



PACIFIC DISABILITY FORUM  
AFRICAN DISABILITY FORUM  
EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM

## The Cairo Declaration

We, people with disabilities and disabled people's organizations (DPOs) representing 66 countries from around the world, have participated in the international conference titled **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – “No one left behind”** organized by the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD) in partnership with Disabled People's International (DPI).

We extend our appreciation for the welcome and support received from the Egyptian Government who generously hosted this international conference.

A special thank you to the Arab Organization of Person with Disabilities (AOPD) for organizing this conference. DPI welcomed regional organizations representing persons of disabilities from all over the world, including RIADIS Latin America, ADF in Africa and PDF in Asia pacific region, which contributed to the success of the conference.

This conference, in part, is a celebration of DPI's 35th anniversary and the opportunity to host DPI's 9th World Assembly. But most importantly the world is commemorating 10 years of the adoption of the first Human Right Treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which has been ratified by 162 States, which represent 84% of the United Nations (UN) members.

However, we express our concern that ten years after the CRPD, some governments in the world have not ratified the Convention. Furthermore in a majority of countries, the charity and medical paradigms are still the dominant philosophies adopted to engage with disabilities issues. Persons with disabilities in these countries are not treated as equal citizens, and we recognize that society must restructure itself, culturally and physically to meet the demands.

After the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda in 2015, we, people with disabilities, from all over the world, gathered here, in Cairo, Egypt, in high appreciation that the world is finally considering disability as a Human Rights issue, and is including persons with disabilities in the 2030 sustainable development agendas, actions and processes.

The 2030 sustainable development agenda includes disability in 7 of the 169 agreed upon targets. This has been the result of the efforts of the global disability community, however, we strongly believe that disability related issues must be included in most of the targets, in particular those related to the alleviation of poverty.



Recognizing that 15% of the world's population is fitting the description of disability as outlined in the CRPD, we also recognize that many more human beings will fall under the CRPD definition of disability in their lifetime; this means that disability is an ordinary condition of life and that policies that benefit the target group of the CRPD benefits nearly all seven (7) billion people that inhabit the world sometime in their life.

Today we all focus our efforts on ensuring that the indicators of the 2030 sustainable development agenda include the concerns of people with disabilities. In particular we feel that questions related to health care, inclusive education, employment, independent living, social protection schemes, and accessibility should highly consider persons with disabilities.

We recognize that science, technology and innovative development cycles are ever shorter and are influencing the success of the 2030 agenda; disabled people and others acknowledge that problems related to science, technology and innovation development are not limited to disabled people not having access to related products and developments, but also can exhibit other problems such as changing perceptions of expectations of people that can also hurt disabled people.

Acknowledging further that many of the governance discussions are happening in an anticipatory way, meaning at the conceptual stage of science, technology and innovation developments; we believe that a way must be found that allows disabled people to be part of science, technology and innovation governance discourses at all stages, in a meaningful and continuous way so that disabled people can react to and advise on emerging issues.

The world in general, and in particular the Arab world, is facing a major humanitarian crisis resulting from war and conflict. It is the position of the conferees that violence and wars will only bring more disaster, destruction and human misery. It is our belief that we, as human beings have the means and tools to communicate with each other, and to put our common goals for a peaceful and just world, in front of our particular interests and egoism, and to use many available peaceful conflict resolution tools to deal with differences and confrontation.

With all the conventions and treaties signed and adopted thus far concerning the Human Rights of the citizens of the World, the international response to different humanitarian crisis including the current situations faced by the Arab Region are far from meeting the minimum required measures and criteria that meet the basic human rights for all humanity. Ten years after the CRPD, different humanitarian interventions still need to have a better understanding of the needs of refugees with disabilities and to remember all those victims with disabilities who cannot travel and escape.



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Based on the above, Disabled People's International (DPI), the Arab Organizations of Persons With Disability (AOPD), RIADIS, Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), and African Disability Forum (ADF), representing people with disabilities worldwide, call upon all human rights activists and organizations to join together in solidarity with people with disabilities including refugees, women and children, and aboriginal persons who live in constant violation of their basic human rights. DPI, AOPD, RIADIS ADF, and PDF call upon all members, supporters and partners to join hands and fight discrimination, marginalization, and abuse, in every aspect.

We, persons with disability from all over the World who have met in Cairo, call for the empowerment of all marginalized people; we call for participation in all political offices to ensure that our voice is heard; we call upon those who oppose the practice of hate, discrimination and oppression; and to adopt the language of humanity that unites human beings. We recognize that sustainability requires greater equality.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN in 1948, clearly states that "all human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity". Let us all work together for a world that knows how to respect the dignity for all humanity regardless of any differences. Let us all join hands to fight poverty, pollution, mismanagement of resources and lack of justice. Let us work for a world that respects everyone as free conscious human beings.

We call on the disability movements and human rights organizations to unite and place our common interests for equality and non-discrimination at the forefront of their agenda. We call upon all United Nation agencies to apply inclusion in their programs, and to consider persons with disabilities as major participants in the development of their programs with a strategy based on our philosophy and practice "nothing for us without us".

We call for the empowerment of people with disabilities and for their full participation in the social and political life of their countries and their local communities.



## Participants Call

*Taking in account* the related articles of *UN CRPD*;

*Remembering the Sustainable Development Goals*; the *Sendai framework* on the prevention of risk of disaster; the *Bioethics approach* towards persons with disabilities of the Bioethics Committee of the Republic of San Marino; the *Education for all* outlined by UNESCO; the *CBR guidelines* of WHO, ILO, UNESCO, the *Decent Work* of ILO, the regional instruments related to persons with disabilities rights including: *Incheon strategy*, *EU strategy* on Disability, *Regional Decade* of Disability, *Action Plan* on Disability *of the Council of Europe*, etc., the *Final Observations* to the National Report of the *State parties* of the UN Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

The DPI World Assembly calls upon International, Regional and National Authorities to commit to:

### **Poverty (Article 28)**

- All persons with disabilities, as part of society making up 15 % of the population, must benefit from economic, social and cultural development;
- Dealing with the seventeen (17) issues of the 2030 agenda must include persons with disabilities, representing the poorest of the poor in the world, with appropriate indicators, measures taken to remove barriers and discrimination and support their participation in the national PRSP;
- Persons with disabilities must be included in all projects of international cooperation financed by the donors in developing countries that have ratified the CRPD, with particular attention to empower the DPOs, the essential voice to make sustainable the implementation of the CRPD;
- Removing environmental and social barriers to achieve an accessible society benefits everyone because most persons during their lifetime will fall under the CRPD definition of disability;
- The data collection on disability must be based on the CRPD definition of disability and Article 31 of CRPD. Only appropriate, disaggregated data to gender support the policies related to implementation of CRPD.

### **Inclusive education (Article 24)**

- All children, and all students with disabilities, have the right to be educated on an equal basis with others, and to have access to high quality education in mainstream settings with the appropriate personalized support;
- All school buildings must be accessible, and appropriate, disaggregated data must be collected to identify barrier free facilities and to identify barriers in existence that hinder the generation of barrier free facilities for persons with disabilities.
- States Parties of the CRPD should move to inclusive education setting, with the appropriate policies addressed to remove discrimination and promote equal opportunity.

### **Women and girl with disabilities (Article 6)**

- Gender policies at international, regional and national levels should mainstream the rights of women and girl with disabilities in all areas of human rights;
- Women and girls with disabilities must be empowered with appropriate support and skills to fully participate in the life and decisions of their community.
- Independent living (Article 19)
- All the measures and welfare systems should be based on the goal of independent living of persons with disabilities, take into account the age, gender and type and level of support needed;

Persons with disabilities must be empowered to understand, choose and manage independent living, with appropriate support (Independent Living Centers, peer counseling, individualized budget and personal assistant).

### **Bioethics and Technology (Articles 4, 20, 26, 29, 32)**

- Bioethics approach towards persons with disabilities must be based on UNCRPD principles, definition and norms, respecting their human rights;
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in a meaningful and continuous way in discussions and decision making processes around bioethics issues affecting the life of persons with disabilities;
- People with disabilities must be involved as experts in research on topics that impact them
- **Prevention of Disaster and Humanitarian Aids (Article 11)**
  - Include persons with disabilities rights and needs in all actions related to prevention of disaster and intervention in the case of humanitarian aids;
  - Involve DPOs on all level of activities to plan, rescue and manage the humanitarian aids;
  - The human rights and fundamental freedoms of refugees with disabilities must be respected in all activity related to humanitarian aids.
  - Boys and Girls with Disabilities (Article 7)
  - Boys and girls with disabilities must benefit from all policies, program and legislation in favour of minors in a mainstreaming form, taking into account the age, gender and type and level of support.

### **Employment and Social Protection (Art. 27, 28)**

- DPI calls upon all governments to adopt social protection policies and programs inclusive of persons with disabilities that will safeguard persons with disabilities rights in the areas of health, education, employment, mobility and retirement;
- To ask governments to respect and implement employment laws adopted in their countries for persons with disabilities and to encourage the private sector to employ persons with disabilities through different tax relief schemes.