



CALL TO ACTION FOR COMMITMENTS AT THE GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2025 - PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AFFECTED BY HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

The third Global Disability Summit will be held in April 2025, hosted by the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the Governments of Jordan and Germany. In the lead-up to this important event, the Disability Reference Group (DRG)¹, calls on governments, multilateral agencies and civil society to make concrete commitments for advancing the rights of all children and adults with disabilities impacted by humanitarian emergencies, who are too often forgotten and left behind.

Over 48 million persons with disabilities are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025 in the context of an increasing number of emergencies, while the humanitarian funding outlook is bleak². This challenging funding situation may affect the capacities of all relevant actors to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities. We know that in armed conflict, disasters, situations of forced displacement and public health emergencies, children and adults with disabilities face higher risks of violence, exploitation and abuse than those without disabilities, often lack access to basic services and lifesaving assistance, and are commonly denied opportunities to participate in decision-making. Further, climate change will continue to exacerbate ongoing crisis situations and create new ones that will severely impact the lives of the most at risk people, including those with disabilities across the globe.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) [Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#) marked a significant step towards disability-inclusive humanitarian efforts. Since their endorsement, these Guidelines and decisive actions to support their uptake have triggered some positive developments, such as humanitarian actors adopting more inclusive policies and practices, addressing barriers, and strengthening partnerships with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to improve emergency preparedness and response for persons with disabilities. In November 2024, the DRG was included in the IASC structures as an associated entity, establishing a formalized place for disability inclusion in the global humanitarian coordination architecture. Recent years also show an improvement in how data about persons with disabilities affected by crisis is collected and how disability inclusion is addressed in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) as reflected in Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRP). However, despite this progress, significant gaps remain:

- In many humanitarian crises, persons with disabilities remain at heightened risk because of the lack of CRPD³ compliant policies, laws, services, support systems as well as education and economic opportunities. Too often, humanitarian interventions may not adequately consider the accessibility or reasonable accommodation requirements of persons with disabilities; while national systems may exclude displaced populations with disabilities, particularly refugees, due to administrative and other obstacles.
- While persons with disabilities and their representative organizations play a key role in responding to humanitarian emergencies, they face barriers to systematically being engaged as partners and in humanitarian coordination structures.
- The collection, analysis and use of (qualitative and quantitative) data related to persons with disabilities and their humanitarian needs remains a challenge, increasing the risk of poorly targeted responses and inequitable resource distribution for disability inclusion.
- In humanitarian emergencies exclusion of more marginalized persons with disabilities is exacerbated. Children, young people, women and girls and older persons with disabilities, as well as persons with sensorial, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, those with deafblindness and those with multiple disabilities, are frequently left behind.

¹ The [DRG](#) is an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) associated entity, established in 2020 as a network bringing together organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), NGO, UN entities, academics, donors and others, to advance disability inclusive humanitarian action.

² Based on the estimation that 16% of the total number of persons expected to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025 (according the OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2025, (<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2025-enarfes>)) are persons with disabilities.

³ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



- Above all, humanitarian funding is declining while humanitarian crises escalate, with devastating consequences for the people affected by them, and creating a critical gap in resources. This imbalance poses a significant risk to ensuring inclusive humanitarian responses as it may force difficult prioritization decisions, potentially resulting in institutionalization and other (unintentional) human rights violations; injury and loss of life for persons with disabilities due to neglect of essential measures to address and eliminate specific barriers.

We call on all partners to ensure that over 48 million children and adults with disabilities in humanitarian crises are not left behind as commitments are made to promote the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. For this, we need to break the silos that challenge the power of our collaboration. All stakeholders, including humanitarian actors, states, the private sector, donors, OPDs, and others working to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities need to join efforts to scale up investment in responding to the needs of persons with disabilities affected by humanitarian emergencies.

It is through this unified approach and by taking proactive, concrete measures that we can make further progress towards ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian situations. In this regard, we call on all partners to submit commitments⁴ for the 2025 Global Disability Summit⁵, through the portal available at <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/commitments/>. It is highly encouraged to submit joint commitments, especially those that have been developed in collaboration between OPDs, humanitarian actors and other stakeholders.

The following section aims to provide broader guidance on specific areas for GDS commitments which can strengthen inclusion of persons with disabilities affected by humanitarian emergencies:

- Consider a commitment to **support the dissemination and implementation of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**, such as through provision of dedicated training on the Guidelines and/or aligning internal policies, guidance and tools to these Guidelines.
- Consider a commitment to strengthen **participation and leadership by persons with disabilities in all your humanitarian action**, such as by making partnership systems accessible and setting targets for the number / percentage of partners being local OPDs.
- Consider a commitment to **strengthen engagement with those persons with disabilities in your humanitarian action who are most at risk of being excluded**, such as children, young people, older persons, women and girls with disabilities, including those with sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial disabilities, those with deafblindness, with minority languages and individuals with multiple disabilities.
- Consider a commitment on making **humanitarian financing more inclusive** and monitoring how funding reaches persons with disabilities and OPDs.
- Consider a commitment to **strengthening disability inclusion in planning and budgeting processes**, such as including a budget for universal design, accessibility, reasonable accommodation and specific supports required by persons with disabilities in all new project and programme documents.
- Consider a commitment to **strengthen qualitative and quantitative collection and use of data** on persons with disabilities affected by emergencies, such as integrating the Washington Group Questions set into key data collection tools or routinely conducting accessibility audits and integrating this into your reporting.
- Consider a commitment to strengthen **disability inclusion in humanitarian coordination** mechanisms, such as, by supporting the establishment and/or functioning of a dedicated focal point mechanism and/or disability inclusion/ age and disability working group in the countries you work, based on need.
- Consider a commitment related to improved access of crisis affected persons with disabilities to quality and appropriate **assistive technology (AT), including assistive products and related services**, such as by establishing partnerships with relevant service providers to meet pre-existing and newly acquired AT-related needs of crisis affected populations.

⁴ Commitments should aim to be SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time-related) to facilitate monitoring and reporting to the GDS Secretariat

⁵ For detailed information on the process for registering commitments, please visit: <https://gds.idata.tools/home>