**Re: Request from the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of person with disabilities / Questionnaire on the rights of person with disabilities to participate in decision-making**

**Submission by the UN Agencies in Sri Lanka, in consultation with civil society representatives working with persons with disabilities**

1. ***Please provide information on the legislative and policy framework in place in your country related to the status, establishment, resourcing, and functioning of representative organizations of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and local levels;***

Establishment and functioning of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)[[1]](#footnote-1)

NGOs representing the interests of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are required to register under 2 statutory mechanisms:

1. The *Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, No. 28 of 1996[[2]](#footnote-2)*:

In terms of section 20 of the Act:

*“(1) No voluntary organization shall engage in providing services or assistance in any form or manner to persons with disabilities either directly or through any institution or other body or organization, unless such voluntary organization is registered under this Act.”*

1. The *Voluntary Social Service Organisations (Registration and Supervision) Act, No. 31 of 1980*[[3]](#footnote-3)*,* as amended by *Act No. 8 of 1998.* [[4]](#footnote-4)

In giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organisations1 requires NGOs to adhere to the following notable registration processes, amongst others:

* Submission of relevant documents with the application form provided by the NGO Secretariat.
* Submission of the recommendations provided by the Department of External Resources.
* Forwarding of the application form along with other information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, and obtaining recommendations from the two ministries.[[5]](#footnote-5)

It is to be noted that following the parliamentary elections in August 2015 and the constitution of new Ministries, the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organisations has been taken under the purview of the Ministry of National Dialogue. In addition, there is some discussion to the effect that the requirement for clearances from the Ministry of Defence and/or Ministry of Foreign Affairs may be removed.

The National, District or Divisional Secretariats will attend to the registration of the NGO, depending on what level it operates at:

* National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organisations – if registered in any country outside Sri Lanka.
* District Secretariat – if operating within the boundaries of an Administrative District.
* Divisional Secretariat – if operating only within the boundaries of the Divisional Secretariat.

The following pre-qualifications are also required to register as an NGO:

* Any organisation formed by a group of persons on a voluntary basis, which:
  + Shall be of a non-governmental nature.
  + Shall be not for profit.
  + Shall not share the profit or surplus earned through fundraising activities among its members.
  + Shall be dependent on public contributions, charities, grants payable by the Government, or donations local or foreign, in carrying out its functions.
  + Shall not be self-serving in aims and related values.
  + Activities shall be within the Constitution, legal framework and social values of the country.
  + Has as its main objectives, the provision of such reliefs and services as are necessary for the mentally retarded and physically sick, the poor, the sick, the orphans and the destitute, and the provision of relief to the needy in times of disaster.

The system in place also ensures the monitoring of NGO activities through:

* The establishment of District Coordinating Committees chaired by the District Secretary/Government Agent, who will monitor activities at a district level.
* The collection of information at various phases of projects implemented by NGOs at the Divisional Secretariat level.
* Obtaining the participation of NGOs for the projects proposed by the Divisional Secretariat.
* The conduct of a comprehensive survey to form a database to commence strict monitoring at district level.

Other activities carried out by the NGO Secretariat include:

* Printing of the NGO Directory and Community Based Organizations Directories.
* Printing of the NGO Projects Directory.
* The submission of an Annual Action Plan for NGOs for approval to the respective District Secretariats where implementation is planned.
* The submission of Quarterly Financial and Narrative Reports to the respective District Secretariats.
* Conducting capacity building programmes to provide skills required for officials in the NGO Secretariat and for the staff of the NGOs.
* Site visits by the officials of the NGO Secretariat to observe activities of NGOs in the field.

Legal action can be taken against the misconduct of NGOs under sections 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of *Voluntary Social Service Organisations (Registration and Supervision) Act, No. 31 of 1980*. These sections stipulate the establishment of a Panel and a Board of Inquiry, the latter of which has the power to summon and compel the attendance of witnesses, to compel the production of documents, and to administer any oath or affirmation to any person.

**Challenges**

* The current system to register a NGO is complicated and involves a significant amount of red tape and Ministry approvals. If a Person with Disability (PwD) wishes to start an organization to address the concerns of PwDs, the registration process and the need to approach different Ministries for paperwork and register under two different Acts may act as a deterrent. However, as noted above, following the parliamentary elections in August 2015 and the constitution of new Ministries, there is some discussion to the effect that the requirement for clearances from the Ministry of Defence and/or Ministry of Foreign Affairs may be removed.
* Furthermore, obtaining funds to ensure the sustainability of such organizations would be a challenge, partly due to the administrative work required. A person heading an NGO would have to visit several government institutions for various administrative reasons. This would be a challenge as accessibility for PwDs to public places is often unavailable.
* What can be observed is that the management capacities of Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) are relatively weak. Fundraising and functioning still tends to be charity-oriented. DPOs require capacity building support to draw up strategic plans for their organizations and better define a vision and mission. Most DPOs tend to formulate their mandates with a focus at the micro-level (divisional or district based) and have limited knowledge of macro-level policies, activism and discourse. In addition, organizational management and financial management skills are limited in a majority of DPOs.

**Suggestions**

1. Provide facilities to register NGOs in one place, through a streamlined and centralized process, instead of requiring several ministries to be approached.
2. Provide online registration facilities, which could minimize the paperwork involved, allow much faster processing, and incentivize the establishment of organisations willing to address the concerns of PwDs.
3. ***Please provide information on existing legislation and policies aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, including children with disabilities, are consulted and involved in decision-making processes that directly or indirectly concern them;***

*National Policy on Disability, 2003*[[6]](#footnote-6) *and National Action Plan for Disability, 2013*

Sri Lanka has taken several progressive steps in relation to disability inclusion in policymaking. It has a fairly comprehensive[[7]](#footnote-7) National Policy on Disability, which was approved by the Cabinet in 2003, as well as a National Action Plan for Disability of 2013[[8]](#footnote-8) to give effect to the policy. Both of these were formulated through by-and-large consultative and participatory processes. Both contain provisions relating to the inclusion and participation of PwDs in decision-making processes. The relevant sections are as follows:

***National Policy on Disability (2003)***

**“VII POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO ENSURE HOLISTIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

**22. Community-Based Rehabilitation**

Community-Based Rehabilitation will promote and protect the rights and responsibilities of individuals who have disability by including them in civil society and in development and welfare programmes at all levels of social organization and civil administration. Strategies that continue to segregate and isolate them from their communities will be discouraged. Community-Based Rehabilitation will continue to be developed as a bottom-up approach with horizontal and vertical networks. Primary decision-making will lie with individuals who have disability, their families and the communities in which they live. Government, NGOs and the private sector will work in partnership to respond to the former and provide community support systems including technical support, referral services and logistics.

**VIII PARTNERS IN IMPLEMENTATION**

* People who have Disability, their Organizations and Parents Groups:

People who have Disability, their Organizations and Parents Groups have been represented through all stages of the formulation of this policy. That they continue to have an equal share in all the decision-making processes related to the implementation of this policy is vital to ensure its fullest impact and continuing relevance to their changing needs. In addition to their position in the National Council for Persons with Disabilities they will be represented on all sectoral mechanisms dealing with issues related to disability.”

***National Action Plan for Disability (2013)***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Focus area** | **Expected Outcome** | **Activities** | **Key Performance indicator** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible agencies** |
| **Thematic Area One: Empowerment** | | | | | | |
| 3 | Group formation, representation and participation including advocacy and lobbying | 3.1 Effective groups in place with capacity for decision-making to represent their peers. At the same time, to claim their rights to participate equally and be included with equity in the social and development mainstream. | 3.1a Promote and assist the formation and organisation of Disability Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs) and Parents Groups | No. of DPOs and Parents Groups interacting with grass-roots CBR | Ongoing | MSS, Provincial Councils, DPOs, NGOs |
| 3.1b Promote and assist their knowledge enhancement and advocacy lobbying skills | No. of DPOs and Parents Groups targeted at divisional and higher levels | 1 yr + |  |
| 3.1c Promote and facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in Children’s Clubs/Associations on the basis of equity | No. of children with disabilities who are members of Clubs/Associations | 6 mths + |  |
| **Thematic Area Three: Education** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Policies, laws, strategies and plans | 1.1 Education policies, laws, strategies and plans reviewed and amended to take disability into account | 1.1a Include full inclusion of children with disabilities in next reviews of education policies, laws, strategies and plans (including special facilities and communication methods at examinations) | School system inclusive | 4 yrs + | MoE Provincial Councils |
| Laws inclusive | (+ = and ongoing) |
| Reports, strategies and plans inclusive | (+ = and ongoing) |
| **Thematic Area Four: Work and Employment** | | | | | | |
| 1 | National policies, laws, strategies and plans relating to work, employment and vocational training | 1.1 National policies, laws, strategies and plans relating to mainstream work, employment and vocation training reviewed and amended to take disability into account | 1.1a Include people with disabilities in next reviews of mainstream work (include recruitment), employment and vocational training policies, laws, strategies and plans | Rates of employment and unemployment of people with disabilities | Start 1 yr (+ = and ongoing) | MoL, MYSD, MoED, Provincial Councils |
| **Thematic Area Seven: Social and Institutional Cohesion** | | | | | | |
| 5 | Non-Governmental and Private Sectors | 5.1 Resources of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector harnessed, coordinated and maximized for NAPD implementation  5.2 Networks and partnerships between Government and non-governmental and private sectors maximized at all levels | 5.a Set up a multi-stakeholder National Disability Forum | No. of members | 6 mnths | MSS  MSS Provincial Councils |
| No of stakeholders |  |
| No./type of activities carried out | 4 yrs |
| 5.b Include disability in existing development fora at all levels | No. of for a |  |
| No./type of activities carried out |  |
| 5.c Set up networks and partnerships at national, provincial, district and divisional levels | No. of networks at each level | 4 yrs |
| No. of partnerships at each level |  |

*Pradeshiya Sabha Act*

In Sri Lanka, Local Government structures comprise three tiers – (1) Pradeshiya Sabha (village level), (2) Urban Council (semi-urban level) and (3) Municipal Councils (urban level). Section 12 of the *Pradeshiya Sabha Act, No. 15 of 1987*,[[9]](#footnote-9) outlines the authority of the Pradeshiya Sabha to appoint committees:

***“Pradeshiya Sabha to appoint Committees***

*12(1). A Pradeshiya Sabha may, from time to time, appoint committees consisting either of members of the Sabha or partly of members of the Sabha and partly of other inhabitants of the Pradeshiya Sabha area, and of the Chairman of the Gramodaya Mandalayas established within such Pradeshiya Sabha area for the purpose of advising the Sabha with reference to any of its powers, duties and functions, or any matter under the consideration of the Sabha, and may, from time to time, subject to such conditions as it may determine, delegate any of its powers and duties to such committees other than the power to raise any loan, to levy any rate or to impose any tax.”*

*12(2). A separate Committee shall be appointed under subsection (1) to advice the Pradeshiya Sabha on each of the following subjects: (a) finance and policy making; (b) housing and community development; (c) technical services; and (d) environment and amenities.”*

Whilst there is no direct reference to PwDs, the above mentioned legal provisions provide an avenue for PwDs and their representative organisations to participate in decision-making processes at the village level, provided that the Pradeshiya Sabha appoints PwDs into either of the committees used to advise the Pradeshiya Sabha.

**Challenges**

* While there are policy frameworks in place, the key issue is a notable lack of implementation of many of the policies and actions. Reasons for this includes the lack of an institutional mechanism to oversee the implementation of disability policies. Considerable gaps in implementation and the absence of an institutional monitoring mechanism has also affected the further development of policies and laws. It is to be noted that the *status quo* may change consequent to the pending Gazette Notification detailing the duties and functions of the newly constituted Ministries following the parliamentary elections in August 2015, as well as subsequent measures taken by the newly established national unity government.
* While local government authorities have the power to appoint committees inclusive of community representatives to participate in decision-making regarding service delivery and community development, there are limited examples where PwDs have been selected to represent the communities’ interests. There is a general lack of involvement of PwDs in decision making. Accessibility to decision-making processes and awareness about the need of such inclusivity is currently very limited.

**Suggestions**

1. Within the legal framework of the Local Government Authority Acts and Ordinances, there is scope for local disability-inclusive organizations to lobby for the representation of PwDs in the decision-making committees appointed by local authorities. This requires an assessment of available entry points, strategic planning and advocacy.
2. Formulate laws and implement existing policies ensuring the representation of PwDs in decision-making that is directly related to them. This has to be implemented at the local government, provincial council and national levels.
3. Enhance awareness of the importance of ensuring inclusivity for PwDs through *Grama Niladari* officers (decentralized government administrative officers closest to village level) and the media.
4. The United Nations Population Fund in Sri Lanka (UNFPA) is working with Provincial Councils to establish Youth Forums that will allow policy makers to identify social and development issues relevant to youth in each locality. These sub-national level youth forums will be platforms to create policy discussions among the stakeholders at provincial level and will produce more relevant, focused and operative policy suggestions. The youth forums will increase youth participation in policy making at sub-national level and will also act as a monitoring body for policy implementation. Special attention is also given to encourage the provincial governance bodies to engage with networks of representative organizations of persons with disabilities through these youth forums in order to obtain their input on disability-specific decision-making processes at the national, regional and local levels. These youth forums are currently being set up in 2 provinces with 2 more provinces to join by the end of 2015. These platforms will allow individuals with disabilities to engage with sub-national level policy makers and other stakeholders, allowing them better access to participate in decision making processes.[[10]](#footnote-10)
5. ***Please provide information on any consultative body or mechanism established to consult and engage with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, including information about their composition, criteria for membership (nomination, appointment, election, etc.) and functioning;***

* Government mechanisms and programmes:

The government institutions that are involved in consulting and engaging with representative organizations of persons with disabilities include[[11]](#footnote-11):

* 1. National Council for Persons with Disabilities and National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities
  2. Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare
  3. Provincial Social Service Departments
  4. Divisional Secretariats

The *status quo* may change consequent to the pending Gazette Notification detailing the duties and functions of the newly constituted Ministries following the parliamentary elections in August 2015, as well as subsequent measures taken by the newly established national unity government.

1. *National Council for Persons with Disabilities and National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities*

The objective of both these institutions is the implementation of the *Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* *Act, No. 28 of 1996*, which aims at the promotion, advancement and protection of rights of persons with disabilities.

In terms of its membership, the National Council comprises members appointed by the President. The mandate of the Council is as follows:

* The promotion of welfare of persons with disabilities.
* The prevention and control of the main causes of disability.
* The maintenance of accurate statistics on persons with disabilities.
* Taking action to rehabilitate persons with disabilities.
* The monitoring of activities of institutions providing assistance to persons with disabilities.
* Ensuring the fulfilment of the needs of persons with disabilities.
* The formulation of programmes and policies and the provision of guidance to prepare a proper physical environment for persons with disabilities.
* Improved awareness regarding the needs of Persons with Disabilities.

1. *Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare*

Implementation of the National Policy on Disability falls under the purview of the Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare. However, given that the Policy is multi-sectoral, a single ministry such as Social Welfare and Empowerment would face challenges in effectively bringing together other Ministries to work on disability, owing to *inter alia*, a general lack of awareness about such policies, coordination challenges and financial constraints.

* Civil society mechanisms:

1. *Development with Disabled Network (DWDN)*[[12]](#footnote-12)*:*

The Development with Disabled Network (DWDN) was established in 2003, as a network of development sector and disability focused organisations and professionals, working towards mainstreaming disability into the process of development and social inclusion. It was registered in 2006 under the *Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, No. 28 of 1996.* However, it operates as a collective of organisations and a voluntary membership organisation.

DWDN consists of 34 active members (both organisations and professionals). The network is governed by an Executive Committee, which is appointed by the members during the Annual General meeting. The objectives of the network include:

* Research on key issues relating to mainstreaming and supporting the development of visibility projects
* Raise awareness and lobby key decision-makers based on research and pilot projects
* Offer training to key policymakers in the government, NGOs and the private sector with a view to sensitizing them to disability issues
* Strengthen networks between members and external partners to enable information and expertise-sharing, and promote inclusive development

1. *NP Coda*[[13]](#footnote-13)

NP Coda is a Northern Province-based affiliation for DPOs. The establishment of this umbrella organization was facilitated by World Vision, Sri Lanka, a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation. The primary objective of NP Coda is to formulate a collective voice to advocate for disability-specific development and service delivery interventions in the Northern Province, and to facilitate disability inclusion in development planning.

**Challenges**

* There are concerns that institutions, networks and mechanisms are often not representative of the PwD community at large.
* The National Council does not have the mandate to consult PwDs in its decision making processes.
* There is generally a lack of cross-sector collaboration between the Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare and other development ministries, such as education, health and livelihoods, to achieve a meaningful impact on the lives of PwDs.

**Suggestions**

1. A new law that would provide for meaningful consultative processes for PwDs.
2. A cross-sectoral mechanism involving government and non-government actors (including PwDs) at all levels to monitor implementation, address challenges, and make policy and practice recommendations.

***4. Please provide information on the efforts undertaken at national, regional and/or local levels to strengthen the capacity of representative organizations of persons with disabilities, in order to facilitate their participation in legislative, policy and other decision-making processes;***

Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare’s *Community Based Rehabilitation Programme*[[14]](#footnote-14)

The Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programme was implemented under the Ministry of Social Services, Welfare and Livestock Development in 2012, within 331 Divisional Secretariats in all 25 districts. Its function was to operate as the mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the National Policy on Disability in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Rupees 7.69 million was provided for the programme for the year 2012.

The objective of the Programme was to facilitate the rehabilitation of PwDs so as to enable them to enjoy their rights and perform responsibilities, and create opportunities through social development programmes to integrate them into society. Core group officers attached to the Divisional Secretariats were briefed on the programme, following which it was introduced to all field officers and communities. PwDs were thus made aware of the importance of meeting collectively in order to participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, action was taken for grouping parents on behalf of their children with disabilities. Moreover, various types of equipment, as well as accessibility and sanitary facilities, were provided to such communities.

Some of the activities within a holistic framework included:

* Conducting workshops for rural leaders at the divisional secretariat level.
* Setting up self-help and empowerment organizations comprising PwDs in 18 districts.
* Establishing parents’ organizations for PwDs and awareness programmes.
* Conducting training workshops for volunteers.
* Conducting district committees, with the leadership of all Divisional Secretariats, to update the National Policy on Disability.
* Updating the National Monitoring Committees, which consists of ministries and NGOs.
* Conducting workshops for Social Service Officers, Social Development Assistants, Child Rights Promotional Officers, Provincial Officers and field officers at the divisional level, on reporting and review processes and innovations for CBR.
* Holding job markets for PwDs in Attanagalla and Kelaniya, with the cooperation of the Chamber of Commerce and business communities.
* Home-based rehabilitation activities for identified PwDs.
* Provision of accessibility, sanitary and other facilities for PwDs.

Challenges

* The effectiveness and impact of programmes such as the Community Based Rehabilitation Programme have not been evaluated. Such evaluations would be useful to inform future policy and programme formulation.

***5. Please explain whether and how persons with disabilities participate in monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 33, para. 3), and in the nomination of experts to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 34, para. 3);***

Although Sri Lanka has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006, it has not ratified it. As a result, the state is not legally bound by the international convention to protect the rights of Persons with Disabilities, as signing it simply provides a preliminary endorsement of the treaty, without creating a binding legal obligation. However, signing it demonstrates the country’s intent to examine the treaty domestically and consider ratifying it, and obliges Sri Lanka to “refrain from acts that would defeat or undermine the treaty’s objective and purpose”.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Some attempts have been made by civil society organisations to urge the government to ratify the convention and ensure the rights of PwDs in certain instances. For example, the ‘Enable’ campaign, run by a team of NGOs and activists during the parliamentary elections in 2015, aimed to ensure the rights of PwDs in election processes, by creating voter awareness among PwDs and lobbying for accessibility at polling stations. The advocacy campaign was inspired by a circular issued by the Elections Commissioner to all Assistant Commissioners[[16]](#footnote-16) to assess the number of voters with disabilities, so as to provide reasonable access to enable them to exercise their franchise and vote. The campaign also presented a manifesto to the leaders of all major political parties, including the President, advocating for disability inclusive policies and development goals from the succeeding Government, the ratification of the UNCRPD, and the implementation of the National Action Plan for Disability.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Challenges**

* There is an absence of political representation of PwDs in Parliament and in the Parliamentary Committees.
* There is a lack of implementation of existing laws and policies, such as the *Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* *Act, No. 28 of 1996*, and the National Policy on Disability 2003, ensuring the rights of PwDs. Laws regarding accessibility, in particular, have not been implemented properly.

**Suggestions**

1. Institutes that are mandated to quality assure and monitor the construction and maintenance of buildings should include the representation of PwDs to ensure that accessibility concerns have been identified and addressed in a manner that best meets the needs of PWDs.
2. ***Please identify the main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities in participating in mainstream and disability-specific decision-making processes at the national, regional and local levels, including challenges faced by persons who experience multiple discrimination (e.g., on the basis of disability, age, gender, ethnic origin, geographical location).***

A major challenge that affects PwD participation in decision-making processes relates to the issue of asymmetric information, where PwDs are often not informed of opportunities to participate in such processes.

Females with disabilities tend to receive fewer opportunities, when compared to men. Furthermore, PwDs in rural areas often do not have access to any opportunities to represent and participate in decision-making processes, given that the accessibility in those areas is very limited. For example, it is much harder for a child with a disability in the rural or estate sector to be educated than a child with a disability in an urban area.

Whilst the deaf community is not homogenous, it is generally distinct from the hearing population. UNFPA has identified, through its support towards addressing the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs of women and young people, that people living with deafness face a number of problems in addressing their SRH needs in their day to day lives. This creates significant barriers to the health and well-being of people living with deafness. Negative perceptions about deafness and lack of societal understanding of their concerns have contributed to the neglect of deaf people in SRH policies and service delivery. At the same time, people living with deafness are more likely to face difficulties in utilizing common sources of information than their hearing counterparts.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Challenges**

* A lack of information about the rights of PwDs and the opportunities available to them. For instance, access to information on sexual and reproductive health can often be limited or unavailable to certain groups of youth with specific disabilities; this includes people living with deafness.17
* A general lack of understanding on the part of public servants regarding the issues faced by PwDs, and a perceived lack of motivation to tackle issues.

**Suggestions**

1. Create a database of PwDs.This would be beneficial to the government and DPOs, as it will enable the identification of areas in which PwDs are concentrated, and analysis of the causes and context-specific solutions to such findings. Such a database would also be useful for policymaking – for example, taking into account financial, human and other resource constraints, if there is data available on the number of children with disabilities in each area, the government could identify which schools should be made fully accessible for PwDs, thus ensuring their right to education.
2. Carrying out a survey would be a good method to collect information on PwDs. However, the survey must be conducted by people who are experts in the subject matter.
3. Carry out awareness and training programmes for public servants regarding approaches in dealing with PwDs.
4. UNFPA plans to facilitate the development of a sign language glossary which translates technical terms on sexual and reproductive health and rights into sign language. This would be done with the involvement of sign language developers. The glossary is expected to be used by all government and private sector organizations who work in the field of SRH.[[19]](#footnote-19)
5. As a solution to the information gap that marginalizes disabled youth groups, UNFPA is working on creating a platform to deliver information regarding sexual and reproductive wellbeing for differently abled people in Sri Lanka. This platform would be mobile-based and would provide information on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) using communication methodologies that will allow individuals with visual impairments to gain easy access. Creation of accessibility to SRHR information for persons with disabilities, using specially designed software that caters to adolescents and youth who are unable to see, is the main focus of this initiative. It will be available in all three languages while the content will be edited to suit Sri Lankan sensitivities. Having access to this information will allow disabled individuals to be more active contributors in SRHR related social discussions that will shape decision making and policy mechanisms in this sphere.19

Annexes Footnoted in Submission and Attached

1. “Policy Outlines” (2015). *Programme for Sound National Policies*. (FN7)
2. “Sri Lanka: National Action Plan for Disability” (2013). *Ministry of Social Services & Ministry of Health.* (FN8)
3. “Circular PEI/64” (2015). *Sri Lanka Elections Commissioner.* (FN17)

Annexes Footnoted in Submission with Links

1. “Activities”. *Website of the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organizations*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=48&lang=en#reg1> (FN1)

1. “Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, No. 28 of 1996.” Retrieved from:

<http://hrcsl.lk/PFF/LIbrary_Domestic_Laws/Legislations_related_to_Employment/Protection%20of%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20Act%20No%2028%20of%201996.pdf> (FN 2)

1. “Voluntary Social Service Organizations (Registration and Supervision) Act, No. 31 of 1980.” Retrieved from:

<http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/actno31of1980.pdf> (FN3)

1. “Voluntary Social Service Organization (Registration and Supervision) (Amendment) Act, No. 8 of 1998.” Retrieved from:

<http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/Actno08of1998.pdf> (FN4)

1. “Registration of Voluntary Social Services Organizations/Non-Governmental Organizations” (1999). Circular No. RAD/99/01. *The Presidential Secretariat.* Retrieved from:

<http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/President%20CircularRAD-99-01.pdf> (FN5)

1. “National Policy on Disability for Sri Lanka” (2003). *Ministry of Social Welfare.* Retrieved from: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSRILANKA/Resources/NatPolicyDisabilitySep2003srilanka1.pdf> (FN6)
2. “Pradeshiya Sabhas Act, No. 15 of 1987.” Retrieved from:

<http://www.commonlii.org/lk/legis/num_act/psa15o1987207/s12.html> (FN9)

1. “National Council and National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities. *Website of the Ministry of Social Services, Welfare & Livestock Development.* Retrieved from:

<http://www.socialwelfare.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=130&Itemid=105&lang=en> (FN11)

1. *Development with Disabled Network website.* Retrieved from:

<http://www.dwdnetwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=54> (FN 12)

1. “National Programme on Community Based Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities.” *Website of the Ministry of Social Services, Welfare & Livestock Development.* Retrieved from: <http://www.socialwelfare.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=134&Itemid=109&lang=en> (FN 14)
2. “Introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Definition of key terms”. Retrieved from: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Definitions.pdf> (FN15)
3. “Making their votes count” (9 July 2015). *Nirmi Vitarana, The Daily Mirror.*  Retrieved from: <http://www.dailymirror.lk/86175/making-their-votes-count> (FN17)

Additional Annexes of Interest

1. “A Critical Analysis of the Draft Disability Rights Bill of 2013 (Draft)”. *Lasanthi Daskon Attanayake*.
2. “Comments on the Draft Disability Rights Bill”. *Lasanthi Daskon Attanayake.*
3. “Disability Rights” (2013). *LST Review, Volume 23, Issue 308*.

23 September 2015

1. <http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=48&lang=en#reg1> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://hrcsl.lk/PFF/LIbrary_Domestic_Laws/Legislations_related_to_Employment/Protection%20of%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20Act%20No%2028%20of%201996.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/actno31of1980.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/Actno08of1998.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As referred to in Circular No. RAD/99/01 on the Registration of Voluntary Social Services Organizations/Non-Governmental Organizations, issued by the Presidential Secretariat. Retrieved from:

   <http://www.ngosecretariat.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/President%20CircularRAD-99-01.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSRILANKA/Resources/NatPolicyDisabilitySep2003srilanka1.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “Policy Outlines” (2015). *Programme for Sound National Policies*, p 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Please find the National Action Plan for Disability (2013) attached as an Annex. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.commonlii.org/lk/legis/num_act/psa15o1987207/s12.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. UNFPA inputs to the submission, dated 18.09.2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.socialwelfare.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=130&Itemid=105&lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://www.dwdnetwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=54> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Information provided by Ms. Nirmi Vitarana, Consultant on Disability Inclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <http://www.socialwelfare.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=134&Itemid=109&lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Definitions.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Please find the circular attached as an Annex. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The Daily Mirror (9 July 2015). “Making their votes count”. Retrieved from: <http://www.dailymirror.lk/86175/making-their-votes-count> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. UNFPA inputs to the submission, dated 18.09.2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. UNFPA inputs to the submission, dated 18.09.2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)