

Panel Presentation and Dialogue on the rights of persons, groups, disproportionately impacted by Climate change

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Excellencies, distinguishes colleagues,

My name is Nelly Caleb, I am the National Coordinator of the Disability Promotion & Advocacy in Vanuatu. Co. Chair of the Pacific Disability Forum

The Pacific Disability Forum is a regional body of organisations of persons with disabilities in the Pacific region. Our aim is to build the capacity of these organisations and improve

the lives of persons with disabilities in the Pacific through advocacy.

I would like to share with you my experience with disaster and climate change faced by persons with disabilities and how the Situation of humanitarian crises impact our lives.

In Vanuatu, when the tropical cyclone Pam hits Vanuatu March last year most persons with disabilities did not have information about the category 5 hurricane because of to the lack of access to information due to radio coverage that did not reach every islands in Vanuatu. When our members wanted to communicate with us, some had to paddle a canoe on the ocean so he/she could reach us, other had to climb banyan trees (biggest tree in the region) so they could find network and access information.

During the cyclone people moved to safe shelters, one of our member went to visit another member to check if he was also safe,

but he found him in his house alone, the winds became so strong that they could not leave, they had to hide themselves inside a local Bread oven.

It's now 18 months after the cyclone, people still leaving in tents;

- no trees, no woods left to rebuild houses,
- no income to build permanent house
- part time or no school
- children only go to school when it is not raining
- lack to access Food and sanitation

Last year after tropical cyclone Pam Vanuatu also faced El nino. People had to walk very long distance to fetch water, one of our members who has a physical disability reported that he could not reach the ocean to have his daily bath, therefore his family members had to bring a bottle of 1.5 litter of salt water twice a week to bath him.

People with disabilities have to live with their families and have access to limited food and water.

Some children with disabilities lost their lives because of malnutrition.

Copra is one of the main source of income of Indigenous communities, but due to the impact of el nino

Coconuts trees bear little nuts, despite the high demand.

Persons with disabilities remain one of the population the most at-risk in disaster and conflict situations, caused by the lack of **concrete data, statistics and information**, they remain excluded from humanitarian response

1. The available data showed that 11 rural women died during the cyclone, this

data is not disaggregated by disability, so there is no possibility to know how many women with disabilities died.

2. Further, without disaggregated data by disability, we cannot locate persons with disabilities, identify their need and the barriers faced to access basic services, and give an appropriate response to save their lives.
3. we have non official data collected through our members, including from rural area, but it is not official.

- Persons with disabilities are often considered in humanitarian contexts as **receivers** of support, rather than as key actors for instance
- Officers did not see the importance to include persons with disability in disaster response, they have their own excuses
- Persons with disabilities in **remote area** and hard-to-reach areas are at greater risk

in crises due to barriers in terms of accessibility, communication and lack of inclusion, in particular women and children, indigenous and elderly persons with disabilities

- People with disabilities and older people are left out during the distribution of relieve supplies
- Sites of distributions of relieve supplies are not accessible, and often our members missed their share.

Moving forward - Key Recommendations:

- **Full inclusion and effective participation** of persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of international, regional and national humanitarian planning, response, recovery, rehabilitation policies and programme must be ensure.

- Ensure that, where relevant, references are made to the principle of **Build Back Better** as outlined in the Sendai Framework explicit reference persons with disabilities and universal design
- All Humanitarian program and activities should integrate accessibility **standards.**

Thank you for your attention