GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

DECEMBER 2016

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In honor of the tenth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Day of Human Rights, the recipients of the annual InterAction Disability Inclusion award since 2009, would like to applaud the steps taken within governments, foundations, international organizations, and civil society groups to empower people with disabilities. Still, we remain deeply concerned that the international community as a whole is failing to provide the necessary resources, attention and leadership in this area. Along with our colleagues who serve as co-chairs of the InterAction Disability Working Group, we are calling for greater allocation of financial and human resources in this area.

Disability inclusion is essential to achieve development and humanitarian goals. Fifteen percent of the world's population is estimated to be living with a disability, making up the world's largest minority. About 80 percent of this group lives in developing nations, and addressing their educational, health, housing, land, employment, political and other rights is essential to achieving the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals and our mutual commitment to end extreme poverty within two decades. The correlation between disability and poverty is well documented, with people with disabilities often representing the poorest population in the poorest regions. Likewise, natural disasters and conflicts can indiscriminately create more men, women, boys and girls with disabilities. Further, failing to draw on the skills and knowledge of this community as planners and implementers of development and humanitarian projects is a tremendous waste of talent. We must promote the inclusion of people with disabilities of all ages as a human rights issue and an economic development issue.

To this end, together we have summarized what we see as progress and accomplishments achieved in support of persons with disabilities of all ages. In addition, we have developed recommendations in the areas of funding requirements and processes, programming and organizational practices with the hope that all development partners will understand and support disability inclusive development at all levels moving forward. Lastly by openly sharing each of our organization's best practices, we want to spark a dialogue and action to advance a global culture of disability inclusion.

Progress and Appreciation

The past decade has seen many important steps forward in expanding the role of international donors, host governments, and civil society actors in the promoting disability rights, creating programs to benefit people with disabilities, and empowering people with disabilities to contribute to their societies. The adoption of **the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in December 2006 by U.N. General Assembly has established basic norms, frameworks for measuring progress, reporting requirements, and a heightened awareness to the challenge of disability rights. The Convention has now been ratified by 168 countries.

We also welcome the incorporation of disability rights into the **Sustainable Development Goals** adopted in 2015. There is no separate section addressing disability rights, as many advocates sought, but several SDGs are particularly focused on the needs of persons with disabilities. For example, Goal 4 seeks to ensure equal access to education and vocational training for persons with disabilities, and to build and provide accessible education facilities. Goal 8 seeks to achieve employment and decent work for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. Goal 10 seeks social, economic and political inclusion empowerment for people with disabilities, while Goal 11 seeks to provide accessible transport systems and access to public spaces for persons with disabilities.

There has also been integration of disability considerations into **Global International agreements**. The Paris Climate Change agreement, the Sendai Accord on Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda, and the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit are good examples. With some notable exceptions, the recognition of the need to engage groups of people with disabilities and reflect their concerns as fundamental steps in achieving the development goals has been widely established. For example, the New Urban Agenda was influenced by an Stakeholder Platform called the "General Assembly of Partners" that includes an Older Persons Constituent Group as part of its governance body.

A growing number of bilateral donors, international organizations, host governments, and foundations have provided **dedicated funding streams and action plans** to support people with disabilities. We applaud the efforts of many individual donors to develop government-wide and institution-wide action plans, create separate dedicated funds, require inclusion of disability concerns into all contract and grant awards, and incorporate rigorous monitoring and evaluation provisions that establish time-bound, measurable goals for disability inclusion.

Another important step has been the establishment of special advisors on international disability rights to focus on measures to improve accessibility and equality of opportunity; promoting participation and inclusion; and increasing respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons with disabilities. In particular, we welcome the appointment of the first U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities following Human Rights Council resolution 26/20 establishing the new special procedures mandate. We also salute a number of **academic institutions and civil society organizations** that are serving as partners and sources of important research data for these efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding Requirements and Processes

Creating and sustaining inclusive projects require disability inclusion to be a commitment from all development partners, including funders, who need to also prioritize disability inclusion as part of solicitations' goals. Inclusive projects are difficult to create when solicitations do not explicitly identify people with disabilities as part of the project's goals, objectives, stakeholders or beneficiaries. Some international NGOs have been asked to remove disability elements of projects because they are not seen as key to accomplishing a project's goals. Barriers such as this are preventing the greatest impact from occurring, as potential beneficiaries become 'weeded out' even before a project has been implemented.

Recommendations include:

Set country level priorities with input from the disability community. For example, as USAID sets out the development phase of the Country Development Cooperation Strategies, people with disabilities and Disabled People's Organizations should be engaged. People with disabilities are their own best experts drawing on their lived experiences and they should inform development priorities. As outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disability inclusion must be a priority.

Specify the inclusion of people with disabilities in solicitations. Under current language found in solicitations, people with disabilities are usually clustered or implied under the phrase "marginalized communities." When solicitations specify people with disabilities, it becomes easier for organizations to offer disability inclusive programs and budget for accommodations. Conversely, when language about

disability is absent from solicitations, they more often result in proposals that do not systematically include people with disabilities which was found in the InterAction White Paper 2013. A clear mention of people with disabilities, both in scopes of work and the selection criteria, and encouraging direct partnerships with Disabled People's Organizations in solicitations will guide international NGOs to design and implement inclusive programs. All proposals responding to International Development Donors' solicitations, including USAID, should be required to include a disability analysis, similar to gender and environmental analyses that are already mandatory.

Review and update internal disability policies. Development partners should mandate disability-inclusive programming across all regions and sectors and have this mandate reflected in their policies. For example, the current disability policy at USAID is from September 12, 1997. A review and update of the policy will inform staff and missions of the importance of inclusion for not only meeting US foreign policy goals, but also the Sustainable Development Goals. Through an updated policy, the US government's leadership and guidance can help international NGOs prioritize disability inclusion.

Require all budgets include reasonable logistical support for people with disabilities. Mobility International USA (MIUSA) has found that allocating 5-7% of the program budget will be adequate for meeting most disability-related accommodation needs. MIUSA also recommends incorporating into the organization's administrative budget a disability accommodation line item of 1%-3% of the overall administrative costs. This additional accommodation line item will ensure that more people with disabilities of all ages are a part of the project staff. As most current solicitations do not mention disability, this often puts disability-inclusive organizations at a risk of being financially uncompetitive when accommodation costs are included in proposals. Technical evaluation committees must additionally refrain

from penalizing any applicant for using funding for including disability accessibility line items in project budgets. Also, it is often less expense to integrate accommodations into programs, then to retrofit current projects to be accessible to all.

Require reporting mechanisms that include people with disabilities and indicators around disability and inclusion. Most solicitations have no expectations for indicators set around disability and inclusion of people with disabilities, which reduces the necessity to prioritize disability inclusion activities in the program design and implementation. Mandating monitoring and evaluation to be disaggregated by disability will ensure that people with disabilities are included in the project as well as the outcomes. The Washington Group has data that can be used, and can support program indicators.

PROGRAMMING

Given that many solicitations do not mention disabilities, the invisibility often continues into the programming stage. Unless projects are disability-focused, they rarely include people with disabilities in a meaningful way. When people with disabilities are included in projects or programs, we have observed that they tend to be stand-alone disability-specific projects. International development should focus on a twin-track approach, meaning disability is mainstreamed into all development programs and there should be high-quality stand-alone projects targeting the disability community.

Recommendations include:

To mainstream disability into all development programs, clearly promote disability inclusion in all aspects of programming. Although development programs may have a sectoral focus, people with disabilities should contribute to, benefit from, and be represented in development programming across sectors.

- **Staffing:** Promote the participation of people with disabilities in focus group discussions, design workshops, and as project staff, especially front-line staff interacting with local community members and stakeholders.
- **Advocacy:** Ensure that people with disabilities are represented in advocacy efforts and that any sector-focused policies proposed address the needs of people with disabilities.
- **Awareness Raising:** Target awareness raising to people with disabilities and ensure that those with communication difficulties can access these messages. Awareness raising material should include images of people with disabilities participating in program activities.
- **Activities:** Require project activities to take place in locations accessible for people with a variety of disabilities and ensure reasonable accommodations for those that need them.
- **Monitoring:** Project data should be disaggregated by disability as well as other demographic characteristics. Enumerators should include people with disabilities. The Washington Group, HelpAge, Sightsavers and Handicap International have tools and experience collecting and disaggregating data from which other organizations can learn.

Use communications tools to promote disability inclusion. People with low vision or hearing impairment may not be able to access information regarding program activities which limits disability inclusion. Ensure equitable access to program information through written and spoken information including media, flyers, internet, etc. In addition, donors should portray people with disabilities participating in project activities in reports, media posts, posters, and other communications materials.

Require disability-specific projects to address the full range of needs for the target group. Often projects focus on specific interventions for habilation and rehabilitation services. All disability-specific projects should address the environmental,

institutional, and attitudinal barriers to community, economic, political, and social inclusion.

Encourage implementing partners to meaningfully engage with Disabled People's Organizations through subawards, training, and recruitment. Disabled People's Organizations can provide key input into needs assessments, evaluations, and accessibility audits. Meaningful engagement with them can ensure that development programs take an inclusive approach to design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to reinforce the commitment to "nothing about us without us."

Support development of standard guidance to more effectively integrate disability into mainstream programs. With increased integration, people with disabilities will not only be the beneficiaries, but can act as key contributors to the development, implementation, and monitoring of programs - in a similar fashion to gender inclusion.

Ensure disability inclusion perspective in monitoring and evaluation of programs. When reviewing program reports, ensure that people with disabilities are included in program activities in a meaningful and effective way. In addition to ongoing review of indicators, ensure that mid-term and final evaluations include an examination of program outcomes for people with disabilities.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

As disability is a cross-cutting issue, we must collaborate to foster the multi-sectoral approach that meaningfully integrates people with disabilities as project participants, program managers and technical experts. A "pro-disability" approach promotes inclusion and elevates society's expectations of people with disabilities as equal citizens. Inclusion should start at the organizational level, with donors and international organizations taking steps to ensure that their policies, hiring procedures and staff training internally are inclusive.

Recommendations include:

Awareness raising:
Require staff to attend disability rights training to ensure all sections and field offices are aware of how to design, implement, monitor and evaluate inclusive programs and create an inclusive office culture.

Hire more staff with disabilities:
Lead by example and support institutions to adopt steps for inclusion of people with disabilities within their own workforce, striving for at least a 10 percent representation. Support this requirement with programs to mentor people with disabilities to be effective candidates for positions; review practices and policies to eliminate bias in hiring employment, promotion, and separation; and create a culture of inclusion where disclosing disabilities results in support and accommodations.

Embed disability experts within various sectors/regions:
Ensure that governments, international organizations and civil society institutions designate disability focal points broadly and within ministries and departments at home and in field offices to ensure a seat at the table for issues related to disabilities. These offices should have sufficient authority to influence decisions of other parts of the organization, along with independent budgets. For example the U.S. Department of State's Special Advisor on International Disability Rights and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Disability Advisor positions should remain filled and other government agencies and organizations should add similar leadership to their sectors.

ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

William Abrams
President
Trickle Up
Recipient: 2009 and 2014

Neal Keny-Guyer
Chief Executive Office
Mercy Corps
Recipient: 2010

William Sweeney
President and CEO
International Foundation
for Electoral Systems
Recipient: 2011

Richard Stearns
President
World Vision
Recipient: 2012

Jonathan Reckford
Chief Executive Officer
Habitat for Humanit
Recipient: 2013

Donald Steinberg
Chief Executive Officer
World Learning
Recipient: 2015

Kate Bunting
Chief Executive Officer
HelpAge USA
Recipient: 2016

Sam Worthington
Chief Executive Officer
InterAction

David Morrissey
Executive Director
U.S. International Council on Disabilities

Jeff Meer
Executive Director
Handicap International US

Susan Sygall
Chief Executive Officer
Mobility International USA

ORGANIZATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices: Mercy Corps, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2010

Best Practices: IFES, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2011

Best Practices: World Vision, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2012

Best Practices: Habitat for Humanity, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2013

Best Practices: Trickle Up, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2009 and 2014

Best Practices: World Learning, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2015

Best Practices: HelpAge USA, InterAction Disability Inclusion Award Recipient 2016

Best Practices: Handicap International, InterAction Disability Working Group Co-Chair

Best Practices: USICD, InterAction Disability Working Group Co-Chair

Best Practices: Mobility International USA