DISABLED PEOPLES' INTERNATIONAL (DPI)

35th International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2026
UNCRPD at 20: Building on Progress, Advancing the Future

DPI Statement Report

Dear DPI Members, Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI), I extend our best wishes and solidarity to the global movement of persons with disabilities on the 35th International Day of Persons with Disabilities and UNCRPD at 20: Building on Progress, Advancing the Future.

The adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006 was a historic achievement, made possible by decades of advocacy, leadership, and relationship-building by DPI with its members, key stakeholders, and disability rights activists worldwide. As we mark 20 years of the Convention, we must turn commitments into measurable results.

Despite progress, 1.3 billion persons with disabilities continue to face discrimination, poverty, inaccessible environments, limited employment and educational opportunities, and exclusion from leadership and decision-making. Legal recognition of rights is not enough; every state must ensure that these rights are effectively realized in everyday life.

Over the past 20 years, progress in advancing the rights and development of persons with disabilities worldwide has been driven significantly by the intellectual engagement, contributions, leadership, and tireless advocacy of DPI, its member organizations, and thousands of grassroots OPDs. These achievements have not come easily. They have required continuous struggle to overcome institutional hypocrisy, the exploitation of persons with disabilities and their organizations, conspiracies by vested-interest groups, funding challenge, and numerous other barriers.

DPI is deeply concerned that many organizations claiming to advance the rights of persons with disabilities employ overwhelmingly persons without disabilities, while the representation of persons with disabilities in employment, leadership, management, and decision-making remains below 5%. Furthermore, persons with disabilities directly benefit from less than 5% of the funds spent by these organizations. Therefore, development of persons with disabilities must be led through their own representative organizations—not merely delivered on their behalf. Donors must critically examine who leads these organizations, who receives the funding, who benefits from it, and whether persons with disabilities have genuine power, equal opportunities, and meaningful control over decisions and resources.

Since 1981, DPI has championed the rights of persons with disabilities from grassroots communities to global platforms. Its contribution to the UNCRPD and the collective strength demonstrated through its national assembly's reflect the real leadership, capacity, and resilience of our movement.

DPI calls upon governments, the United Nations, donors, development partners, and organizations claiming they work for persons with disabilities to take five concrete actions:

1. **Accountability:** Implement the UNCRPD through national laws, policies, action plans, adequate budgets, and transparent monitoring.
2. **Direct Funding:** Provide direct financial and institutional support to DPI and representative Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to strengthen their independence and sustainability.
3. **Leadership:** Ensure that persons with disabilities lead and participate meaningfully in decision-making, planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring.
4. **Equal Opportunities:** Guarantee accessibility, education, employment, social protection, political participation, and independent living.
5. **Measurable Results:** Evaluate programmes based on actual improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities, not merely promises, activities, or reports.

I remain committed to honoring the legacy of DPI's founders and past leaders while strengthening DPI's unity, institutional capacity, and global influence. We must urgently develop clear position papers, strengthen our grassroots foundations, and unite to sustain DPI as a vital global safeguard for the rights of 1.3 billion persons with disabilities.

As we look towards the next 20 years, let us move beyond promises and demand action, accountability, and genuine partnership.

Nothing About Us Without Us!

Together, let us build a world where political participation, equality, dignity, freedom, justice, and human rights are realities for all persons with disabilities.

Long Live DPI! Long Live the Global Movement of Persons with Disabilities!

Abdus Sattar Dulal
World President
Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)
Email: dpiworldpresident@gmail.com