

Voice from Bangladesh: New International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy

Submitted

To

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
RG Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
Barton, ACT 0221
Australia

Submitted By

By

Farjana Reza (She/Her)

National Programme Officer

International Labour Organization

[linkedin.com/in/farjana-reza-she-her-41bb43151](https://www.linkedin.com/in/farjana-reza-she-her-41bb43151)

+8801779288100

farjana.reza87@gmail.com. reza@ilo.org

Background

The accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is in jeopardy in light of the numerous issues facing the modern world. As we are approaching the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda's implementation period, the world is not on schedule to meet several of the SDGs by 2030. Many have seen their progress stop or go backwards when compared to the baseline from 2015.

Fifteen percent of the world's population is estimated to be living with a disability¹. Each person living with a disability has faced different barriers to their participation and inclusion in the development humanitarian and recovery continuum. Such barriers may be based on identity (age, gender, ethnicity, location and race), attitudes, or physical and communication limitations. These different factors can intersect with and amplify how members of a society relate to persons with disabilities, resulting in greater marginalization and discrimination.

A fundamental shift in commitment, solidarity, financing and action is critical. Integral to this is the inclusion of the voices, needs and priorities of the global community of persons with disabilities in all their diversity.

Encouragingly, with the adoption of the Political Declaration of the recent SDG Summit, world leaders have recommitted themselves to achieving sustainable development and shared prosperity for all, by focusing on policies and actions that target the poorest and most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities.

This open call is one of inclusive strategy to engage people around the world for providing recommendations on the new international disability equity and rights. The Australian Government plays a significant role in promoting disability inclusion across various aspects of society, including education, employment, healthcare, and community participation. It has enacted various policies and legislation to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities and ensure their equitable access to opportunities. These good practices might be transferred at the country level.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)² is an international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy full equality under the law. The Convention serves as a major catalyst in the global disability rights movement enabling a shift from viewing persons with disabilities as objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing them as full and equal members of society, with human rights.

Following ratification by the 20th party, it came into force on 3 May 2008.³ As of October 2023, it has 164 signatories and 188 parties, 187 states and the [European Union](#) (which ratified it

¹ <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>

² [United Nations General Assembly](#) Session 61 *Resolution 106. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities A/RES/61/106 13 December 2006. "alternate link: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_61_106.pdf"*

³ Pyaneandee, Coomara (2019). *International Disability Law*. London: Routledge. pp. 19–21. [ISBN 978-1-138-59347-3](#).

on 23 December 2010).⁴ The convention is monitored by the [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) for which annual [Conferences of States Parties to the CRPD](#) have set guidelines since 2008.

BRIDGE THE GAP: To Advance Disability Equity through implementation of Convention on the Rights of Persons Disabilities (CRPD) at country level

Prioritise: To advance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons Disabilities (CRPD) and disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the country level around the world

Approach: Joint coalition among UN agencies and OPDs

DFAT Role: In Bangladesh context DFAT can support coalition of UN and OPDs.

Challenges: OPDs struggle to reach the policymakers and there is a gap of inclusion and meaningful participation of OPDs in the policy development.

Opportunities: UN has strong working relation with Government and OPDs have filed level experiences. Such Coalition can bridge the gap and help Government to implement UNCRPD and disability inclusive SDGs.

Positive aspects

Government of Bangladesh has been ratified CRPD in 2007 and the CRPD Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to implement the Convention since its ratification in 2007.

Based on CRPD, the below legislative and policy measures taken to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular ***the adoption of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act in 2013*** and the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Rules in 2015.⁵

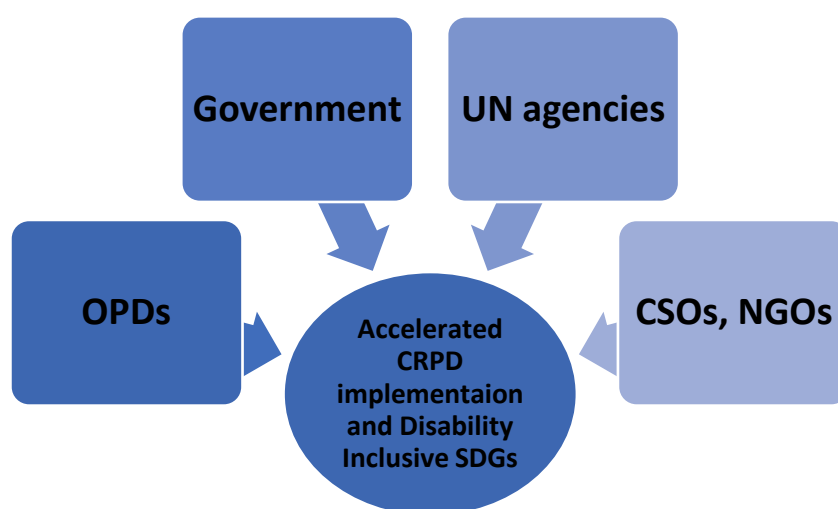
⁴ ["UN Treaty Collection: parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: List of parties"](#). United Nations. 12 October 2016. Retrieved 20 April 2017.

⁵ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3996830?ln=en>

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)⁶ launched by the UN Secretary- General in June 2019, provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the United Nations’ work.

The policy aims to establish an institutional framework for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other international human rights instruments, as well as for development and humanitarian commitments. It also establishes the highest levels of commitment and a vision for the United Nations system on disability inclusion for the coming decade.

Since 2020, The UN system in Bangladesh has been collaborating closely with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), civil society and the government in accelerating the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Disability Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁷



The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) is a unique partnership that brings together United Nations (UN) entities, governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and broader civil society to advance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the country level around the world.⁸

The proposed programme in Bangladesh is an initiative to accelerate implementation of the UNCRPD and disability inclusive SDGs following a multi-partner approach that includes the government and OPDs, the UN, CSOs and others. It aims to strengthen building blocks, namely equality and non-discrimination, with a specific focus on discrimination against women and girls ‘existing partnerships with the government and CSOs and following success factors for a results-based programme designing, planning, implementation, and monitoring and to address the already identified gaps and advocacy to foster meaningful participation among OPDs, especially women’s rights organizations, and stronger compliance with the UNCRPD⁹.

⁶https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf

⁷ https://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Situation_Analysis_CountryBrief_Bangladesh_0.pdf

⁸ <https://unprpd.org/aboutus>

⁹ <https://unprpd.org/>

Sustainability

- ✓ Improved coordination mechanism between National and local coordination bodies on disability inclusion is expected to have a long-lasting impact on addressing coordination gaps.
- ✓ Rights holders and duty bearers, participating in capacity development on disability-inclusion and consultations on law and policy reforms may contribute to disability-inclusive planning, budget, implementation and monitoring at different levels of government interventions engaging OPDs.
- ✓ Evidence based advocacy tools for OPDs may strengthen their role in working with the relevant ministries and UN agencies.
- ✓ Inclusive skills training and employment opportunities created by engaging employers in respective job placement, can be replicated throughout the country, which will contribute to reducing the current norm and mindset of placing PWDs in selected areas of work.
- ✓ Supporting the BBS in deriving disability disaggregated data will contribute in achieving SDG indicators for the country, assist policy makers in planning interventions and help allocate a budget based on reliable data. It will also allow the country to have comparable data with more than 100 countries and exchange knowledge and information about disability inclusion.

In a nutshell, the mechanism is ready for proposed coalition at country level which is sustainable. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is committed to disability inclusion is evident in its comprehensive policies, legislation, and initiatives. By continuing to invest in these efforts, Australian Government can create a more accessible, inclusive, and equitable society for all people with disabilities around the world.