



**UNPRPD** MPTF  
Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



**UNITED NATIONS  
CAMEROON**



# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

## CAMEROON



**COUNTRY BRIEF**



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# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN **CAMEROON**

## COUNTRY BRIEF

November 2022

### Disclaimer

This brief was prepared by the Technical Secretariat. It summarizes the key findings from the situational analysis report and does not necessarily reflect the position of the UNPRPD MPTF.

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CCA</b>	Climate Change Adoption
<b>CHRC</b>	Cameroon Human Rights Commission
<b>CONRHA</b>	National Committee for the Rehabilitation and Socio-economic Reintegration of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CUAPWD</b>	Coordinating Unit of Associations of Persons with Disabilities
<b>ICDR</b>	International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation
<b>MINAS</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OPDs</b>	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNPRPD</b>	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UNPRPD MPTF</b>	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

# 1 BACKGROUND

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.

The UN entities participating in UNPRPD are ILO, OHCHR, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and WHO. Other UNPRPD members include the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). The main contributors to the UNPRPD MPTF are Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In 2020, with the Strategic and Operational Framework 2020-2025, UNPRPD adopted a new programme design approach. The Framework moves towards proactive, results-oriented joint programming to drive implementation of the CRPD and disability-inclusive SDGs.

In the same year, the UNPRPD launched its fourth funding call and invited UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to submit proposals for joint country-level programmes with the objectives of advancing CRPD implementation and improving the implementation of disability-inclusive SDGs. The 26 selected teams (see Annex 1) were then allocated an initial budget to deliver an induction training, conduct a country situational analysis and complete a full joint programme proposal based on the findings of the situational analysis.

The 26 countries conducted a comprehensive multistakeholder situational analyses to identify gaps and opportunities around preconditions to CRPD implementation and agree on a set of recommendations to address them.

From May to August 2021, the Cameroon UNCT conducted the situational analysis. The methodology included a desk review of relevant literature, key informant interviews and focus groups, stakeholder mapping exercises, and consultative workshops with key stakeholders.

The full situational analysis report can be found [here](#).

# 2



## WHY A COUNTRY ANALYSIS?

Many countries still struggle to transform the CRPD into concrete policies, systems, programmes and services that uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. It is urgent that governments and their implementation partners deliver on their SDG commitments through CRPD-compliant interventions. To support countries in the most catalytic way requires understanding the main bottlenecks and priorities in each country in relation to the fulfilment of the CRPD. We needed to know who the key stakeholders are, how implementation/monitoring mechanisms are functioning (or not), which capacities stakeholders may need to improve, and which ongoing development processes could be leveraged to become more disability inclusive.

The situation analyses were designed to:

- Inform the design of future PRPD-funded programmes in the country and serve as a baseline for them;
- Inform UNCTs of gaps in achieving disability inclusion in ongoing national processes and programmes and recommend further, in-depth analysis where needed;
- Build a base of mutual understanding and working relationships among UN entities, government, OPDs and other civil society organizations, as well as the private sector and academia, as the basis for future co-design of joint programmes;
- Strengthen the capacity of those stakeholders to more effectively include and address the rights of persons with disabilities as outlined in the CRPD; and,
- Serve as an advocacy tool for ODPs and other civil society partners, both national and international.

# 3 INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY CONTEXT IN CAMEROON

 <b>Population</b>	<b>26.55 million</b>
 <b>Disability Prevalance</b>	<b>5.4%</b> [2011] <sup>1</sup>

- **High prevalence regions**, which include the country's South and Littoral regions (10-11 percent)
- **Average prevalence regions**, which include the Centre, Northwest, West and Far North regions (6-7 percent)
- **Low prevalence regions**, which include the Southwest, East, North and Adamawa regions (3-5 percent)

Disability data in Cameroon is outdated and limited. The findings present the most recent available data.

# 4 FINDINGS

## 4.1 Stakeholder coordination mechanisms

The key stakeholders responsible for implementing and monitoring the CRPD are highlighted below. A full list of stakeholders is included in the full report.

### Government

- **Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)**  
is the principal government agency mandated to monitor the implementation of policies aimed at protecting, promoting and empowering persons with disabilities.
- **National Committee for the Rehabilitation and Socio-economic Reintegration of Persons with Disabilities (CONRHA)**  
**CONRHA is an advisory body** that assists the government in developing and overseeing national policy for persons with disabilities. It is chaired by MINAS and is mandated to facilitate the coordination of efforts of various stakeholders (OPDs), civil society organizations (CSOs), UN agencies, development partners, government agencies and the private sector for the benefit and with the participation of persons with disabilities.

### Government

- **The Inclusive Societies Platform for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in Cameroon (ISPOPD)**  
includes 119 registered OPDs and CSOs focused on disability inclusion. The platform engages in activities such as advocacy, collection of data to develop statistics on persons with disabilities, as well as development and implementation of inclusive programmes nationally.
- **Coordinating Unit of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (CUAPWD)**  
is a network of associations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders in Cameroon's Northwest Region.



## UN System

- **The UN Working Group on Human Rights**, chaired by the representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy for Central Africa, monitors **disability inclusion in UN analysis and joint programming** mechanisms, such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).
- There is no specific UN working group dedicated exclusively to disability inclusion. The United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office has assigned a disabilities focal point. The disability inclusion-related activities of the UN Human Rights Working Group include assessing the accessibility of existing UN premises, developing related recommendations and monitoring subsequent actions.

## Other key partners

- Faith-based organizations in Cameroon play an important role in support services, particularly in the areas of health and education. They include the Baptist Convention, Catholic Mission, Presbyterian Mission and the Council of Muslim Dignitaries. International NGOs, such as SightSavers, are also engaged in advocacy and support services for persons with disabilities.
- International donors, including the Canadian International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR-Cameroon), collaborate and coordinate their activities with local entities and platforms, such as the CUAPWD mentioned above.

## Summary of stakeholder coordination analysis

The overall trend observed is that implementation mechanisms are ad hoc and are not structured or institutionalized. Coordination mechanisms are also unlikely to be enforced. The analysis found that government ministries (health, education, labour and economy) face barriers to implementing CONRHA's recommendations due to limited knowledge and technical capacity to promote disability inclusion in their respective sectors. Weak technical capacity and poor coordination among OPDs in Cameroon was also highlighted as a concern, limiting their capacity for collective advocacy and monitoring of accountability on inclusion. In addition, OPDs are reported to have limited knowledge of the CRPD and poor technical capacities regarding approaches to advancing disability rights in Cameroon.

## 4.2 Preconditions for disability inclusion

In its Strategic Framework, UNPRPD has identified five preconditions as foundational aspects that must be in place to address the rights of persons with disabilities across sectors. The following findings focus on these preconditions in the Cameroon context.

- 1 Equality and non-discrimination
- 2 Accessibility
- 3 Inclusive service delivery
- 4 CRPD-compliant budgeting and financial management
- 5 Accountability and governance

### Equality and non-discrimination

Cameroon has several laws that protect the rights of persons with disabilities. However, OPDs have indicated that they are not enforced and that persons with disabilities are usually not aware of them. This analysis found that government capacity and enforcement mechanisms are insufficient to ensure implementation of existing legal provisions. In addition, fewer than 20 percent of the OPDs/CSOs interviewed agreed that persons with disabilities are familiar with provisions regarding non-discrimination and equity in Cameroonian law. While the legal instruments in force include provisions to protect persons with disabilities, the lack of knowledgeable legal specialists, lack of familiarity with the laws and lack of motivation among rights holders to advocate for their rights contribute to perpetuating discrimination against persons with disabilities.

### Key findings

- The monitoring and legal enforcement mechanisms for disability inclusion within public institutions are insufficient, and monitoring and enforcement within ministries, schools and hospitals are inadequate.
- Even the judicial system (courts of first instance, appeals courts and the Supreme Court) lacks specialists in disability law to protect and defend the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The limited knowledge among persons with disabilities regarding non-discrimination provisions in the country's laws stems, in part, from inadequate communication. To be understood, this information must be communicated in simple and innovative ways.
- OPDs' coordination bodies do not receive adequate support to monitor implementation of disability inclusion.

## Inclusive service delivery

### Disability assessment and referral services

In Cameroon, MINAS, in collaboration with specialized health centres, determines the type and degree of disability and assigns a disability card to persons with disabilities, entitling them to services. Only persons with disabilities who possess a card and can prove a Permanent Potential Incapacity Rate of at least 50 percent may benefit from special support measures. However, many persons with disabilities have not managed to obtain this card. The process is not clear and systematic and persons with disabilities are lack information about the system.

### Disability support services

The government provides disability support services to persons with disabilities through the MINAS and its local social centres. MINAS occasionally provides mobility aids and assistive devices. It also operates a health facility specialized in rehabilitating people with physical disabilities. In addition, some physiotherapy and physical rehabilitation services in certain Ministry of Public Health facilities are operational and support persons with disabilities. OPDs and CSOs at the consultation workshops acknowledged MINAS' support. Several of them are familiar with the services provided and have helped the Ministry to direct this support. In addition, international NGOs and faith-based organizations provide significant assistance to disability support services.

However, disability support services in Cameroon are largely inadequate. They tend to focus more on material aspects, such as assistive devices, and less on intangible supports, such as supportive decision-making, communication support (such as sign language or guide interpreters) and community services.

## Key findings

- Demand for disability support services largely exceeds supply. Public expenditures for disability support services through the MINAS budget is limited and support from non-State actors is sporadic and depends on several external factors. These services also tend to focus more on material aspects and less on intangible supports. As a result, many persons with disabilities do not have access to disability support services.
- Difficulties in guaranteeing access to mainstream services in Cameroon stem from the inadequacies of disability support services, along with lack of proper planning and budgeting for disability inclusion in mainstream sectors beyond education, health and social services.
- The assessment and referral system is confusing. Although a biometric disability card will be introduced soon (through the MINAS-DGSN agreement), the process will need to be streamlined and simplified, with appropriate communication on how to obtain it.

## Accessibility

Cameroon has several laws to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access public and private buildings. While these laws address the physical environment, in practice they are not usually implemented because the premises of several public institutions (including newly constructed buildings) remain inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Furthermore, accessibility is seriously compromised in the areas of communication and information. For example, public institutions – including ministries, schools and other public buildings – lack dedicated sign language interpreters to support those who are deaf. Sign interpreters are almost never used, including on the main news programmes on the public television station, where key public information is communicated. The OPDs consulted noted that important legislation and information is not published in braille.

### Key findings

- Although accessibility laws and measures are in place, they are not enforced and are often violated.

## CRPD compliant budgeting and financial management

As a developing country, Cameroon is struggling to allocate its resources to achieve its development goals. This is further complicated by financial malpractice, such as embezzlement of public funds and limited transparency and accountability. Consequently, public expenditures for disability inclusion are virtually insignificant and persons with disabilities are not a top priority for the government.

The Ministry of Finance representatives who participated in the consultation workshops noted that there are no specific processes, guidelines or recommendations to mainstream disability inclusion in public budgets.

Direct disability-related costs are addressed through the MINAS and Ministry of Basic Education budgets, which occasionally offer assistive devices to persons with disabilities. However, these budgets are very small and do not meet disability needs nationwide. Other disability support services, such as sign language interpreters, receive very limited budget allocations. In its public finance committee sessions, the Ministry of Finance convenes a civil society representative who represents the broader interest of civil society, including on issues of disability. However, OPDs indicated that they have never been invited to public finance consultations.

### Key findings

- The financial budgeting processes do not adequately take account of persons with disabilities and their rights and needs. Budgets for disability support services, accessibility measures and mainstreaming are non-existent or too small. There is no guidance in place to make the budget process more disability inclusive.

## Accountability and governance

### Inclusive evidence and data gathering systems

Data on persons with disabilities in Cameroon is outdated as it is drawn from the third General Census of Population and Housing, published in 2010. The government has faced logistical and financial challenges to conducting a fourth general census, which has been in the pipeline for several years.

Nonetheless, the National Institute of Statistics occasionally conducts surveys, sometimes in collaboration with ministries and departments (including health, education and employment). These surveys use the Washington Group of Questions and disaggregate data by disability. While surveys of this type provide some relevant data, they are usually limited in scope and method. Due to these limitations, data on persons with disabilities are scarce, not harmonized and easily challenged as unreliable. The representative of the National Institute of Statistics who attended the consultations acknowledged this issue and underscored the need to support the institute financially and technically in order to obtain reliable, disaggregated data on the situation of persons with disabilities.

### National accountability mechanisms

Cameroon is currently in the process of ratifying the CRPD. On December 28, 2021, the President of the Republic signed the Decree authorizing its ratification. However, the country already faces very complex problems implementing the provisions of its own national disability-inclusive legislation, which are not as stringent as the CRPD's. With this consideration in mind, ratifying the CRPD without first addressing the preconditions and tackling implementation bottlenecks could lead to a situation in which additional provisions are adopted but not implemented.

The MINAS and its Department of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly are the key entities responsible for monitoring the implementation of disability rights-related policies. Several ministries, such as the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, have designated focal points who may bring any disability-specific matters to the attention of their minister, together with recommended action. However, the inter-governmental disability (CONRHA) mechanism's lack of enforcement authority constitutes a serious gap.

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC) is another very important mechanism for protecting human rights (including disability rights). Its role is to protect and promote human rights in the country. The CHRC processes requests and complaints related to alleged human rights violations through self-referral or matters brought to it that constitute serious, recurrent or systemic violations of human rights. The CHRC is composed of 13 members, one of whom must be a representative of persons with disabilities. However, this person is appointed by the President of the Republic and not elected. Some OPDs noted that an executive appointee may thus not be fully accountable to them and may not represent their interests properly, particularly if they differ from those of the executive.

## Key findings

- Up-to-date and accurate disaggregated data on persons with disabilities that could inform ministries on disability needs within their respective development sectors are not available.
- CONRHA is criticized as being a very weak coordination platform whose advisory recommendations are rarely implemented. In addition, CONRHA lacks the authority to implement its own recommendations.
- Communication, orientation, instruction and sectoral policy from higher executive levels are inadequate. The prime minister's office and the presidency have not established disability inclusion as mandatory in all sectors of development. Participants at the consultation workshop firmly stated that the Office of the Prime Minister, rather than MINAS, should oversee the CONRHA sessions as this would signal and build government-wide commitment and interest.

## 4.3 Cross-cutting approaches: Participation, gender, inequalities

The UNPRPD has adopted three cross-cutting approaches to be intrinsically applied across all of UNPRPD MPTF's work, including its structures, programmes, and processes, to ensure full and meaningful participation of all persons with disabilities.



### Participation:

Enabling full and effective participation of persons with disabilities



### Inequalities:

Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities



### Gender:

Addressing gender inequality and advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities

## Participation

As noted above, the participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs is limited in consultations with the government and in planning, implementation and monitoring of development programmes.

The findings highlight the following key gaps:

- The consultation and monitoring platforms offered by the government and development partners are weak or non-existent.
- OPDs do not have sufficient capacity and their advocacy is fragmented.
- Both physical premises and means of communication are often inaccessible to persons with various disabilities.
- Legal provisions are lacking that would ensure that persons with disabilities hold more positions of political leadership.

Underlying obstacles to greater participation are:

- Negative perceptions lead to incorrect assumptions that persons with disabilities cannot contribute significantly to society, engendering discrimination and marginalization.
- Access to quality education is unequal, leaving many persons with disabilities behind.
- Persons with disabilities lack employment opportunities because they have limited access to training opportunities. As a result, many are under-skilled and thus unemployed and lack adequate financial resources to engage in any activity beyond income generation;

## Gender and inequalities

The situational analysis reported limited findings around gender and inequalities. The report did highlight increased discrimination and barriers that women with disabilities and underrepresented groups face in terms of participation at local and national levels. Persons with intellectual disabilities in particular are severely excluded in Cameroon.

## 4.4 Disability inclusion in broader development, humanitarian and emergency contexts

### National development plans

The government-led National Disability Strategy 2030<sup>2</sup> emphasizes inclusion and non-discrimination as fundamental principles.

Disability inclusion is core to the UN Cameroon programming principles, which are articulated in the pledge to “leave no one behind and support the most vulnerable first” in development processes. All 18 UN agencies in Cameroon working to achieve the SDGs adhere to this pledge and its components, including disability inclusion. In 2020, the UNCT organized a capacity-building initiative on UN programming principles for designated UN agencies and government ministries to mainstream the principle of leaving no one behind, including persons with disabilities, within the UNSDCF. The UNSDCF 2022-2026, agreed by the Cameroon government and the UNCT, specifies expected outcomes for all target groups at risk including persons with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> Cameroon also recently presented its Voluntary National Review at the 2022 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

To date, the UN Working Group on Human Rights<sup>4</sup> has monitored disability inclusion in UN analysis and joint programming mechanisms such as the CCA and UNSDCF. There is no specific UN working group dedicated exclusively to disability inclusion. The United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office has assigned a disabilities focal point person.

## **Climate change, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action**

There is little evidence of systematic engagement of OPDs and persons with disabilities in humanitarian response delivery. The OPDs consulted from Cameroon's English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions described physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers to inclusion in decision-making processes, despite their desire to be more involved in humanitarian action. Humanitarian agencies could do better at including OPDs in their consultations and programme delivery; those agencies include the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Plan International, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Danish Refugee Council and Doctors without Borders.

## **COVID-19:**

The findings from Cameroon's situational analysis report focused more on broader impacts on disability inclusion, with limited findings on COVID-19 impacts.



# 5 CONCLUSIONS

Although disability inclusion has been included in various programs and projects and is a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, additional efforts are needed to ensure that the goals and targets are effectively achieved in line with the CRPD standards.

The situational analysis highlights that the following key challenges to CRPD implementation:

- Insufficient knowledge and capacities of right holders, duty bearers and development partners in implementing three key CRPD preconditions: accessibility, non-discrimination and inclusive service delivery within the framework of development programs and sectoral strategies in Cameroon; and,
- Weak implementation of accessibility, non-discrimination and inclusive service delivery for persons with disabilities in the following key development domains: health; education; employment (economic empowerment), infrastructure (physical and public services), including information and communication technology, and political participation.

To address these challenges, the Cameroon UNCT developed key recommendations in consultations with relevant partners, including OPDs:

- The UN and development partners should support the ministries of public works, communication and information technologies, education, health, and employment in conducting surveys for disability statistics.
- The UN and development partners should support the National Institute of Statistics and the Census Bureau in ensuring that the planned fourth Population and Housing Census mainstreams best practices for obtaining disability-disaggregated data.
- The UN and development partners should provide financial, human, material, and managerial support to the two principal OPD coalitions (ISPOPD and CUAPWD) to strengthen their contributions to advancing disability rights in Cameroon.

- The UN and development partners should support the government and OPDs in developing simple and innovative ways to communicate the non-discriminatory provisions of the CRPD to the public, schools and hospitals to combat stigmatization and exclusion.
- The UN and development partners should support the Ministries of Public Works and of Public Contracts in enforcing the circulars and guides pertaining to disability inclusion when building public infrastructure.
- The UN should support MINAS in carrying out campaigns aimed at eliminating negative perceptions leading to incorrect assumptions that persons with disabilities are unable to make any significant contribution to the society.
- The UN should support MINAS in streamlining, simplifying and clarifying the disability assessment and referral systems in Cameroon. The UN should also support MINAS in communicating correctly and clearly on the process for obtaining the biometric disability card.
- The UN should support the Ministries of Economy and of Finance in undertaking an analysis on best practices for mainstreaming disability inclusion in budgetary and public expenditure processes in Cameroon.

## ANNEX 1:

# 26 SELECTED COUNTRIES

Argentina  
Colombia  
Guatemala  
Panama  
Trinidad & Tobago

### AMERICAS

Cameroon  
DRC  
Eswatini  
Ghana  
Rwanda  
Sierra Leone  
Tanzania  
The Gambia  
Tunisia  
Zimbabwe

### AFRICA

Montenegro  
North Macedonia  
Republic of Moldova

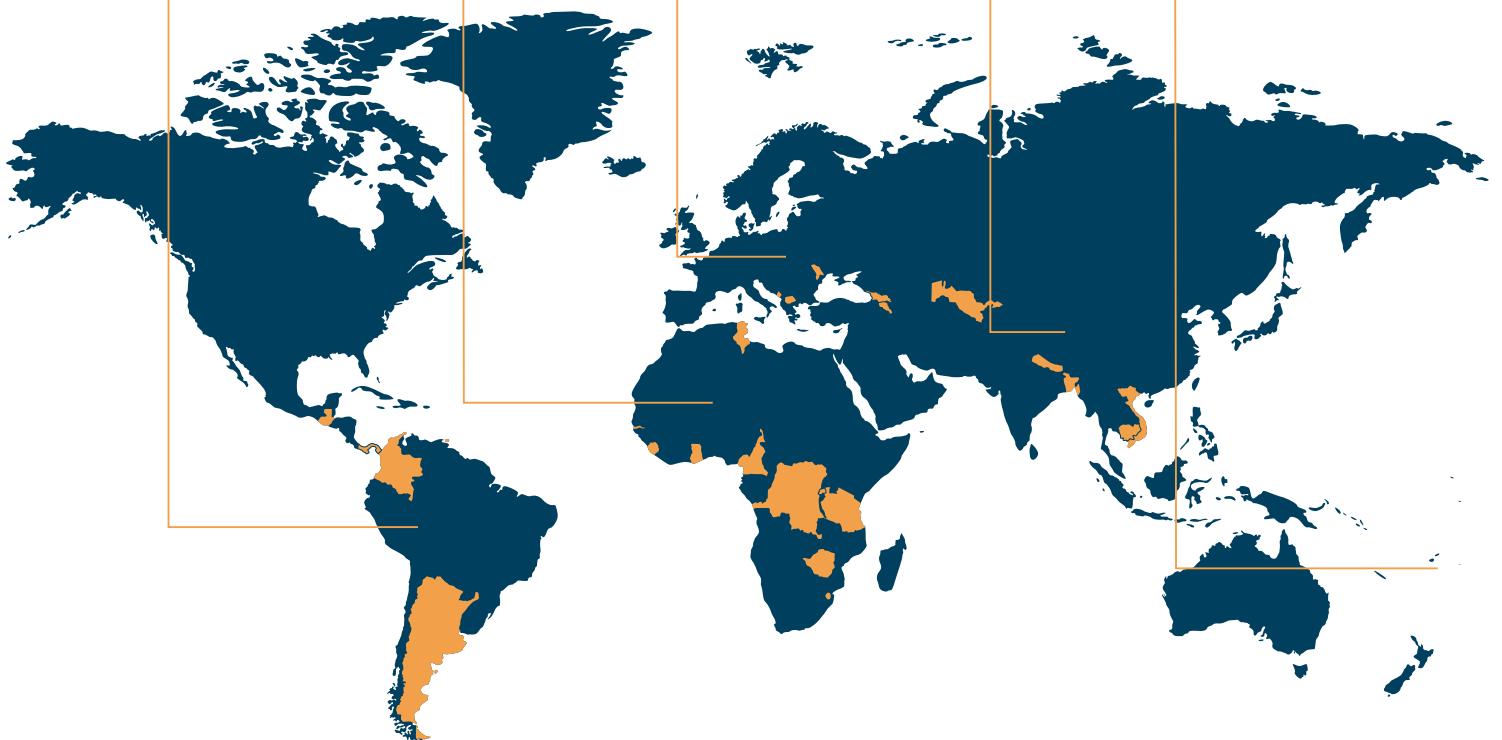
### EUROPE

Armenia  
Bangladesh  
Cambodia  
Georgia  
Nepal  
Uzbekistan  
Vietnam

### ASIA

Cook Islands

### OCEANIA



# ENDNOTES

- 1 Multiple Cluster Survey, Institute of National Statistics 2011
- 2 [http://bibliotheque.pssfp.net/livres/NATIONAL\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_STRATEGY\\_2020\\_2030.pdf](http://bibliotheque.pssfp.net/livres/NATIONAL_DEVELOPMENT_STRATEGY_2020_2030.pdf)
- 3 <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-cameroon-2022-2026>
- 4 The UN Working Group on Human Rights is chaired by the Representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy for Central Africa, which is the sub-regional unit for Central Africa of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

