



10 September 2019

Hon. Alex Hawke MP
Minister for International Development and for the Pacific
PO Box 6200
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Maintaining Australia's leadership on disability inclusive development

The Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDc) is a community of over 600 individuals and organisations working across Australia, the Asia Pacific and globally on disability and international development issues. We, the undersigned, represent Australian agencies that are united by the desire to see a more inclusive world and consider it vital for disability inclusion to continue as a core component of the Australian international development and humanitarian program. We call on the Australian Government to continue this commitment through a third iteration of the *Development for All* strategy.

People with disabilities in developing countries often face higher levels of discrimination, exclusion and violence than the rest of the population, alongside lower levels of food security, inclusion in livelihood activities and access to health care and education. Disability can be a cause of poverty as well as a consequence of poverty. Not only do people with disabilities experience a disproportionately higher level of poverty, being poor increases their chances of having a disability and reduces their access to vital services. This cycle of disability and poverty for people with disabilities, their families and communities can compound marginalization and be very hard to break.

For over a decade, Australia has been at the forefront of advancing disability inclusion in international development policy and practice and driving international momentum to include people with disabilities as key agents of development. Australia's *Development for All* strategies have been foundational to this global leadership. The introduction of the first [Development for All 2009-2014](#) strategy in 2009 was ground-breaking and the first of its kind, followed by the subsequent release of the more ambitious [Development for All 2015-2020](#). Guided by the strategies, Australia's development investments have been providing opportunities for people with disabilities in developing countries to shape their own futures. From supporting women with disabilities to achieve financial independence, to facilitating access to much-needed assistive devices, and strengthening educational opportunities, the *Development for All* strategies have made tangible differences in the lives of people with disabilities around the world. However there is still much work to be done.

The current *Development for All* strategy will expire at the end of 2020. The introduction of a third strategy is the next step for the Australian Government to continue as a global leader and meet its commitment to the rights of people with disabilities living in poverty. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade released the [first report](#) of its inquiry into Australia's aid program in the Indo-Pacific earlier this year. The Committee made a number of recommendations relevant to the implementation and continuation of the *Development for All* strategy, in line with recommendations of the 2017 and 2018 Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) evaluations of the current strategy. The report and evaluation recommendations provide a useful roadmap to develop an effective strategy with a strong accountability framework to ensure and understand success.

A central tenet of Australia's groundbreaking work has been ensuring people with disabilities and their representative bodies are at the heart of this vital work; from developing to implementing and evaluating the strategies. The [ODE 2018 Evaluation](#) recognized that the importance of the role of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) 'cannot be overstated' in the success of the first and current *Development for All* strategies. This core component needs to remain part of Australia's work, starting with the process to develop the next strategy.

We look forward to working with you to advance disability inclusive development globally, with the next step a new and innovative *Development for All* strategy. ADDC, Australian and regional DPOs as well as the Australia international development sector worked with the government to develop the previous two strategies. We are available to support the development of a new strategy to continue to convert Australia's commitment and leadership for disability inclusive development into meaningful and transformative action.

ADDC would welcome the opportunity to discuss or provide you further information on the above. Please contact ADDC Executive Officer, Kerryn Clarke on kclarke@addc.org.au and 03 8843 4519.

Yours faithfully,

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