

Addis Ababa, September 5, 2025

On the occasion of the **2025 Second Africa Climate Summit**, Addis Ababa, we urgently call for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate action, including disability inclusive humanitarian action and inclusive food security policies.

The We are Able! programme promotes inclusive food security for persons with disabilities. Our advocacy aims at measures that can **dismantle stigma, promote dignity, and ensure that persons with disabilities are meaningfully included in climate action**. It is implemented by Leprosy Mission, See You Foundation, African Disability Forum, VNG International, The Hague Academy and ZOA.

Climate change is already a lived reality across Africa, manifesting in prolonged droughts, devastating floods, extreme heat, food insecurity, and mass displacement. Persons with disabilities - more than 80 million across the continent - remain among the most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted - yet they are too often excluded from disaster preparedness, adaptation planning, and recovery efforts.

The challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the context of climate change are multiple:

1. **Barriers to Evacuation and Emergency Response**
During floods, droughts, or storms, evacuation systems are rarely designed to be accessible. Lack of sign language interpretation, adapted transportation, or accessible shelters creates life-threatening risks for persons with disabilities
2. **Limited Access to Humanitarian Assistance**
Distribution of food, water, and shelter during climate-related crises often overlooks accessibility, leaving many persons with disabilities without adequate support.
3. **Exacerbated Livelihood Vulnerabilities**
Many persons with disabilities rely on agriculture, informal work, or social support systems that are highly sensitive to climate shocks, increasing poverty and dependence.
4. **Barriers in Early Warning Systems**
Early warning messages may not be accessible to persons with hearing, visual, or intellectual disabilities, preventing them from taking timely protective measures.
5. **Low Resilience and Preparedness**
Lack of inclusion in disaster preparedness programs undermines the resilience of persons with disabilities and their communities, making recovery longer and more difficult.
6. **Exclusion from Climate Policies and Decision-Making**
Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) are often excluded from climate governance, resulting in policies that fail to address their specific needs.

We underscore that African countries have the potential to lead in climate solutions, with a young workforce, renewable energy potential for developmental gains, and vast natural wealth. Reaching this potential requires global action on emissions reduction, fulfilment of funding pledges, and increased financing for Africa's adaptation and resilience. All of these measures need to be inclusive for persons with disabilities.



We recall the key outcomes of the **2023 Nairobi Declaration**, adopted by Heads of State at the first Africa Climate Summit. This important declaration calls for global action on emissions, debt relief, and financing for climate solutions, highlighting Africa's vast potential for renewable energy and natural carbon sinks to spearhead a climate-compatible development pathway.

We note with concern that the 2025 flagship report of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) **State of the Climate in Africa in 2024** provided worrying data on climate patterns and their impacts across the African continent. It should be clear to everyone that priority should be given to strengthening resilience, supporting early warning systems and disability inclusive evacuations at times of climate emergencies, and accelerating climate-smart investment and adaptation efforts in Africa.

Finally we recall the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (UNCRPD) and the **African Disability Protocol** (ADP) that emphasize the disproportionate impact of climate change on persons with disabilities and the States' obligation to ensure their protection and safety during climate-related disasters. The UNCRPD Article 11 and the ADP Article 12 oblige states to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, which includes climate-related events and natural disasters. We endorse the CRPD call for disability-inclusive policies, participation in climate action planning and implementation, and accessible emergency response plans to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are respected in a changing climate.

Building on the We are Able! work in Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, DR Congo, and Uganda to strengthen the resilience of persons with disabilities to climate change, we urge our leaders to place persons with disabilities at the heart of Africa's climate agenda, with particular focus on the needs of girls and women with disabilities.

Moreover, we urge that climate action should extend resilience efforts to also include both adaptation and mitigation measures. By bridging social action with political advocacy, we bring a compelling reminder that the struggle for climate resilience in Africa must be rooted in inclusion and the conviction that no one is left behind. In this way, we can expect the Second Africa Climate Summit to contribute directly to the shaping of inclusive climate strategies and ensuring that the voices of persons with disabilities are part of Africa's response to the climate crisis.

Therefore, we recommend that:

- 1. Inclusive climate action is urgently needed, with a strong role for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in their implementation**
- 2. Besides sustainable and inclusive resilience measures, anticipatory action and disaster preparedness is also required**
- 3. Adaptation and mitigation strategies such as early warning systems and accessible low-carbon transport need to include persons with disabilities**
- 4. Humanitarian action promoting food security requires accessible and inclusive distribution systems**
- 5. Addis Ababa agreements should build on the UNCRPD and Nairobi commitments and (funding) pledges, ensuring more inclusive policies implemented by sufficient resources.**