



UNPRPD **FUND**

Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Joint efforts to deliver disability inclusive climate action

What the UNPRPD Fund can do.

November 2023

Disability-inclusive climate action: an urgent priority

The impact of climate change is increasing across the world and disproportionately affects the poorest and most marginalized populations, who have historically contributed the least to climate change¹. Exposure to climate risk is shaped by existing inequalities, individual and social characteristics, and how these factors intersect². The people who face the greatest level of risk are those that experience the highest level of inequality and barriers to exercising their rights in everyday life, including persons with disabilities. Rights-based, intersectional and people-centred approaches are required.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) calls for initiatives that focus on capacity building, the meaningful participation of vulnerable groups and ensuring their access to key resources³. Although there is increasing recognition of the disproportionate impact of climate change on persons with disabilities⁴, there is a lack of evidence on how to strengthen their climate resilience.^{5,6} This is exacerbated by the exclusion of persons with disabilities from climate frameworks, policies and programmes.⁷ Very few countries refer to disability in their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)⁸ or only refer to persons with disabilities in general terms as a vulnerable group.^{9,10} New mitigation and adaptation policies and programmes that do not adequately consider the rights of persons with disabilities also risk creating new barriers.¹¹

There is an urgent need to prioritise disability-inclusive climate action through rights-based, intersectional and people-centred approaches in all facets of climate frameworks, policies and programmes. To deliver disability-inclusive climate action, effective interventions must consider how factors related to disability, gender, age, ethnicity, indigenous origin or minority status, geography, migration, religion and other factors intersect and impact climate risk.

¹ IPCC (2023) [Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#)

² For example, considering how factors related to disability, gender, age, ethnicity, indigenous origin or minority status, geography, migration and religion impact climate risk.

³ IPCC (2022) [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Summary for Policymakers](#)

⁴ OHCHR (2020) '[Analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change](#)', Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/44/30

⁵ Smith et al (2017) [Disability and climate resilience: A literature review](#)

⁶ Kett et al (2020) [Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Query No: 30](#)

⁷ Human Rights Council (2020) [A/HRC/44/30](#)

⁸ McGill, DiCarp and IDA Status Report on [Disability Inclusion in National Climate Commitments and Policies](#)

⁹ UNFCCC [NDC Registry](#) and UNFCCC [Submitted NAPs](#)

¹⁰ McGill, DiCarp and IDA Status Report on [Disability Inclusion in National Climate Commitments and Policies](#)

¹¹ OHCHR (2020) '[Analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change](#)', Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/44/30

Why the UNPRPD Fund is a unique modality for supporting disability-inclusive climate action

The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Fund (UNPRPD) is a unique funding mechanism that brings together UN entities, governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and broader civil society. As the only UN inter-agency funding mechanism dedicated to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), UNPRPD Fund's strategic approach provides catalytic funding for national and multi-country programmes, generates innovative knowledge management tools and systems, and provides context-relevant capacity building to support the development of genuinely inclusive national policies and systems¹².

The risks posed by climate change, humanitarian emergencies, disasters and widespread poverty are connected. There is a need to avoid working in siloes and develop complementary and integrated approaches between climate action, humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development strategies and interventions,^{13,14} including how the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework are implemented. The latest IPCC synthesis report refers to how 'integrated, cross-cutting multi-sectoral solutions increase the effectiveness of adaptation', and how climate risk can be mitigated through 'through carefully designed and implemented laws, policies, participatory processes, and interventions that address context specific inequities such as based on gender, ethnicity, disability, age, location and income'.¹⁵

The multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach to mainstreaming disability set out in UNPRPD Fund's Strategic Operational Framework¹⁶ ensures that our programmes are delivering integrated, cross-cutting and multi-sectoral approaches at national level. By bringing diverse stakeholders from across sectors and areas of expertise together, the UNPRPD Fund's operating model ensures innovation and shared learning on how to embed disability inclusion in climate action across countries. The UNPRPD Fund is uniquely placed to support a co-ordinated national approach to disability inclusive climate action by bringing the UN system, government and OPDs together. As of 2022, the UNPRPD Fund has delivered 94 joint programmes in 87 countries. Our multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral focus ensures UNPRPD Fund programmes deliver co-ordination between ministries and whole of government approaches to strengthening climate resilience across sectors, in national policies and in UNFCCC processes.

UNPRPD Fund understands the importance of using an intersectional approach to build climate resilience, by recognizing that persons with disabilities are diverse and experience exclusion based on multiple factors and identities. UNPRPD Fund uses an intersectional and inclusive approach to generate evidence and guidance on how disability, gender, age, location, indigenous origin, minority status and other factors intersect in order to strengthen the climate resilience of persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups. Our focus on learning ensures we are contributing to the global evidence base, developing knowledge products and testing practices so that they can be used and replicated to ensure disability-inclusive responses to the risks posed by climate change across the world.

¹² UNPRPD (2020) [Strategic Operational Framework 2020-2025](#)

¹³ International Institute for Sustainable Development (2022); [Addressing Climate Change Through Integrated Responses](#)

¹⁴ UNFCCC (2017) [Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030](#)

¹⁵ IPCC (2023) [Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#) p110

¹⁶ UNPRPD (2020) [Strategic Operational Framework 2020-2025](#)

UNPRPD Fund’s approach to support disability-inclusive climate action

UNPRPD Fund national and multi-country programmes address disability-inclusive climate action across several areas at national and international level.



Climate frameworks and system changes

It is vital to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are embedded into national climate planning processes and systems, and that persons with disabilities have shaped their development through systematic and meaningful participation in their design. All UNPRPD Fund programmes have a specific component on mainstreaming disability into national development, humanitarian and climate plans, budgets, programmes, and monitoring processes, and focus on building synergies between climate action, humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development policies and processes at national level.

UNPRPD Fund programmes can ensure the development of national **mitigation** policies that are systematically disability inclusive. This includes the development of domestic mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, inclusive and accessible communication strategies, plans and actions, and the development of NDCs and long-term strategies in line with states' commitments under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement.

UNPRPD Fund programmes can also support countries with their **adaptation** policies and programmes that aim to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability, and ensure inclusive design that enhances accessibility and inclusion in society. Our multi-stakeholder approach brings local, subnational, national, regional and international partners together to develop systematically country-driven, disability-inclusive, gender-responsive and participatory approaches to adaptation planning, whilst ensuring a focus on the systematic and meaningful participation of impacted communities, in order to integrate adaptation into national policies and actions. Our programmes also support the development of inclusive NAPs, climate vulnerability and comprehensive risk assessments, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and adaptation communications in order to build the resilience of persons with disabilities, in line with states' commitment under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement. UNPRPD Fund programmes can also support countries' efforts to avert, minimize and address loss and damage to individuals and communities by developing inclusive and accessible multi hazard early warning systems, climate forecasts, emergency preparedness, risk assessment and management, and interventions that build the resilience of impacted communities.

The **Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)** initiative aims to empower all members of society to engage in climate action through six elements: education, public awareness; training, public participation; public access to information; and international cooperation.¹⁷ In order for ACE to achieve its goals, broad collaboration between all levels of government and sectors of society is required. UNPRPD Fund programmes can help countries to ensure their ACE activity is systematically inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities by supporting OPDs to participate meaningfully in ACE initiatives at national and sub-national level, recognizing and integrating the knowledge and lived experience of persons with disabilities in climate decision-making, and supporting government partners, national climate movements and wider civil society to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in all ACE initiatives.

Under the **transparency** initiatives of the Paris Agreement member states are obligated to provide several updates and reports. This high level of transparency is an important opportunity to assess how states are progressing with their climate commitments, and whether they are ensuring progress is people-centered and disability-inclusive. UNPRPD Fund programmes can provide technical support to governments to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are embedded into national approaches,

¹⁷ [Action for Climate Empowerment](#)

and ensure persons with disabilities, OPDs and under-represented groups participate in the development of transparency initiatives. This includes the development of communications on capacity building and adaptation, NAPs, NDCs, long term strategies, national contributions to the Global Stocktake, and engagement at the annual Climate Change Conference and Conference of the Parties.

Promoting inclusive policy reform

UNPRPD Fund programmes support countries to develop and reform policies, plans, budgets, programmes and services in line with their obligations to the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda – including the SDGs, Sendai Framework and Paris Agreement. Our approach ensures the preconditions required for effective CRPD implementation are in place and have a specific focus on ensuring all interventions are developed in partnership with persons with disabilities and OPDs – including women with disabilities, women-led organizations and under-represented groups of persons with disabilities.

UNPRPD Fund programmes work to ensure that **legal frameworks, policies, budgets and systems** developed at national level genuinely strengthen disability inclusion and climate resilience. This includes reviewing and reforming equality and non-discrimination legislation; reviewing national budgets for climate change mitigation, adaptation and disability inclusion allocations; strengthening disability-inclusion and allocating financial resources for building climate resilience within specific sectors including health, social protection and education; and mainstreaming and targeted provision of services to strengthen climate resilience of persons with disabilities through disability assessment and determination systems, the provision of disability support services and targeted healthcare, social protection and education initiatives.

Achieving a **Just Transition** towards greener, resilient and climate neutral economies cannot be achieved without systematic disability-inclusion. Due to discrimination, persons with disabilities often face high levels of exclusion from social and economic activities. Just Transition provides a unique opportunity to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities through alternative, and systematically inclusive, pathways that address the additional costs of disability, develop accessible infrastructure and ensure persons with disabilities of all ages can access the education, vocational training and skills required to participate in green economies. The participation of persons with disabilities is vital for ensuring transport and green infrastructure are accessible, creating employment opportunities and quality social protection for all.¹⁸ UNPRPD Fund programmes can help to ensure the systematic representation of persons with disabilities and OPDs at all stages of Just Transition policy and programme design and implementation. Our programmes also develop guidance on how disability-inclusion and intersectionality can be strengthened in Just Transition and green jobs assessment methodology and reporting at national level, and generate evidence on how ensuring a Just Transition can build inclusive pathways to combatting climate change.

Multi-stakeholder capacity building

In order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the rights enshrined in the CRPD, extensive **capacity building** of national and local governments, OPDs, climate action organizations and wider civil society is required. Capacity building and knowledge sharing are key components of all UNPRPD Fund programmes. UNPRPD Fund has over ten years' experience of designing and delivering country-driven

¹⁸ ILO (2022) [Just Transition Policy Brief](#) “Nothing about us without us” Realizing disability rights through a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies

capacity building based on national needs, and ensuring participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive approaches.

UNPRPD Fund programmes use our comprehensive situational analysis process to identify capacity gaps to target in programme implementation. This includes identifying targeted capacity building for national governments, OPDs, national climate movements and wider civil society on disability-inclusive climate action, adaptation and mitigation actions, access to climate finance, education, training and public awareness, and inclusive and accessible climate communication. Our programmes deliberately foster collaboration between partners and across sectors, including at national, subnational and local levels, to ensure all key stakeholders play an active role in the design and delivery of disability-inclusive climate action and accountability mechanisms. This includes building partnerships with mainstream stakeholders engaged in climate action to improve their understanding of addressing intersectionality and disability inclusion when designing, implementing and monitoring climate action.

Learning, evidence and knowledge management

Given the lack of quality evidence on how to deliver disability-inclusive climate action, it is vital to collate and share good practice, learning and guidance so effective interventions can be showcased in appropriate local, national and international forums, and replicated in other countries.

UNPRPD Fund programmes collect **learning, generate evidence and develop innovative knowledge products** that are tested at national level so that they can be applied to other countries and contexts. Our programmes foster cross country collaboration between OPDs, government institutions and UN organizations, and capture learning and good practices to support innovative approaches to developing, monitoring and reporting disability-inclusive climate action. Our programmes also create learning and exchange mechanisms to promote learning and evidence in key national, regional and global forums to ensure evidence is strategically disseminated and promoted.

Understanding how factors related to disability, gender, age, ethnicity, indigenous origin or minority status, geography, migration, religion and other individual characteristics impact climate risk is vital for designing appropriate and impactful interventions. Developing **rights-based, intersectional and people-centered approaches** is required. UNPRPD Fund programmes explore disability inclusive and intersectional approaches that recognize and enhance the knowledge, leadership, and contributions of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, prevent multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and ultimately make climate action more effective. Our programmes also develop guidance on how to prioritize the rights of persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups and ensure their meaningful participation in the development of genuinely inclusive climate action, policies and programmes



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