the state.

The donor community can, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, support efforts to finalize the National Disability Strategy and support its implementation by aligning their strategies to it.

2. Capacity within the government

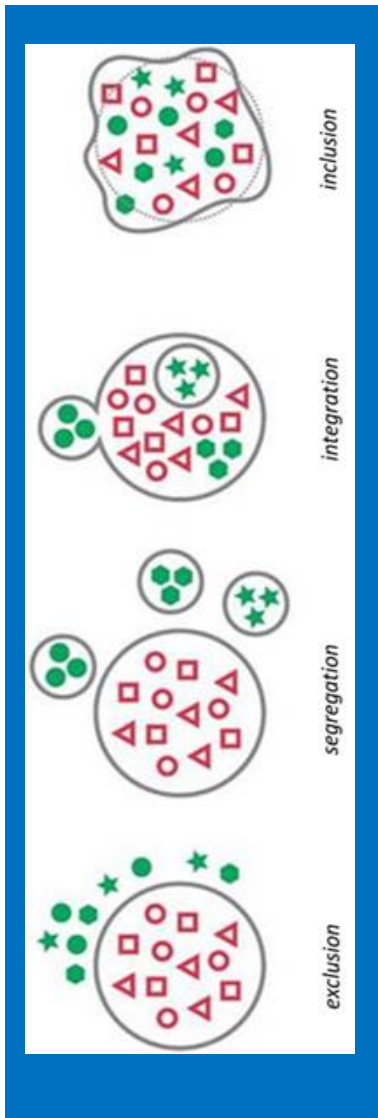
The State Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs (MMD) has recently been created and it is charged with the responsibility to ensure protection of right of people with disabilities. There is a clear need to build the capacity of this ministry not only on day to day running of the ministry, but in the understanding of general legal and policy environment (SDGs, CRPD action etc.) and how to concretely support disability inclusion in broader development agenda. On coordination within the government, MMD is the chair of the Inter-ministerial committee and this in itself is a good opportunity to bring disability inclusion across ministries into the agenda.

The donor community can support to build the capacities of MMD at both central and provincial level.



3. Gaps in availability of data on disability

The last country-wide survey in Afghanistan, carried out in 2005 by Handicap International in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) showed that 10.8 % of people in the country live with a severe or very severe disability. OCHA's October – December 2018 Humanitarian Bulletin highlighted that “prevalence of disability is becoming a main concern” in humanitarian intervention. While there are efforts to collect data, there is need to improve data quality in order to inform the planning of services to adequately address the needs of people with disabilities.



The donor community and civil society can promote the use of unified method of collecting data through use of standardized tools such the Washington Group Questions (WGQs) which allow for self-reporting of disability in a destigmatizing way and allows comparability. Indeed, donors should commit and demand that all programs that they fund provide disaggregated data on age, gender and disability.

4. Minimal dialogue between Organizations Representative of People with Disabilities (such as Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) and decision makers

DPOs are essential actors to improve the participation of people with disabilities and have a special role in promoting inclusive societies. There are approximately 100 DPOs in Afghanistan and most of them are concentrated in Kabul. DPOs have made efforts to organize and advocate for their rights including advocating for shelter, employment, welfare payment etc. However, they are relatively weak in terms of their organizational capacity and are not confident enough in the social/rights model approach to challenge and lobby for their rights on a more extensive scale. Overall they have limited management capacity and often lack clear plans for how to mobilise and strengthen their membership base. There is a real need to facilitate a learning process between DPOs and their members and from DPOs to policy makers.

The donor community can support to build their membership base, strengthen their internal organizational and technical capacities to raise awareness and advocate for their rights. A stronger civil society movement will be able to engage meaningfully with decisions makers and contribute to shape and influence formulation of inclusive policies and strategies.

For more exchange on disability inclusion, contact

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