The Impact of Climate Change on People with Disabilities

Report of the e-discussion hosted by

The Global Partnership for Disability & Development (GPDD)

and

The World Bank (Human Development Network - Social Protection/Disability & Development Team

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The Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD), in partnership with the World Bank's Disability and Development team, held a five-day long e-discussion on the *Impact of Climate Change on People with Disabilities*, facilitated by **Dr. Maria Kett**, from **Leonard Cheshire Disability**, and **Valerie Scherrer**, from the **Christian Blind Mission**. Dr. Kett and Ms. Scherrer are both engaged in work for the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). Due to existing inequities and disparities, people with disabilities will face a disproportionate impact due to climate change. People with disabilities and their families need adaptation and coping strategies and robust systems and mechanisms that can mitigate and minimize the harmful effects of climate change, and promote sustainable access to basic necessities, secure livelihoods, health care, and social and civic participation. The objective of the e-discussion was to share information and knowledge about the needs of people with disabilities and good practices for inclusion in situations such as natural and man-made disasters, emergencies, violence and conflict, scarcity of resources, and development efforts, all of which will be affected by climate change. The e-discussion was divided into two main thematic areas:

    I.   Inclusive Disasters, Emergency, and Conflict Management, and

   II.   Basic Necessities & Poverty Reduction

The issues raised in the e-discussion are summarized below:

I. Inclusive Disasters, Emergency, and Conflict Management

Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, give examples of good practices, and promote efforts that can substantially improve disaster response for people with disabilities and their families. They raised several different issues, while also providing case studies and examples that give an insight into efforts on the ground. Despite some positive

developments, gaps in accessibility continue in recovery and reconstruction efforts and most mainstream initiatives do not address the needs of people with disabilities. Stigma remains one of the most intractable barriers towards the inclusion of disability issues in disaster response. Although international and mainstream actors assert that they want to include the needs of people with disabilities in their Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities they claim that they do not have the necessary "expertise/capacity/specialization." As a result, the needs of people with disabilities continue to be labeled as "special needs," which is severely detrimental to efforts for promoting inclusive practices. Disability and humanitarian organizations have to strengthen alliances to effectively integrate disability in disaster management. There were significant concerns that even when disability is included in disaster management policies and planning, there is a severe lack of implementation and know-how to translate policy into effective practice. Participants felt that the disability community has to work towards demystifying disability, providing technical guidance on appropriate measures to address different disabilities, and demonstrating the feasibility of inclusive disaster management through practical solutions. Sometimes mainstream services may be inadequate to fully address the needs of individuals with disabilities. In such cases, a "twin track approach" can get individuals appropriate access to both mainstream and specialized services through effective networking and coordination between the mainstream actors and disability service providers. Recommendations were provided to respond to violence and protection of individuals with disabilities in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations.

People with disabilities who also belong to other minority groups based on gender, race, or ethnicity may face added disadvantages in having their needs met in a disaster situation. A broader view towards practices inclusive of all needs would ensure that response and service delivery is not fragmented but mindful of all sources of vulnerability.

Finally, participants discussed methods to balance limited resources in developing countries with the need to ensure that individuals with disabilities people with disabilities are not excluded from disaster preparedness, response, relief, and reconstruction. The main challenges faced by governments in addressing disability issues were listed as: lack of financial resources; lack of knowledge, problem solving, and on-site advocates on disability issues; lack of international guidance, through the international coordination mechanisms, and donor priorities. Respondents stressed the need to provide these governments with practical, cost-effective, realistic, and relevant examples from the developing world.

II. Basic Necessities & Poverty Reduction

Changes in weather patterns and natural resources can severely affect food and water availability and result in changes to occupational trends and forced migrations. These changes will also impact on-going development and poverty reduction efforts. Respondents shared their concerns about maintaining access to food and water distribution, and stressed the need for accessible distribution sources. Occupations relying on natural resources and weather patterns are most likely to be directly impacted by climate change. Respondents suggested the need to tackle barriers to agricultural occupations for people with disabilities, which may multiply due to climate change, while also highlighting the need for alternate livelihood training in the event of forced migration – often an effect of climate change. Development efforts must consider access to economic resources for people with disabilities to offset the negative impacts of climate change on poverty reduction.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Need for an e-discussion on the impact of climate change on people with disabilities

Climate change can result in grave consequences for human well-being, development, and security through increased exposure to severe weather conditions such as floods and droughts that will directly aggravate the risks of disease and poor-health, inadequate drinking water and food scarcity, loss of livelihoods, migration, violence, and conflict (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2007). Vulnerable and marginalized groups including the poorest populations in low and middle income countries will face a disproportionate impact of climate change and this will threaten the effectiveness and success of development and poverty-reduction efforts [UNDP; The World Bank, 2006, 2009a]. Additionally, resource scarcity may intensify existing inequalities and result in greater fissures between communities and a rise in violence and conflict. Conversely, existing inequalities can also exacerbate individuals' vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2007).

While different populations may face similar risks of exposure to the negative effects of climate change, their actual vulnerability is socially constructed i.e. it is dependent on their socio-economic conditions and the available resources and infrastructure (Morrow, 1999). People with disabilities constitute a significant proportion of the poorest of the poor in the world (Hoogevan, 2005; McClain-Nhlapo, C., 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008) and face inequalities in access to education (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009), health care (Cheausuwantavee, 2007; Sherr & Blumhardt, 2002), employment (Eide & Kamaleri, 2009; Hoogevan; Loeb & Aide, 2004), asset accumulation (Hartnett, Mendelsohn, & Morris, 2008), and opportunities for social and community participation

(Handicap International & the Christian Blind Mission, 2006). More than 80% of people with disabilities live in low and middle income countries (World Health Organization [WHO], 2009). Individuals with disabilities are disproportionately affected in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations due to the lack of accessibility in evacuation, response, and recovery efforts, and exclusion of disability issues in planning and preparedness (Center for International Rehabilitation [CIR], 2005; Fox, White, Rooney & Rowland, 2007; National Council on Disability, 2006; Priestley & Hemingway, 2007). Food and drinking water scarcity will increase malnutrition rates and poor health conditions leading to a greater risk of acquiring a health-related disability (McMichael et al., 2003). These social and economic inequities will have a snowballing effect on their vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change.

People with disabilities and their families need adaptation and coping strategies and robust systems and mechanisms that can mitigate and minimize the harmful effects of climate change, and promote sustainable access to basic necessities, secure livelihoods, health care, and social and civic participation. However, there is a lack of documented information about the disparate impacts of climate change on people with disabilities, and their needs have not been included in most vulnerability assessments or reports on mitigation, adaptation, and coping strategies. This does not imply that no information or knowledge exists about the needs of people with disabilities or good practices for inclusion in situations such as natural and man-made disasters, emergencies, violence and conflict, scarcity of resources, and development efforts, all of which will be affected by climate change. By building on this knowledge, and sharing information among people with disabilities, disabled peoples organizations (DPOs), other civil society organizations, academics, disability advocates, development practitioners, donor agencies, and policy makers, we can begin to build new mechanisms or strengthen existing ones to adequately prepare for the realities and effects of climate change.

The Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD) in partnership with the World Bank's Disability and Development team, hosted an E-Discussion on the *Impact of Climate Change on People with Disabilities* from December 8-12, 2009 to promote discussion on the subject within the disability and development communities. Facilitated by **Dr. Maria Kett**, from **Leonard Cheshire Disability**, and **Valerie Scherrer**, from the **Christian Blind Mission**, both of who are engaged in work for the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), the e-discussion attracted 127 participants from several countries who enriched the dialogue by sharing knowledge, experiences, case studies, stories, and literature. Participants included people with disabilities, representatives of Disabled Peoples' Organizations (DPOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), relief organizations, disaster and emergency management communities, development practitioners, donors, and academics. This e-discussion was not an empirical or systematic investigation into the consequences of climate change for people with disabilities or potential solutions to mitigate or minimize its impact. Rather, it was intended as an open platform to share experiences, opinions, and good practices between people engaged in different fields of work such as inclusive development, disaster and emergency management, advocacy and awareness-raising, and poverty reduction. This report summarizes the issues raised during the discussion and is based entirely on the thoughts, experiences, examples, and opinions shared by the participants, except where external sources are cited. Hence it is by its very nature a subjective account of the impact of climate change on people with disabilities.

1.2 Content and structure of the e-discussion

To maximize its usability and coverage of different critical issues, the discussion was structured around two primary thematic areas:

III. Inclusive Disasters, Emergency, and Conflict Management (Days 1-3), and

IV. Basic Necessities & Poverty Reduction (Days 4-5)

Additionally, it sought to draw out sustainable adaptation and coping strategies to prepare adequately for these emerging concerns.

Each day, one of the facilitators would share a list of questions to initiate discussion on a sub-topic and also summarize the previous day's postings. The entire set of questions and instructions are included in Appendix C. The GPDD Secretariat moderated all the postings to ensure that the content was respectful. The report is organized into the different themes that emerged from the discussion across all five days. Section I focuses on inclusive disaster management,[1] while Section II tackles issues of basic resource limitations, health, and poverty reduction efforts.

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[1] The term "inclusive disaster management" is used in this report generally to refer to planning, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts across natural and man-made disasters, emergency situations, and emergency response issues (such as evacuation, sheltering, and aid distribution) arising in violence, war, and conflict situations.

II. INCLUSIVE DISASTER, EMERGENCY, AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Following disasters and emergency situations in the past few years, such as the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, several efforts were made to highlight the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the disaster preparedness, response, and recovery process and share knowledge on best practices and strategies to ensure that people with disabilities are involved in emergency preparedness and planning, and that response and recovery efforts address their needs. (See for example: NCD, 2006; Nobody Left Behind, 2007; CIR, 2005; Hans & Mohanty, 2006; US Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2009; WHO, 2005; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2008). See Appendix A for other sources provided by e-discussion participants.

However we need to assess whether lessons learned were systematically and successfully applied to more recent disasters and understand and highlight the barriers and challenges that continue to exist in our communities. The first portion of the e-discussion was dedicated to examining recent developments, or the lack of progress, in inclusive disaster management. It sought to identify the barriers and facilitators to meeting the needs of people with disabilities during disasters, emergencies, and conflict. Additionally, participants were requested to think about the potential solutions and initiatives that can facilitate significant improvements and changes in the way in which disability is conceptualized and addressed in disaster management. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, give examples of good practices, and promote efforts that can substantially improve disaster response for people with disabilities and their families. This section highlights the different issues that were raised by the participants, along with case studies and examples that give an insight into efforts on the ground.

2.1 Heightened vulnerability and the needs of people with disabilities in disasters

A disturbing and frequently cited concern expressed by several participants was the heightened vulnerability of people with disabilities in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations. Common experiences reveal that at the onset of a disaster, emergency, or conflict situation, people with disabilities are more likely to be left behind or abandoned during evacuation. One participant mentioned emerging stories of how people with disabilities were left behind in the rush to escape tides and winds when cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar in May 2008. Additionally, the disruption to physical, social, economic and environmental networks and support systems disproportionately affected people with disabilities. This resonates with experiences of individuals with disabilities in other parts of the world in the aftermath of a disaster. Another concern is the potential for discrimination on the basis of disability when resources are scarce in the immediate response and long-term recovery period. As one participant summarized, "whenever there is a scarcity of resources, those who are historically excluded from society, in general, are especially likely to experience barriers and access issues when resources are diminished overall."

Although some positive developments are certainly in place, gaps in accessibility continue in recovery and reconstruction efforts, as documented through a contributor's observations on reconstruction efforts in Indonesia after the Yogyakarta and Central Java earthquake in 2006:

> … a fair number of actors ensured reconstruction efforts included improved access. This also included specific projects, including watsan [water and sanitation], targeting people with disabilities. However, many public buildings (including schools) were not rebuilt with basic facilities such as ramps and accessible toilets…This is disappointing

especially considering relevant Indonesian construction guidelines have been in place for some time.

Another participant shared how disaster management personnel are trying to address the needs of people with disabilities in India:

> In India, the Disaster Risk Management Programme covering 17 states have been trying to address the issue of differentially abled in the planning process for preparedness and response by ensuring that segregated data is available for effective response. The Evacuation, Search and Rescue and First Aid teams have this information in readiness for effective response.

Such efforts at gathering data on people with disabilities in communities in advance often get mixed responses from the disability community and advocates. Some fear that mechanisms to register people with disabilities in communities (often referred to as registries) would raise the risk of privacy violations and intrusion by the government who could easily use the data for other purposes. Others feel that it is important to differentiate between "government involvement, intervention and intrusion," especially since governments do play a central and significant role in disaster response. There is a need to balance individuals' privacy rights with the government's ability to ensure that everyone's basic needs are met in a disaster including rescue, evacuation, sheltering, and aid distribution. Self or community identification as opposed to mandatory registration for disaster planning purposes could be a potential solution.

2.2 Stigma towards people with disabilities

Stigma remains one of the most intractable barriers towards the inclusion of disability issues in disaster response, and it is difficult indeed to legislate to change people's attitudes. A participant described how displaced people affected by leprosy in Sudan were not allowed by "other refugees into the [refugee] camps," but had to go to the local leprosy village. This in turn makes it necessary to raise the awareness of relief agencies about such situations so that they can ensure appropriate distribution of food and relief operations to multiple sites as opposed to the refugee camps only.

2.3 Mitigation and Inclusive Preparedness

Instead of being purely reactive, disaster management has to include effective and inclusive mitigation efforts that consider how communities can prevent or minimize the effects of hazards and the economic, social, and political costs of these events. Mitigation also involves personal preparedness for individuals with disabilities such as a plan that meets their needs, a strong social network they can rely on, plan for their service animals, and having an emergency kit adjusted to local needs. For example, the state of Maryland in the United States has invested heavily in preparing both people with disabilities and the local emergency management personnel to ensure that all are as prepared as possible and that people with disabilities are more aware of the capabilities of the local and state governments. However, this may only address emergency response issues narrowly without meeting the larger need for accessible and inclusive communities, as suggested by a respondent:

> Interestingly, all these efforts (in Maryland) have been directed at response mostly;
> ensuring buildings are accessible for entry and exit, have plans for in-place sheltering or

evacuation (technology and equipment), preparing personal emergency kits, among many others. Nevertheless, individuals with disabilities remain vulnerable in terms of residential segregation, institutional discrimination, access to crucial goods and services (healthcare, employment, transportation).

Similarly, some state emergency management officials in Mexico have been adapting their response plans, information dissemination and warning systems, and shelters to address the needs of people with disabilities and others such as indigenous groups. However, as in the example above, "individuals with disabilities and other highly vulnerable groups are still living in great poverty, segregated, with significant barriers to many other goods and services that only increases their vulnerability."

2.4 Continuing exclusion of disability in mainstream disaster management efforts

Participants shared their recent exposure to mainstream practices in improving disaster management, and expressed disappointment that even though there has been some progress, the needs of people with disabilities are excluded from most initiatives. For example, appropriate accessibility usually does not appear to form part of reconstruction criteria, and though this issue has been raised by international disability organizations with several global agencies, policies and practices have not been updated to reflect this. A respondent noted that experiences of people with disabilities during the war in Lebanon in 2006 showed that only DPOs were making efforts to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. The lack of accessible vehicles and assistive medical equipment prohibited the evacuation of many people with disabilities during the war. Although international and mainstream actors assert that they want to include the needs of people with disabilities in their Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities they claim that they do not have the necessary "expertise/capacity/specialization" in

this issue due to the conceptualization of disability as purely a medical condition. As a result, the needs of people with disabilities continue to be labeled as "special needs," which is severely detrimental to efforts for promoting inclusive practices. As a participant stated, "in an emergency, being special is not only not a good thing, it can actually be deadly." In fact, preparing to meet the needs of people with disabilities benefits the entire community and optimizes limited and precious resources.

Participants questioned the extent to which disability is really mainstreamed in UN humanitarian responses, in particular the Cluster Approach, advocated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC, 2007) Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning through its planning guidelines on humanitarian assistance. The cluster approach is intended to improve inter-agency planning, predictability, and accountability in disaster response, by promoting a strategic and coordinated response across key stakeholders in different clusters (areas of activity), with each cluster having a designated leader (IASC, 2007). Various organizations have been involved in the development and are often deputy cluster leads in the various countries (e.g. IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning, composed of members from CARE, ICRC2, IFRC, OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO and co-chaired by WFP and UNICEF). Disability should be integrated into such approaches as an issue that cuts across multiple sectors, similar to the mainstreaming of gender across clusters. Respondents suggested a "guerilla approach to infiltrating all of the existing clusters" towards inclusion rather than advocating a separate IASC Cluster on Disability. Coordinated quality control in each cluster could ensure accessible communications, transportation, shelters, sanitation, and relevant post-disaster education. Similarly, forums such as HAPs (Humantarian Action Plan) and CAPs (Consolidated Appeals Process) in countries with ongoing emergencies should have committees that cover a disability as a cross-cutting issue. Currently, cross-cutting

issues in the IASC humanitarian reform include gender, age, HIV and the environment. However, this would require major international disability or other non-governmental organizations to take the lead in representing disability in different clusters and advocating for inclusion in other committees. In the past, disability sub-clusters have been formed in response to some disasters such as Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008.

Respondents shared some examples of policies that do mention disability, such as the need for DRR education for children with disabilities was added to BIWAKO plus 5 and the Bangkok Action Agenda. The European Community Humanitarian Aid department's (ECHO) Disaster Preparedness ECHO program's (DIPECHO) Sixth Action Plan also made reference to the needs of people with disabilities. The Third Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR held in Malaysia mentioned disabilities in its recommendations. Another key inter-agency initiative, the Sphere Project, has also released minimum standards for disaster response through a great deal of work by humanitarian organizations. As one participant explained, "these guidelines have all sorts of technical data, detailed guidelines and information for setting up emergency response, exactly the kind of work that needs to be pre-designed as inclusive or accessible. And yet the guidelines only mention disability as a kind of afterthought and lumped in with several other issues."Standards and guidelines that *only mention* disability as a cross-cutting issue without giving any ideas as to how to achieve mainstreaming can lead to confusing and ineffective implementation.

It is also important to consider rights based approaches to inclusive disaster management. For example, the IASC's *Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial support in Emergency settings* do not reference the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD] despite being released after the Convention's passage. This can impact the manner in which individuals with disabilities are perceived by disaster management personnel.

Participants shared numerous examples of similar guidelines, declarations, and policies that do not explicitly involve and include the needs of people with disabilities (See Appendix B).

2.5 Increasing collaboration between mainstream actors and disability organizations

A key reason for the continuing exclusion of disability in mainstream disaster management could be that disability and humanitarian organizations are not engaging in a meaningful dialogue. Often, conferences and workshops that could be an effective meeting ground tend to cater only to one of these communities. A participant recounted, "I was told that if these events were to be promoted as only disaster conferences, no people with disabilities would attend; on the other hand, few people without disabilities/associations actually attended, unless invited by the organizers," and suggested that efforts to merge these conferences with other vulnerable groups and create a common agenda would add political muscle and effectiveness to the process. It is necessary to reach out to initiatives such as the Sphere Project and create strategic alliances to encourage meaningful and practical inclusion of the needs of people with disabilities throughout the process of disaster management.[2] Good dialogue between disability and mainstream disaster management groups, strong lobbying, and government recognition, can lead to positive examples such as the opportunities given to a relief organization to commence projects addressing relief for people with disabilities during the Asian Tsunami and the Myanmar cyclone. A participant shared positive examples of efforts in India to raise awareness of the needs of people with disabilities within communities and disaster management personnel through a workshop on inclusive disaster risk reduction:

> Efforts are being made to make common man understand the basic needs of people with disabilities and also provide learning skills to handle their requirements. In a recent

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[2] The Sphere handbook is currently undergoing revision.

sensitization workshop the [training manual] (Delhi Disaster Management Authority, n.d.) as well as the invitation were in Braille. The project also brought out Braille book on Search & Rescue techniques and First Aid measures required during disasters for people who are blind to be able to familiarize themselves with the concepts.

Similarly, after the war in Lebanon in 2006, some NGOs have undertaken initiatives to promote inclusion and accessibility in recovery efforts. The cluster approach is being initialized in several countries e.g. Afghanistan and it represents an important entry point to incorporate disability into mainstream efforts. To realize this, participants suggested that the next step would be to ensure that the various governments get involved and the appropriate ministries are given the chance to participate.

Participants felt that the disability community has to work towards demystifying disability, providing technical guidance on appropriate measures to address different disabilities, and demonstrating the feasibility of inclusive disaster management through practical solutions. Effective mapping of the needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of people with disabilities at the onset is essential in designing appropriate inclusive programs and avoiding gaps in services at a later stage. For example, an organization's training manuals in India and Nepal suggest that responders and DRR personnel be trained to assign people with disabilities into four main groups - visual, hearing and/or speech, intellectual and mental impairment, or physical impairment – without the need to understand extensive medical details (B. Schranz, personal communication, December 9, 2008). On the basis of this categorization they can identify and respond to their disaster related needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities through all stages of the process, such as "vulnerability and capacity assessments, early warning systems, search, rescue and evacuation, and shelter management."

2.6 The Twin Track Approach

People with disabilities are not a homogeneous group and different individuals may have very differentiated needs during a disaster, emergency, or conflict. The vulnerability of persons with disabilities could be decreased significantly, and their capacity to cope increased, by systematically providing them access to the general services of actors working in disaster management. However, as a participant articulated, mainstream services in itself may be inadequate to fully address the needs of individuals with disabilities as they may simultaneously "need to be empowered through specialized services (physical rehabilitation; psycho-social support; support services such care takers, sign language interpreters; etc.)" to fully benefit from mainstream services.

A "twin track approach" can get individuals appropriate access to both mainstream and specialized services through effective networking and coordination between the mainstream actors and disability service providers. This further advances the importance of stronger working relationships between disaster management and disability focused groups and the need for mainstream organizations to learn the "stakeholder landscape of specialist service providers" in the area, their roles, and areas of expertise. Technical support and assistance from disability groups can also serve to educate disaster management personnel in effective disability mainstreaming through practice. Thus inclusive disaster management should not be limited to access to general service, but also provide a common channel to access any necessary specialized disability services as well.

2.7 Converting policy into practice

Participants acknowledged that there was increasing awareness about the need for inclusive emergency management due to several awareness programs, lessons documented,

disability conferences, training and education in recent years, although these are scattered, wide-ranging, and have not been synthesized. Some countries have changed policies to ensure that people with disabilities are not excluded during disasters and emergencies, e.g. the Stafford Act in the United States, which regulates governmental emergency policy, was updated to reflect the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families in case management. But there were significant concerns that even when disability is included in disaster management policies and planning, there is a severe lack of implementation and know-how to translate policy into effective practice. As noted by a participant, "it is certainly how these policies are put to work what determines the success or the failure of many of these well-intended efforts." A participant shared:

> For example, in Maryland (USA) many resources have been brought together with the purpose of creating inclusive planning at the State and local levels, by creating disability-specific annexes to current emergency operations planning. But how these annexes translate into practice remains to be seen.

Another contribution emphasizes the gap between developing inclusive policies and preparing for real time implementation:

> Schools in California must all conform with Standard Emergency Management Plans. Those who take these seriously and practice regular drills also practice with students and staff with disabilities. HOWEVER, it seems that more often than not, when special measures are needed they are "mentioned" but direct practice is often avoided due to the inconvenience involved. Existing plans do not seem to include any provisions for what happens during a school-commute-time earthquake when tens of thousands of children with disabilities will be in the care of bus drivers who a) don't have their emergency

contact information b) don't have any information on their life support systems and medications c) don't have a plan for where they will take the children (although the nearest Jr High or High School would be an obvious choice if the plan is extended this far) d) schools don't have a 'reception plan' to accept incoming students stranded in the vicinity. So the child protection gaps are huge.

2.8 Individuals with disabilities from gender, race, and ethnicity based minority groups

People with disabilities who also belong to other minority groups based on gender, race, or ethnicity may face added disadvantages in having their needs met in a disaster situation. For example, women with disabilities face even greater stigma and discrimination in societies which view women as subordinate to men, as they are considered incapable of even fulfilling traditional roles. However, some respondents felt that it is counterproductive to design disaster management efforts solely on the basis of different labels. Instead, the disaster management community should move towards more meaningful categories that look at the supports needed by different individuals such as "communication supports, transportation supports, daily living supports." A broader view towards practices inclusive of all needs would ensure that response and service delivery is not fragmented but mindful of all sources of vulnerability. Participants suggested that the first stage should be effective consultations: for example a large international DPO conducts workshops on women with disabilities in the Middle East to understand their unique challenges.

2.9 Violence and Conflict

Many regions of the world are afflicted with ongoing internal and external violence and conflict situations. People with disabilities face heightened vulnerability in conflict situations which may also cause severe psychological and physical trauma to the affected population. Disasters and growing inequities arising from climate change are significant risk factors to the outbreak of violence and increasing conflict in communities. For example, as described by a participant, water scarcity which has already resulted in conflict among people will exacerbate due to climate change potentially causing serious conflicts. People with disabilities also face unique challenges in post-conflict situations which are aggravated by their invisibility in post-conflict policies and practices.

Additionally, disaster and conflict situations may often lead to violence which could have terrible consequences for people with disabilities as described below:

> This may cause a highly insecure environment, where persons with disability are particularly at risk of all forms of abuse (torture, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, etc.). The changed environment may also considerably decrease their level of autonomy and their usual protection mechanisms. Women and children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, with people with visual, intellectual and mental impairments possibly amongst the most vulnerable ones. For instance, an aggressor might consider persons who cannot see an easy prey, as they might not be able to identify the aggressor. Reports of persons with intellectual or mental impairments might not be paid attention to (as they might be considered "crazy"), etc., so they are again an easy prey. But also, persons with disabilities may have difficulties to have their agression aknowledged and still face problems to effectively have access to justice to file a case against the violator.

He also offered some suggestions to enhance protection:

1. Orient relief staff and volunteers (in camps, shelters, etc.) about this risk and on ways to minimise it.

2. Try to place or reunite people with disabilities with their carers or family as fast as possible.

3. If carers or family are not available, try to ensure there are volunteers or staff to provide extra security. In particular, have female volunteers / female task force members provide assistance to females with disabilities.

4. Make sure there are mechanisms to check on security of people with disabilities, as well as other vulnerable groups.

5. Ensure Watsan etc. facilities are well lit at night.

6. Promote effective access to justice for persons with disabilities: in this sense, the CRPD is a strong potential instrument. Particularly important in this sense is Article 13, aiming at ensuring access to justice on an equal basis with others (still widely refused as persons with disabilities still often seen as objects of charity rather than subjects of law). This will contribute to decrease persons with disabilities' vulnerability towards all form of abuses.

7. Other CRPD articles are further supportive in creating an environment where protection and safety of persons with disabilities is ensured: Article 11, which generally addresses situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, where States have to take all necessary measures to ensure protection and safety of persons with disabilities, Articles 15 (freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), 16 (freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse) and 17 (protecting the integrity of the person).

8. DRR activities should provide identified people with disabilities with knowledge about their rights to have access to services on an equal basis with others and their right to safety and protection (useful even if a State has not ratified the CRPD, because other international general legal frameworks also apply to persons with disabilities. It's also useful to look for related regulations in domestic law.)

2.10 Building capacity of low and middle income countries

Low and middle income countries frequently face limited capacities, infrastructure, and resources for effectively addressing and incorporating best practices in inclusive disaster management. Despite these challenges, it is crucial that people with disabilities are not excluded from disaster preparedness, response, relief, and reconstruction. The main challenges faced by governments in addressing disability issues were listed as:

a. lack of financial resources

b. lack of knowledge, problem solving and on-site advocates on disability issues

c. lack of international guidance, through the international coordination mechanisms (clusters) and donor priorities

A respondent pointed out that almost all of the quality initiatives and resources on inclusive DRR are from the developed world and very few are suitable or replicable for developing countries. Additionally, people with disabilities in the rural areas in low and middle income countries face greater isolation, and may have different needs from those in urban settings.

Governments in low and middle income countries need practical, cost-effective, realistic and relevant examples from the developing world. Mirroring the general arguments above, the demystification of disability would get more actors involved in trying to design workable

approaches based on the resources and constraints in their region. A respondent highlighted the role that pilot projects could play in testing different ideas and offering a safe platform for different organizations to enter the field. Working in partnership with governments (particularly education departments) from the start was advocated as an effective evidence-based strategy. Disability related organizations can work together with governments to identify what resources are available and how they could be practically built upon. Education departments have the advantage of the scale at which they operate, as the respondent described:

> Working with persons with disabilities in a single village or community can give rise to good individual examples, but when you can show that your DRR project can be implemented in every special needs school in a province- government officials at the national level seem to take a bit more notice.

The absence of professionals in inclusive disaster management, especially at the policy and planning levels, is another challenge for these countries. Respondents suggested different approaches to improve the awareness and knowledge on the needs of people with disabilities in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations and build governmental capacity, such as:

a. Making capacity building and awareness initiatives an integral part of aid packages to these countries

b. Considering the needs of people with disabilities at the design stage to avoid additional costs during response

c. Direct involvement of experts with disabilities and disability related organizations in training and awareness raising programs for government officials.

A respondent noted that in countries where disability is not considered adequately in national policies and even the day-to-day accessibility needs of people with disabilities are neglected, an effective strategy would be to work directly with local government units. He documented the following steps his organization plans on taking to this effect in Guyana:

1. Work with Neighborhood Democratic Councils (the smallest government unit) to develop a register of people with disabilities in the villages. We found out recently that in the regions and far-flung villages, a good source of information on the location of people with disabilities are the Post Offices; it's not even the health center but the post offices! This list can now be made available to first-responders during an emergency.

2. Sensitization for first-responders on dealing with persons with disabilities. This can be easier to facilitate by going through the local ministry representatives in charge of Home Affairs and incorporating it into the training curricula for police and fire officers.

Another participant shared the three-pronged capacity building approach practiced by her organization:

A. **Family Support**: Families need to work and complement the work of rehabilitation centres, but to do so, families must be provided with relevant knowledge and know-how. [The organization] plans to regularly visit families at their homes as well arrange for focus groups sessions in the villages so as to help families cope with their children's' cases in a better way.

B. **Program Development:** Work with specialists to develop more tailored and relevant programs for both the therapy and education of [people with

disabilities]. These programs will be tried out and assessed in our safe incubator, on the hope that it will be developed to become later the seed to national programs targeting the People with disabilities and youth at all 'extended' schools. [The organization] will also aim to share programs, information and experience with regional and international centers and agencies working with [people with disabilities].

C. Assessment and follow up: The essence of this program is to enhance diagnostic tools and follow up on each case. A specialized committee will be selected from professionals who will meet every week and discuss children's cases and recommend a comprehensive course of action for each case. On the second phase, each case will be followed up closely and its progress assessed and rectified frequently.

2.11 Examples of training efforts for different stakeholder groups

The e-discussion participants provided the following examples on training efforts to substantially improve disaster and emergency response for people with disabilities and their families:

1. An organization translated and adapted the *Living and lasting on shaky ground: An earthquake preparedness guide for people with disabilities* for use in Turkey, and separated into four smaller publications targeted towards different disabilities. The target audience included adults and youth with disabilities and parents and caregivers of children with disabilities and outreach was conducted through organizations, schools, and institutions. In addition the organization produced a series of twelve public service announcement videos (also released on a CD-ROM) highlighting a wide variety of disability-related disaster preparedness issues (especially around

earthquakes) and with an emphasis on risk reduction. They trained basic disaster awareness instructors with visual and hearing impairments to work DPOs.

2. After the Kocaeli earthquake in Turkey, a school for the deaf destroyed was reconstructed with aid from an international faith-based organization. A disaster preparedness and educational enrichment program was developed for the students. Additionally, the faith-based organization brought in four groups of adult volunteers who were deaf to work with the students and the teachers, creating a significant positive impact on communication between teachers, students, and families, and consequently on education for people who are deaf in the country. This was the first opportunity for local students to interact with and learn about people who are deaf from other countries. Additionally by inviting parents, teachers, and school authorities to an earthquake preparedness educational session with the presence of a professional interpreter, they could see the benefits by providing alternate presentation formats first-hand.

3. An organization in India carried out a school safety program for earthquake and fire incidents for children with visual and hearing impairments in a local school in a region highly vulnerable to earthquakes. The children and the teachers were trained on quick evacuation, search and rescue and first aid.

III. BASIC NECESSITIES AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Climate change can seriously affect agricultural productivity due to changes in rainfall pattern, natural disasters such as droughts or floods, and risks to bird and animal populations (IPCC, 2007). It can have similar consequences for access to clean and safe drinking water due to a significant impact on water cycles, allocation, and availability (The World Bank, 2009b). Resulting forced migration, or loss of working land, can threaten thousands of livelihoods and destabilize many ongoing poverty reduction efforts (Brown, 2008; IPCC). Marginalized and poor communities face the most adverse impacts in such situations, and it is essential that we discuss efforts to address these challenges. The following themes emerged during discussion on these topics.

3.1 Food scarcity, water shortages, and other resource limitations due to climate change

The effects of climate change in the availability of safe and adequate essential resources are already being felt acutely in some countries. A respondent described the increasing cycles of drought in Afghanistan and its severe impact on food and water resources in the country, which adds to the challenges imposed by escalating insecurity in many parts of the country.

> Food scarcity is already a critical problem in the country and as the drought effects are becoming worse the farmers trying to put more land in cultivation, resulting in greater land erosion, and the lack of anti-erosion measures might deplete the resources further. More and more trees are being cut for fire wood for the poor people and even root systems are removed and used for fire wood. This will affect the irrigation and more water will run-off quickly increasing the likelihood of flooding in the valleys and therefore the vulnerable people like people with disabilities, women and children will be

in potential grave danger. There will be less irrigation potential as water has no time to infiltrate and being released slowly creates further hardship and when resources are getting scarce then again the poor, the vulnerable will suffer more. Water is a priority but getting safe water at present in Afghanistan is becoming more of a problem and luxury because of the drought conditions. The sanitation is not very good either and the hygiene education is only possible with the delivery of water and sanitation. Again the vulnerable people will have the greater problems with dealing with all the negative issues related to poverty and accessibility to the basics.

Such experiences will become more common as changing weather patterns result in greater disruptions to existing food and water sources. While public health and emergency planning officials have worked on planning for food, water, and other resource scarcities for some time, they have not addressed the needs of individuals with disabilities; while needs will be similar in terms of food and water, integration of the disability perspective is still missing in the process. As the first step, public and private stakeholders should include people with disabilities in the adaptation and mitigation planning. A participant suggested that dedicated accessible grain banks and water harvesting tanks would help in tackling food and water distribution. Water collection points must be accessible, safe, and easy to operate for people with disabilities along with provision of appropriate water collection containers.

3.2 Migration and loss of livelihoods

Disability is almost unmentioned in existing publications related to forced migration and climate change. While we can estimate the manner in which people with disabilities will be affected by migration, there is a lack of documented experiences that can lead to specific solutions. It is commonly observed that heads of households migrate first to look for economic

opportunities elsewhere. A majority of heads are men, who leave behind women, children, and older adults. Increasingly, women are also leaving their families to obtain sustainable sources of income. Many individuals with disabilities may themselves by unable to migrate for economic self-sufficiency due to inaccessible transportation and other infrastructure.

Occupations relying on natural resources and weather patterns are most likely to be directly impacted by climate change. Taking the example of agriculture, a respondent noted that the needs of people with disabilities may be ignored in development programs aimed at providing climate change support systems for farmers. In such cases it is important to build inclusive programs using existing evidence on the barriers that people with congenital and acquired disabilities face in participating in agricultural occupations. Barriers could include access to land and finance, education and technical training, and insufficient technology transfer and adaptive tools and technology.

Another suggestion was to reduce dependence on such occupations, through training in alternate livelihood skills that will allow people with disabilities to engage in productive labor if they are forced to migrate to other regions. In general, it is important to provide people with the means to achieve independence in their daily lives and in their work, and provide them with adequate education, training, and accessible environments.

3.3 Impact on inclusive development and poverty reduction efforts

Several respondents felt that increasing scarcity of resources would consequently increase the inequities experienced by people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are generally excluded from most development decisions, and this trend is expected to exacerbate due to the need to take frequent and varied development decisions to adapt to climate change impacts. There is a shared concern that with shortage of local resources and income loss, the

strongest will pull away all the available resources. Promoting the availability of culturally appropriate small loan programs for people with disabilities, especially at the rural level, could be one way of ensuring sustainable development offsetting the negative effects of climate change on poverty reduction.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1 Summarizing the e-discussion

The e-discussion on the impact of climate change on people with disabilities sparked dialogue and discussion on the readiness of existing systems to mitigate or cope with the effects of climate change in disasters, emergencies, and conflict, resource scarcity, and development efforts. Participants provided examples of barriers to inclusion, good practices to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, and recommendations to minimize adverse consequences in the future. In general, experiences around the world show that people with disabilities face disproportionate disadvantages in situations of risk and/or resource scarcity and their needs are not addressed adequately by preparedness and response efforts.

Many responders noted that while some progress has been made, there is a lot more that needs to be done. Disaster response and recovery efforts continue to exclude people with disabilities or be hampered by poor accessibility in evacuation, sheltering, and aid efforts. Although some governments, first responders, and aid organizations have implemented policies and practices for inclusive disaster contributors, felt that there is a lack of consistency and very little 'best practice.' Instead of considering the needs of people with disabilities as "special" and hence separate, they need access to mainstream development actors and programs. This also necessitates fighting the entrenched belief in the disaster management community that it is not possible to mainstream disability in DRR, because of the complexity of technical aspects involved. The disability community can break down these beliefs by offering training and practical examples to meet the needs of people with disabilities, along with advocacy and awareness-raising. Networking and coordination between these sectors must be promoted and encouraged. A twin track approach can get individuals appropriate access to

both mainstream and specialized services through effective networking and coordination between the mainstream development actors and disability service providers. Preparedness and prior planning, adapted and appropriate to local culture and needs, is very important to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster management. There is a trend today to look at disaster risk management as a topic to be mainstreamed in development strategies - then there is a need to strengthen inclusion of disabilities in development including DRR practices.

Additionally, most existing guidelines and case studies come from the developed world and may not transfer well to low and middle income countries, with different capacities, cultures, and local contexts. There is a need to (a) develop systems and initiatives that use available resources and are adapted to the local needs in developing countries, and (b) share these examples and good practices with other countries with similar resource limitations. E-discussion participants used this opportunity to share some experiences from their own work in different countries. Many developing country governments may hesitate to undertake initiatives for inclusion fearing exorbitant costs; however respondents observed that by systematically including the needs of people with disabilities in programs right from the start and in all planning efforts, additional costs incurred are minimal.

Initiatives to mitigate or cope with effects of other climate-induced shortages, such as in food and water supply, must be designed in an inclusive and accessible way for all. This includes ensuring inclusion and full access to climate change-linked programs such as those working to retrain communities in alternate livelihood skills to reduce dependency on natural resources and weather patterns. Such skills help reduce poverty by ensuring sustainable livelihoods and may reduce the likelihood of migration and further strain on resources.

4.2 Recommendations for future actions

Participants offered several key recommendations to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in future actions and cope with the adverse impacts of climate change:

- ❖ Include and involve people with disabilities during the planning, preparedness, and implementation stages of disaster management

- ❖ Empower people with disabilities to take control of personal emergency preparedness for themselves and their families

- ❖ Focus on prevention and mitigation strategies to reduce adverse impacts of climate change

- ❖ Build strategic alliances between people with disabilities, DPOs, experts on inclusive disaster preparedness and mainstream DRR organizations including UN and other international inter-agency initiatives

- ❖ Develop pilot projects in low and middle income countries to demonstrate the feasibility of inclusive disaster management solutions

- ❖ Promote disability as a cross-cutting issue impacting all groups and sectors

- ❖ Build/identify accessible food and water distribution centers

- ❖ Ensure inclusion in all climate-change related programs such as retraining for alternate livelihood skills

- ❖ Ensure that disaster risk reduction methodologies and tools for scaling-up purposes, in particular for risk assessment and monitoring and early warning systems are accessible and inclusive

- ❖ Integrate inclusion as a requirement in international development donor funded programs

- ❖ Include disability issues in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – the 'Road to Copenhagen' work plan 2009

- ❖ Clearly identify representative groups contributing to the negotiating process and include persons with disabilities in the civil society actors contributing to the review process

- ❖ New treaties under the UNFCCC umbrella should ensure that action taken in the context of adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer are in compliance with ALL existing human rights frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- ❖ Increase funding to assess changing hazards, vulnerabilities, risk and capacities to provide national and community baselines and priorities for intervention

4.3 Final remarks

Climate change is a universal issue whose impacts will be felt by a much larger population than just people with disabilities. Existing inequities and disparities will unfortunately skew the adverse impacts towards the most poor and marginalized sections of society. People with disabilities will be amongst the worst affected. However, rather than seeing this as insurmountable, we must take advantage of this through engagement with wider society – with education, information and advocacy as key components of this strategy. There are several ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the seriousness of climate change as a development issue. By raising the importance of including the needs of people with disabilities in such efforts and building alliances with mainstream groups, we can play a significant role in shaping policy, practice, and systems to be truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of all persons.

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APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY COMPILED FROM E-DISCUSSION RESOURCES

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APPENDIX B: MAINSTREAM POLICIES, REPORTS, INITIATIVES THAT FAIL TO COVER THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This list was compiled from comments made by E-Discussion participants about mainstream resources that either fail to mention the needs of people with disabilities or mention them only briefly without any specifics.

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APPENDIX C: E-DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT (GPDD)
E-discussion: The Impact of Climate Change on People with Disabilities

Introduction: How does climate change affect people with disabilities?

Climate change can result in grave consequences for human well-being, development, and security through increased exposure to severe weather conditions such as floods and droughts that will directly aggravate the risks of illness and disease, inadequate drinking water and food scarcity, loss of livelihoods, migration, violence, and conflict (United Nations Development Program, 2007). Climate change will disproportionately impact vulnerable and marginalized groups, including the poorest populations in low- and middle-income countries, and threaten the effectiveness and success of development and poverty-reduction efforts. Additionally, resource scarcity may intensify existing inequalities and cause greater fissures between communities and a rise in violence and conflict. Existing inequalities may also exacerbate individuals' vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007).

While different populations may face similar risks of exposure to the negative effects of climate change, their actual vulnerability is dependent on their socio-economic conditions and capacity to withstand the challenges. Marginalized groups, such as women and those living in poverty, face heightened challenges in coping with disasters, resource-scarcity, and conflict (The Women's Environment and Development Organization, 2008).

People with disabilities constitute a significant proportion of the poorest of the poor in the world and face unequal access to education, health care, employment, assets, and opportunities for social and community participation. They are disproportionately affected in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations due to the lack of accessibility in evacuation, response, and recovery efforts, and exclusion of disability issues from planning and preparedness. Furthermore, food and drinking water scarcity will increase malnutrition rates and poor health conditions that lead to a greater risk of acquiring a health-related disability.

People with disabilities and their families need adaptation and coping strategies and robust systems and mechanisms that can minimize the harmful effects of climate change, and promote sustainable access to basic necessities, secure livelihoods, health care, and social and civic participation.

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Day 1 - Progress & Improvements in inclusive disaster/emergency management practices

Following disasters and emergency situations, such as the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, efforts were made to highlight the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the disaster preparedness and response process (such as the World Bank E-discussion on Disaster and Disability in 2006) and share knowledge on best practices and strategies to ensure that people with disabilities are involved in emergency preparedness and planning, and that response and recovery efforts address their needs.

However we need to assess whether lessons learned were systematically and successfully applied to more recent disasters and understand and highlight the barriers and challenges that continue to exist in our communities. In an effort to learn from each other's experiences, today we will focus on the following themes:

1. What progress has been made in disaster preparedness and response efforts to ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind during evacuation, sheltering, and relief operations following these awareness raising efforts?

2. What policies and practices have governments, first responders, and aid organizations implemented for inclusive disaster and emergency response and relief?

3. What are the main barriers and obstacles to continued lack of efforts in addressing the needs of people with disabilities in disaster/emergency management?

4. Have recovery efforts in recent disasters addressed the need for inclusion and accessibility?

5. How do we effectively address the heightened vulnerability of people with disabilities who also belong to other minority and marginalized groups such as women and ethnic minorities?

Day 2 – Practical strategies and best practices in inclusive disaster management & addressing inadequate capacity in low and middle income countries

Topic 1 - Practical strategies and best practices in preparedness, evacuation, response, and recovery efforts

Continuing from yesterday's discussion we encourage participants to share their knowledge of preparedness efforts that we can substantially improve disaster and emergency response for people with disabilities and their families.

1. Share knowledge and information about training efforts for different stakeholder groups including people with disabilities and their families

2. How can people with disabilities and their families overcome the challenges on inaccessibility in transportation and evacuation and sheltering?

Topic 2 - Challenges encountered by mid and low-income countries in effectively addressing the needs of people with disabilities in disaster/emergency/conflict situations

As we talk about practical strategies and best practices, we cannot ignore realities about existing capacities, infrastructure, and resources in low and middle income countries for effectively addressing and incorporating best practices in inclusive disaster management. Despite these challenges, it is crucial that people with disabilities are not excluded from disaster preparedness, response, and relief. How do we advance inclusive disaster management in these regions and build the capacity of governments and civil society?

1. What are the main challenges facing poorer nations in adequately addressing the needs of people with disabilities in disaster/emergency/conflict situations?

2. How can we build the capacity of low- and middle-income countries to address the needs of people with disabilities in disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery operations? Share examples, case studies, and best practices.

Day 3 – Violence and Conflict with strategies for mainstreaming disability in disaster reduction

Topic 1 - Violence and Conflict

Many regions of the world are afflicted with ongoing internal and external violence and conflict situations. People with disabilities face heightened vulnerability in conflict situations which may also cause severe psychological and physical trauma to the affected population. Disasters

and growing inequities arising from climate change are significant risk factors to the outbreak of violence and increasing conflict in communities. People with disabilities also face unique challenges in post-conflict situations which is aggravated by their invisibility in post-conflict policies and practices.

1. What are the unique challenges that people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers face in situations marked by ethnic and other violence, conflict, and wars?

2. What prevention and mitigation measures can be implemented to reduce the vulnerability of people with disabilities, families, and caregivers in conflict situations?

3. How can communities adapt to cope with the possibility of conflict and violence arising due to climate change?

Topic 2 - Mainstreaming disability in disaster reduction

We have focused our discussion so far on the unique challenges that people with disabilities face in disaster, emergency, and conflict management. However one of the key solutions to effective disaster management is the inclusion of disability in all disaster management policies, practices, and initiatives. There are several mainstream initiatives that are diligently focusing on the impending effects of climate change and methods for disaster reduction. What measures can the disability community take to advocate the mainstreaming on disability in disaster reduction programs and initiatives, such as the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery?

Day 4: Basic necessities and poverty reduction

Today we continue our ongoing discussions, while also addressing the effects of climate change on basic necessities, the availability of nutritious food and safe drinking water, the threat to sustainable livelihoods for people with disabilities, and the impact on poverty-reduction efforts.

Climate change can seriously affect agricultural productivity through changing rainfall patterns, natural disasters such as droughts or floods, and risks to bird and animal populations. It can have similar consequences for access to clean and safe drinking water. Resulting migration, or loss of working land, can threaten thousands of livelihoods and destabilize ongoing poverty reduction efforts. Marginalized and poor communities face the most adverse impacts in such situations, and it is essential that we discuss efforts to address these challenges.

1. How can public and private stakeholders address the negative effects of food scarcity, water shortages, and other resource limitations on people with disabilities?

2. What practices could aid in reducing the threats of migration and loss of sustainable livelihoods?

3.   How does climate change affect inclusive development and poverty reduction efforts for people with disabilities?

Day 5 - Adaptation and coping strategies to reduce the impact of disasters, emergencies, and conflicts arising due to climate change

The Human Development Report 2007/2008 states that poor countries will face three main challenges in implementing effective climate change adaptation strategies in development and poverty reduction planning and policies: information, infrastructure, and insurance for social protection. We seek to gather creative solutions on ensuring that people with disabilities are included in climate change adaptation strategies.

1.   What strategies and actions can promote information sharing and capacity building among governments and civil society in poor countries that are approaching inclusive climate change adaptation plans?

2.   How can partnerships between the public and private sectors, disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs) and larger civil society contribute towards building accessible and sustainable infrastructure to mitigate the negative effects of climate change?

3.   What kinds of social protection programs must be created or strengthened and implemented to secure the lives and livelihoods of people with disabilities?

4.   What conclusions can we draw from these discussions and what concrete recommendations can we take forward?