QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE on

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SPAIN

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI) is the expression of the disability social movement for the incidence, representation and political interlocution. Its mission, established and assumed by its member entities, consists in articulating and structuring the disability social movement (from the cohesion and unity of the sector and always respecting the pluralism inherent in such a diverse social segment) in order to develop representative political action in defense of the rights and interests of Persons with Disabilities, both collectively and individually. In 2011, CERMI was officially designated by the Spanish State as an independent mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the CRPD in Spain. CERMI has been an ECOSOC advisory body since 2011.

**QUESTION 1**

Since Persons with Disabilities are commonly excluded from social planning and decision making, the consequences of climate change are even more devastating. As long as their needs are not taken into account when anticipating events or providing alerts, any climate change event (from a heat wave, heavy rains, to a catastrophe that involves evacuation) will affect their health, physical and mental protection even in a worse way than the way it affects people without disabilities.

In the event that an extreme incident requires evacuation, Persons with Disabilities are at greater risk of suffering impacts on their health, both physically and mentally. They do not usually receive adequate emergency information or instructions for action, or accessible ways to communicate their needs in an emergency or an evacuation. Messages regarding extreme weather situations or other emergency information do not usually reach Persons with Disabilities as they are not accessible for blind, deaf people or those who have mental disabilities.

On the other hand, material and household losses due to natural disasters can lead to even greater marginalization of this group, creating a cycle that reinforces social and economic exclusion and increases vulnerability.

Climate change has a strong impact on people with disabilities and their families, which makes it difficult to enjoy their fundamental rights; for example:

* People with disabilities suffer a higher rate of unemployment and poverty, with dependence on polluting energy and few resources to change into a clean energy. This situation causes poverty and energy vulnerability in their homes.
* Climate change especially affects what the article 28 of the CRPD states, since it produces difficulties in access to drinking water, energy and even a house with proper health conditions.
* This climate crisis is especially damaging the so-called climate migrants, who leave their nations due to scarcity of resources, leaving in many cases people with disabilities abandoned by the difficulty of these exoduses.
* Excessive air pollution reduces the quality of life and even the life expectancy of many people with disabilities whose health is more vulnerable.
* Access to organic products with low carbon footprint become luxury products for Persons with Disabilities due to their high cost, so they end up having less healthy diets.
* Heat waves can higher risk of dying to those Persons with disabilities with especially sensitive heat-related illnesses. Likewise, these factors can increase health risks in case of hurricanes and storms of great intensity. During these types of events, high rates of illness, injuries and death are common among people with disabilities.
* Sea level rise and sudden events such as floods or cyclone can lead to the disproportionate loss of lives and livelihood among Persons with Disabilities, as they are commonly excluded from social planning and decision-making.
* Such disaster losses can lead to further marginalization, creating a cycle that reinforces social and economic exclusion and increases vulnerability. Alarmingly, 85 percent of people with disabilities in 137 countries reported in a 2013 UN survey that they have not participated or been consulted in community disaster management processes.
* The established warning or evacuation systems may therefore not reflect the ideas and needs related to the disability of persons with disabilities. Their exclusion from decision-making and the planning of such processes puts them at a greater risk of loss of life or damage during climatic events and disasters, a risk that cannot be overstated given the greater frequency and intensity of change-related climate disasters.
* Natural disasters destroy infrastructure, which is already precarious in terms of accessibility, leaving many people with disabilities unable to travel due to the damage caused, as well as delays in their repair.
* These natural disasters increase dangerous situations and spaces for women and girls with disabilities, as they are a group more vulnerable to violence and abuse.
* Emergency telephone number 112 has many deficiencies in accessibility for deaf people. Today, there is no common accessibility operation for all territories. In some Autonomous Communities, there are systems in which people with hearing impairment register and can send and receive text messages in case of emergency, but if they leave the territory of the community in which they have registered, it is no longer useful. The service also does not contemplate the possibility of communicating through sign language.
* People with disabilities need to know the appropriate measures to take against these changes according to their particular situation; they need to receive clear and accessible emergency instructions, and have the necessary means to mobilize and communicate in case they need to evacuate. This includes, for example, preparing and transmitting messages related to extreme weather situations or other emergency information in an accessible way; as well as consider means of evacuation that take into account those with reduced mobility, visual, mental or auditory disability.

**Examples / specific stories of these situations:**

Floods in 2019 in the eastern regions of Spain: The experience of the meteorological phenomenon known as DANA highlighted the difficulty in meeting the transport demand of people using wheelchairs. It also showed difficulties in maintaining the adequate supply of prescription drugs or access to certain necessary medical equipment, such as oxygen, as well as the lack of shelters with facilities, equipment and trained personnel to meet the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

**QUESTION 2**

At CERMI we are highly committed to the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this sense, we are working with our member entities to disseminate the Agenda, as well as to identify the contribution that from organizations of disability in the achievement of this Global Compact.

CERMI understands that environmental caring is essential within a strategy of social innovation in disability. CERMI advocates respect for the environment by a rational use of resources, minimizing consumption, reducing the generation of waste and emissions, favoring recycling and seeking eco-efficient solutions. During 2018, CERMI has implemented an Internal Instruction on Environmental Management, which offers indications aimed at saving energy, water, and minimizing plastic resources.

CERMI has also calculated the impact of its activity on the carbon footprint:

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| --- | --- |
| Carbon footprint in absolute terms | 17,8249 CO2eq |
| Carbon footprint in weighted terms | 0,3412 CO2eq |
| Range 1 | 0,1716 CO2eq |
| Range 2 | 17,6533 CO2eq |
| Ratio 1 | 0,0594 CO2eq/m2 |
| Ratio 2 | 1,9805 CO2eq/empleado |

In addition, within the framework of the 15th World Climate Summit held in Madrid, CERMI will present an awareness campaign to warn about the effects of climate change on Persons with Disabilities and about the measures to take, as promoting the participation of this group of people (of more than 12 million in Spain) in active environmentalism.

In this regard, CERMI, through a Conference, will inform the audience about how the population with disabilities becomes a highly vulnerable group in the climate crisis, as well as those subjects to be improved that allow incorporating an inclusive and accessible vision in environmentalism, which promotes the green commitment of people with disabilities, their families and their representative organizations.

**QUESTION 3**

The impact of climate change has a greater effect on those people who live multiple situations of vulnerability and marginalization, that is, factors such as geography, poverty, gender, age, indigenous or minority character, national or social origin and disability; often combined in the same population, make them suffer more exclusion.

Those who work in rural areas such as agricultural and construction workers, as well as children, the homeless, the elderly and women from different regions who must walk for hours to find water are in a situation of greater vulnerability to heat stroke, dehydration, insolation and, consequently, in danger of death.

Regarding geographical issues, climate change also contributes to forced migration for those who have the means and resources to do so. Those who cannot emigrate will remain in places subject to the problems caused by this change.

**QUESTION 4**

In order to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is necessary to rely on the global indicators framework for the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development objectives (especially those linked to situations where people with disabilities can frequently be found and generate their marginalisation, such as poverty and exclusion at different levels). Likewise, it will also be necessary to take into account the principles and articles of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in which highlight that the duties of the States concerning the protection of persons with disabilities in the situation of emergencies.

Regarding the 2030 Agenda, it incorporates a global, regional and national monitoring system, which has as a common framework the 232 global indicators of monitoring progress agreed by the UN General Assembly.

Similarly, “The National Statistics Institute of Spain has already incorporated the 2030 Agenda indicators into the National Statistical Plan, in its strategic vision and operations, and is fully committed to move towards the progressive fulfillment of the reporting requirements of the official system of indicators of the UN. ”

Regarding the following indicators, it is essential, as the Agenda proposes, that they be disaggregated  according to various characteristics, specifically to assess how many of these affected people have disabilities:

3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory diseases

3.9.2 Mortality rate attributed to unhealthy water, poor sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unhealthy water, sanitation and hygiene services for all (WASH)

13.1.1 Number of dead, missing and affected people directly attributed to disasters per 100,000 people

3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to involuntary poisoning

(among others)

On the other hand, other indicators on the agenda allow us to measure how States managed to reduce the impact gap of the effects of climate change between people with disabilities and those who are not in a vulnerable situation. Such as:

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate systems and measures of social protection for all, including minimum levels, and, by 2030, achieve broad coverage of the poor and vulnerable

1.5 By 2030, foster the resilience of the poor and people in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather-related phenomena and other economic, social and environmental disturbances and disasters

10.2 By 2030, strengthen and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all people, regardless of their age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic situation or other condition

1.4 Ensure that all men and women, particularly the people who are poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services, ownership and control of land and other property, inheritance, natural resources, new appropriate technologies and financial services, including microfinance

1.3.1 Proportion of the population covered by systems or minimum levels of social protection, disaggregated by sex, distinguishing between children, the unemployed, the elderly, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, victims of accidents work, the poor and the vulnerable

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable people, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in situations of vulnerability.

Finally, from the International CRPD, different articles refer to how the states should deal with situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters also linked to climate change. In this way, they also measure the degree of commitment in reducing the impact of the effects of climate change on people with disabilities:

**Article 10 Right to life**

States Parties reaffirm that every human being has the inherent right to life and shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

**Article 11 Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**

States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.

**Article 28 Adequate standard of living and social protection**

States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability.

**QUESTION 5**

It can be highlighted how the Employment Centers of social initiative are moving to eco-efficient and environmentally friendly production models. Also noteworthy is a campaign developed by the State Confederation of Deaf People, aimed at recycling:

https://www.ecovidrio.es/conocenos/campanas/Campanhas/ElSignoDelVidrio

**QUESTION** 6

In addition to all the actions and measures already mentioned, other of the central ways to fight climate change and its effects on Persons with and Disabilities is to make a global transition to a low carbon economy. This transition, in addition to being useful for the environment and those who inhabit the planet, would be a net generator of jobs (including Persons with Disabilities).

Implementing a fair transition to a low-carbon economy that aims to leave no one behind will require a specific and contextualized combination of laws, social protection, skills development and attitude transformation that would create an enabling environment for green jobs to be perpetuated and new opportunities for dignified work to be opened for people with disabilities.

Likewise, it will be vital to establish alliances between environmental movements and civil society and disability to add new voices to the green agenda and, above all, to incorporate inclusion and accessibility to all political and awareness actions related to the climatic emergency.

Finally, the depopulation of the rural environment - which particularly affects people with disabilities, who due to the need for attention and services are forced to settle in urban areas - is a doubly harmful phenomenon both for territorial balance and social cohesion, as well as for the environment, and therefore the fight against climate change.

It is therefore imposed that the causes of uprooting, which devastates the rural environment, to be addressed at the highest global level, through the promotion of economic development policies, strategies and actions in terms of sustainability and respect for the environment, which in addition to “green results ” offers vital solutions to all people, including those with disabilities, to remain in their environment of origin and choice, with quality of life

The incessant depopulation of rural areas and the disappearance of the peasantry are among the causes that are causing the climate crisis that the world is experiencing, so this phenomenon must be confronted with all energy, making the rural environment dignified, inclusive and green.