

Disability and DRR: A policy primer

1. Background

The *World Report on Disability* (2011) finds 15% to 20% of the world's population living with disability. Previous global estimates were 10%. Figures from the Great East Japan Earthquake (2011) in Miyagi prefecture indicate a general mortality rate of 0.8%. For persons with disabilities the mortality rate jumped to 3.5%. Following the Haiti earthquake (2010) an estimated 200,000 people were left living with disability. (UNESCAP, 2012).

Disasters impact on the built environment and further limit persons with disabilities' access to information, services and resources. In light of aging populations, higher accident rates from increasing vehicle ownership and more frequent climate-induced disasters we can, without action, expect the situation to worsen.

2. Disability and the HFA

The *Hyogo Framework for Action* (2005) (HFA) references vulnerability and highlights the increased vulnerability of certain groups e.g. women and children. Reference to disability, however, is poor. Despite the HFA's focus on risk, the HFA does not recognise the increased risk that persons with disabilities face nor the positive contribution that persons with disabilities and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) can make within DRR.

Disability is crosscutting. Disability increases risk across all groups including the already at-risk e.g. a child with disability. The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) (CRPD) stresses the need for the active participation of persons with disabilities within all development efforts. Article 11 of the CRPD states the need to address disability in situations of risk; including, natural disasters.

3. Initiatives from Asia and the Pacific

Recently, there have been initiatives that respond to Article 11 of the CRPD. Goal 7 of the Incheon Strategy: To Make the Right Real (2012) promotes disability-inclusive DRR and seek disability-inclusive planning and appropriate disaster response for people with disability. The *Yogyakarta Declaration* (2012) of the 5th Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR makes both general and specific references to disability and includes the first disability stakeholder annex. In response, the government of Indonesia is, at the time of writing, drafting a national regulation on disability and DRR.

In Pakistan, guidelines for humanitarian organisations to address disability in disaster risk management (DRM) have been produced by the Aging and Disability Taskforce (ADTF) with the participation of persons with disabilities. Similarly, a Pacific Platform for DRM initiative promotes a disability-inclusive approach in DRM trainings and strengthens working linkages between DPOs and DRM officials in planning and implementation with regional coordination from the Pacific Disability Forum. In Fiji, DRM officials are involving persons with disabilities in government-led DRR outreach activities and are drafting a disability-inclusive DRR toolkit for use in communities.

4. Post-2015 recommendations

It is of the utmost importance that the increased risk that persons with disabilities face is acknowledged within DRR post-2015. It is also essential that persons with disabilities participate in and, directly contribute to, the development of DRR policy and frameworks post-2015. A failure to include the most at-risk, challenges the very foundation of DRR itself.