TOWARDS INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE
EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

“Only 1 in 5 persons with severe disability have effective access to disability benefits. Social protection has a key role in supporting the participation and inclusion of all persons with disabilities. Across the life cycle, social protection systems should use all instruments available to:

- ensure income security;
- ensure coverage of disability-related costs;
- ensure effective access to health care, assistive devices, and community support services;
- improve access to services across the life cycle, such as child care, education, vocational training, support with employment.

The UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UNPRPD) funded-project seeks to develop practical guidance for countries, development agencies and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) for the reform of critical aspects of social protection systems. The main components of the project:

- Knowledge development and dissemination
  - Thematic background papers

- Support to effective DPO engagement
  - Training and regional exchanges

- Capacity strengthening
  - Development of technical guidance documents and training modules

- Technical assistance
  - Joint learning with countries engaged in reform towards inclusive social protection

“My boss was ready to adapt my workplace, but the buses were not accessible and I could not pay for the taxi to go to work. With a disability allowance, I would have been able to keep my job.”

Abner, Philippines
The challenge
Across the life cycle, persons with disabilities are more likely:
- to be poor, unemployed and to face catastrophic health expenditures
- to never attend school or to dropout, to be institutionalized
- to face multiple discriminations, in particular women with disabilities

Limited coverage of persons with disabilities by social protection systems in Low and middle income countries:
- Only 18% persons with severe disabilities receive a disability benefit globally
- Wide regional discrepancies: 95% in eastern Europe, 59% in Latin America, 14% in South East Asia, 6.4% in Asia Pacific

Design of social protection schemes can undermine inclusion of persons with disabilities:
- Issues with disability assessment, eligibility determination and adequacy of benefit
- Support to institutional care rather than community living
- Lack of flexibility which can lead to work disincentives

The opportunities
- Better evidence on situation of persons with disabilities
- Effective tools to collect and disaggregate data on disability
- Growing international consensus about the key role of social protection to support the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ILO Recommendation No. 202, SDGs (Goal 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10), Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, Asia Pacific Incheon strategy “Make the right real” (Goal 4)
- Many low and middle income countries are developing or reforming their social protection systems and are considering issues of persons with disabilities.

Rethinking social protection systems in the light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
- **Beyond incapacity to work**: Adequate and flexible combination of income support and disability-related support to promote economic empowerment
- **Support living in the community**: Development of community support services, cash plus programmes, case management and interlinkages with other programs such as community based inclusive development
- **Disability assessment**: Focus on support requirements rather than on impairments
- **Beyond one-size-fits-all**: Eligibility thresholds and design of benefits should account for disability-related costs of the diversity of persons with disabilities
- **Twin-track approach**: Ensuring effective inclusion in all social protection programmes and developing required disability-specific programmes
- **Meaningful participation of organisations of persons with disabilities** in social protection reforms

To know more
- Joint statement: Towards inclusive social protection system supporting full and effective participation of persons with disabilities. ILO-IDA (2019)
- World report on disability. WHO and World Bank (2011)

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