



Pacific
Disability
Forum

2023 PDF CONFERENCE DISCUSSION PAPER



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ACRONYMS

CBID	Community-Based Inclusive Development
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IS	Incheon Strategy
ILO	International Labour Organization
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disability
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PFRPD	Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPC	Pacific Community
UN	United Nations
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WGSS	Washington Group Short Set
WHO	World Health Organization



MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Mr Setareki Macanawai, CEO, PDF

Since the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) released our 2018 SDG-CRPD Monitoring Report, there has continued to be **significant progress under some areas**. For instance, progress has been seen in legislative review and reform, integration of disability-inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) and social protection into humanitarian and disaster risk reduction (DRR) work, accessibility, and the emergence of new Organisations of Persons with Disability (OPDs) and strengthening of existing ones. It is no coincidence that these areas of concrete progress are those in which we have had **focused support from multilateral partners** in particular, as well as **meaningful engagement with the disability movement**.

There are also many areas which have **substantial gaps in progress** towards realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), including but not limited: to assistive technology and support services; comprehensive inclusive health and education systems following the twin-track approach; and equal employment and livelihood opportunities for people with disabilities. There are also areas in which there has been **some progress, however this needs to be continued and scaled up** if the SDGs and CRPD implementation are to be achieved. These include the rights of women and girls with disabilities, data and budgeting, and social protection. Regional cooperation is another such area.

The areas of progress were only possible through **funding support from DFAT and MFAT**, and technical partner support from **CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group, Centre for Inclusive Policy (CIP) and International Disability Alliance (IDA)**. We also acknowledge the many other partners, donors and significant programs that worked in the region, such as **PIFS; Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP)**; numerous UN agencies including particularly the **UNPRPD; the EU; USAID; the FCDO**; as well as **regional and national civil society organisations, amongst so many others too numerous to name**. The good practices demonstrated in the investments and partnerships made possible through all of these should be replicated and expanded, as we push forward to closing the substantial remaining gaps to realising the SDGs and CRPD.

We need to use this Conference to focus on concrete, effective steps to close these gaps. The fact that together we have been able to make progress towards disability inclusion in our region in the past three years, despite the challenges of the pandemic, **demonstrates just what can be achieved when we work in partnership using innovative, strategic thinking with actionable next steps in mind**. We hope this Conference provides opportunity for such discussions to unfold.

'Inclusion can take us to the table but it is equity that will transform and reconfigure the table to ensure our full and effective participation'

This Conference Discussion Paper provides a **concise overview** of Pacific Disability Forum's **position and recommendations** of key areas essential to the achievement of the SDGs and CRPD.

The aim is for this to **inform all discussions and dialogues** throughout the 2023 PDF Conference.

PDF operates on the principle of **'nothing about us without us'**, yet we also acknowledge that people with disabilities cannot practically participate in every single conversation or meeting throughout the course of this Conference. We therefore offer this paper as a concise representation of our position and recommendations on all major topics and sectors that will be discussed throughout the Conference. We ask that when you go to hear about or discuss a particular topic, you first **turn to this Paper to bring an understanding of our recommendations** on that topic.

As such, we hope that this Conference Discussion Paper will form a solid **foundation for dialogues throughout the week**, and that the recommendations presented within this can be analysed and refined by delegates throughout the course of the Conference. We have strong expectations that the Conference Outcomes Document will provide **practical pathways for meaningful and accelerated progress towards the SDG and CRPD** for people with disabilities, and that the recommendations within this Paper will assist in delivering that.

The recommendations in this Paper are distilled from the significant analysis conducted by PDF across each of these key areas, as part of our preparation of the 2023 SDG-CRPD Monitoring Report. The 2023 Monitoring Report will be released later this year, allowing it to be informed by the dialogue and outcomes of this Conference.

OVERVIEW

The following are recommendations for **overarching areas** of national and international level reforms that lead to **significant systemic changes** for the rights of people with disabilities.

01

CRPD-Compliant Legal Frameworks

SDG 10-16; CRPD 4-5; IS Goal 9

1. Continue technical assistance from UN agencies, PIFS and SPC Regional Rights Resource Team, in partnership with PDF, for legal harmonisation work – including comprehensive legislative reviews (of both disability and sector-specific laws and regulations) benchmarking against the CRPD as the first step.
2. Mainstream CRPD compliance within other regional programs providing technical assistance on legal and regulatory frameworks.
3. Invest further in training of government officials around CRPD-compliant and disability-inclusive public policies and programs.

02

Allocation of Public Resources

CRPD Art 4

1. Support ministries and local authorities to develop costed plans to make their services and programs disability-inclusive.
2. Improve public finance management budget reporting from national governments to allow disability inclusion expenditure analysis. This should include disaggregation of data in budget documents and thematic reporting.
3. Include non-discrimination and accessibility requirements in public procurement for all infrastructure, goods and services at a national and local level, including for ODA-funded programs.
4. Consult meaningfully with Organisations of Persons with Disability (OPDs) in decisions related to public resource allocations, and support their budget advocacy work.
5. Build upon and continue the investment in government focal point training around disability inclusion and budgets.

03

Improved Data Collection, Disaggregation and Analysis

SDG 17; CRPD Art 31; IS Goal 8

1. Continue to include the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability (WGSS) in national censuses and surveys without compromising the questions, and resource appropriate training for data collectors regarding this tool.
2. In consultation with OPDs, undertake data analysis and disaggregation to produce national disability monographs.
3. Undertake targeted research on key barriers and enablers to participation for people with disabilities.
4. Place greater emphasis on disaggregation of administrative data, including within education and health information management systems, and their associated data collection processes.

04

Improved Capacity, Diversity and Engagement of OPDs

CRPD Art 4-29; IS Goal 2

1. Continue to build and strengthen the capacities of OPDs, particularly in relation to organisational and advisory skills, so they can provide trusted advice and technical assistance to governments, NGOs and partners.
2. Embed long-term core funding to OPDs for operational expenses, to ensure their sustainability.
3. Support the emergence and strengthening of OPDs representing marginalised groups.
4. Embed funding lines towards engagement and consultation with OPDs within all investments and public budget allocations

PRE-CONDITIONS FOR INCLUSION

PDF has identified the following as 'pre-conditions' to disability inclusion: accessibility, assistive devices, CBID, non-discrimination, social protection, and support services. **These pre-conditions must be ensured in order for disability inclusion to be achieved across all other sectoral areas.** The following are recommendations for each pre-condition.

05

Accessibility

SDG 4-10; CRPD 9-19-21; IS Goal 3

1. Regional Accessibility Standards on the Built Environment are under development. When publicly endorsed, adopt these within national regulatory frameworks.
2. Train national delegations of professionals, OPDs, and government representatives (particularly at the sub-national level) on how to use and monitor the Regional Accessibility Standards on the Built Environment
3. Develop a regional process for monitoring the implementation of the Regional Accessibility Standards on the Built Environment by PICs, involving OPD representatives, government and other key stakeholders.
4. Establish a regional taskforce to identify and mobilise action on strategic opportunities for accelerating accessible transport and infrastructure in the Pacific, building upon the analysis and recommendations in the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility report, Improving Accessibility in Transport Infrastructure Projects in the Pacific Islands.
5. Commission a report to undertake a situational analysis and outline regional Information and Communications Technology (ICT) accessibility standards for the Pacific, which could then be tailored by countries when developing their own national standards.

06

Assistive Technology

SDG 10; CRPD 9-19-21; IS Goal 3

1. Review existing tax regulations and promote exemptions or concessions for assistive products and technology across the region
2. Establish a regional procurement facility, in line with the recommendations of the *WHO Assistive Technology Procurement Study*, to address shortage of quality and affordable assistive products and technology across the region.
3. Develop support from national governments and partners for training for multi-disciplinary personnel in relation to assistive products and technology, and integrated health and rehabilitation services, to ensure improved access and safe and appropriate use by people with disabilities.

07

Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID)

SDG 10; CRPD 19-26; IS Goal 3

1. Link CBID to DRR through systemic mechanisms (such as national policies, international frameworks, and national/international funding allocations), to ensure progress being achieved on a programmatic level is embedded sustainably.
2. Support an initiative to identify a new action plan and budget commitment to continue strengthening CBID in the Pacific, building on *The Pacific Regional Framework for Community Based Inclusive Development: 2016 – 2021*.

08

Non-Discrimination

SDG 10; CRPD Art 5

1. Ensure disability is mainstreamed into all other sectoral laws, particularly anti-discrimination legislation and policies.
2. Include non-discrimination terms and provisions in partner/donor funding arrangements, including adequate provisions to address reasonable accommodations.

09

Social Protection

SDG 1-10; CRPD Art 28; IS Goal 1- 4

1. Support all countries in the region to adopt disability-specific support benefits and allowances based on good practices in the region, including protecting the right to work and accounting for family supports, and to embed these in relevant policies, legislation and budgets.
2. Implement disability-inclusive mainstream social protection schemes, which protect the right to access specific disability support benefits and necessary family benefits.
3. Develop social protection schemes that support children with disabilities and their families.
4. Establish schemes that enable people with disabilities to access social welfare assistance automatically in the event of natural disasters, without having to provide evidence of hardship.

10

Support Services

SDG 3, 4, 8, 10; CRPD Art 4, 19; IS 1-10

1. Recognising the extensive lack of support services in the region, commission a regional report to provide a situational analysis regarding what support services across the Pacific currently exist and what they need to involve to enable daily living and inclusion for people with disabilities, and provide clear recommendations for next steps to deliver concrete and systemic changes required to progress this sector.
2. Invest in a pilot program that can be scalable to implement the recommendations of this regional support services report.

SECTORAL AREAS

In keeping with the twin track approach, the rights of people with disabilities will only be achieved when there is both **mainstreamed inclusion, plus disability-targeted programs** where required, in all significant areas of their day-to-day life. The following are recommendations for **systemic changes** required to progress disability rights and inclusion under **main sectors identified in the SDGs and CRPD**.

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Employment

SDG 8; CRPD Art 27; IS Goal 1

1. Implement government-backed skills training for youth with disabilities.
2. Invest government or donor funds in business training e.g. scaling up the good practice already underway initiated by the ILO program.
3. Develop regional principles and standards for inclusive employment, including in relation to non-discrimination, reasonable accommodations, and accessibility, which governments can adapt for national contexts.
4. Ensure government and financial institution schemes that support small businesses and enterprises include specific provisions for people with disabilities and their families.
5. Ensure all government departments implement disability-inclusive employment and recruitment practices, guided by relevant policies, to actively promote equal opportunities of employment for people with disabilities.

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Health

SDG 3; CRPD Art 25; IS Goal 4

1. Develop and implement health care standards related to the care of people with disabilities, including practical provisions to address physical, communication and attitudinal barriers in health systems, including service provision and outreach services.
2. Ministries of Health work to activate relevant referral pathways for patients with disabilities to access social protection, disability support services such as mobility aids, rehabilitation and allied health services, assistive technology, and medical supplies.
3. Ministries of Health, in consultation with universities, donors and OPDs, work to develop structured trainings for health care workers on disability inclusion in relevant contexts – including particularly regarding rehabilitation and mental health. This should involve regional coordination as appropriate, including for example sustainable workforce planning.
4. National governments work to scale up resourcing, planning and delivery of high-quality rehabilitation services.
5. National governments work to scale up resourcing, planning and delivery of high-quality CRPD-compliant community mental health services.

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Disaster Risk Reduction

SDG 13; CRPD Art 11; IS Goal 7

1. Review national and community DRR legislation, policies and committees to identify gaps in disability inclusion and strengthen these.
2. Include the use of the WGSS and disability-disaggregated data across DRR efforts, to inform better decision-making.
3. Invest in better consultation with people with disabilities and their representative organisations in designing new DRR regional or national investments.
4. Continue to strengthen social protection mechanisms as part of DRR and emergency response efforts, and ensure these adequately address disability-specific provisions as well as disability inclusion broadly.

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Education

SDG 4; CRPD Art 24; IS Goal 5

1. Develop and cost implementation plans for inclusive education policies on national levels, and scale up the resourcing, activation and monitoring of these within education sector plans.
2. Resource teacher aides and assistants in classrooms where students with disabilities require them.
3. Build capacity of all teachers and aides regarding inclusive education, working in partnership with universities, Ministries of Education and OPDs to develop and deliver pre- and in-service training.
4. Invest in access to early childhood education (ECE) through early childhood development (ECD), through practical plans to implement the PacREF on national levels.
5. Mandate that children with disabilities must be able to access the reasonable accommodations and assistive technology they require participate fully in education settings, and allocate funding accordingly.
6. Consider and develop practical strategies for incorporating in education children with disabilities who are particularly marginalised, including Deaf children and children with disabilities living in remote or rural areas.

We endorse all recommendations of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Review funded by PacREF and UNICEF.



Setareki Macanawai, CEO, PDF, Vice-Chancellor, USP, Dr. Professor Pal Ahluwalia and the PacREF Steering Committee at USP in Suva. Photo Credit: PDF

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Women with Disabilities

SDG 5; CRPD Art 6; IS Goal 6

1. Consider women and girls with disabilities whenever drafting or reviewing national or international gender or disability policies, strategies or laws.
2. Meaningfully engage with women with disabilities in all regional and national women-focused initiatives, and include adequate resourcing to facilitate this (i.e. reasonable accommodations and other pre-conditions).
3. Adequately resource implementation of gender policies and strategies at the national level to appropriately address the issues faced by women with disabilities.
4. Ensure that women with disabilities are engaged in national and regional disability-focused initiatives, and that these contribute to the empowerment of women with disabilities.
5. Identify and provide core funding to emerging women-focused OPDs on national levels.
6. Fund a mapping of mainstream gender programs to ascertain whether women with disabilities are being included in these, and the extent of their meaningful participation in such programs.



Participants who attended the 2 day training at Vunidawa Assemblies of God Church which was facilitated by FDPF and FWCC. Photo Credit: Fiji Disabled People Federation (FDPF)

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

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SDG 17; CRPD Art 32; IS Goal 10

1. Develop an efficient and innovative regional and multi-donor funding mechanism to enable national governments to undertake initiatives to implement the CRPD.
2. In tandem with the above, develop a regional and multi-stakeholder helpdesk that will support coordination of technical assistance.
3. Continue to invest in and build upon the initiative to support capacity of government disability focal points.
4. Facilitate inter-government cross-learning to leverage experiences and harness good practice across the region.



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CONTACT

<http://www.pacificdisability.org/>
Ground Floor, Kadavu House, Victoria
Parade, Suva, Fiji Islands
Pacific Disability Forum
GPO Box 18458,
Suva,
Fiji Islands
(+679) 773 0200 or (+679) 331 2008