

## ACT Alliance public statement on disability inclusion

An estimated 17,6% of the world's population and 19,6% of women live with a disability (1,5 billion people)<sup>1</sup>, 80% of whom live in developing countries. Disability is not a quality of an individual. Instead, disability is an evolving concept, seen as the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>2</sup>

Disability and poverty cause and compound one another. Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) face many barriers to full participation in society and are likely to face an increased risk of social exclusion. PwDs are first and foremost people, with the same basic needs and rights as all individuals in the community. Whether a person has an impairment or not, he or she needs access to water, food, shelter, medical assistance, education and livelihood opportunities. As access to such basic services is often a greater challenge for PwDs and they are often left behind, humanitarian and development actions must be made inclusive.

There is growing awareness and impetus for international and community development assistance, and disaster risk management (DRM) and response, to be inclusive of PwDs. There is growing global recognition, that without addressing the needs of PwDs or including them within programming; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be reached.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) has been fundamental in affirming the rights of PwDs. The purpose of the UNCRPD is to *“promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities (PWDs), and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”*<sup>3</sup>. The UNCRPD is approaching universal ratification. Article 32 of the Convention requires state parties to ensure that international cooperation, including international development programs, is inclusive of and accessible to PwDs. The majority of ACT's members are registered in countries that have ratified the Convention and receive governmental funding that is bound by Article 32 in the Convention.

We as an alliance have committed to work for a world where “all God's creation lives with dignity, justice, peace and full respect for human rights”<sup>4</sup>. Our Founding Document also states that we “believe[s] that all persons are created in the image of God”.

In addition, we are committed to the 2030 Agenda and its core message “Leave No-one Behind”. To ensure justice and well-being for every human being, we will build on what has worked in the past and use lessons learned to overcome existing and emerging challenges. As an alliance, we are also committed to strive to

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<sup>1</sup> UN Women 2018, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohamed 2018

<sup>2</sup> UN CRPD Preamble (e)

<sup>3</sup> UN CRPD Article 1

<sup>4</sup> ACT Alliance Founding Document: Vision Statement

ensure all our work consistently tackles intersecting areas of discrimination, such as gender, disability, nationality, race, religion or belief, class or political opinion, and will work for the empowerment of all women and girls as stated in Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the Istanbul Principles on development effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

We commit to raise awareness, act upon, and advocate for the rights of all people. We can turn this springing hope to a reality of inclusion and participation.

We call the members of ACT Alliance to map out ACT Alliance's existing commitments to disability inclusion and identify the experience of the Alliance on disability inclusion to enable comprehensive understanding across the Alliance and develop policy guidelines to achieve the goals set for the Alliance in its Global Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We call on governments and ACT Alliance members to live up to their commitments on the Disability Charter<sup>6</sup> on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Humanitarian action as well as the UNCRPD article 32, to lift the barriers People with Disabilities are facing in accessing relief, protection and recovery support and ensuring their participation in the development, planning and implementation of humanitarian and development programs and advocacy activities.

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<sup>5</sup> ACT Alliance Global Strategy draft 14th May 2018

<sup>6</sup> <http://humanitariananddisabilitycharter.org/>