

Submission on the Zero Draft ‘Study on the Impact of Climate Change on Human and Peoples’ Rights in Africa’ prepared by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

**Submitted jointly by:
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Integrated Disabled Women Activities (IDIWA)¹ and Fambauone Youth Organisation (FAYO)² are organisations led by and composed of persons with disabilities. IDIWA and FAYO make the following inputs to zero draft of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights’ Study. In particular, the submission aims at strengthening references and approaches to persons with disabilities in the study and call on the African Commission to take these comments into account in revising the study and recommendations. The below applies not only to the specific paragraph on persons with disabilities (paragraphs 38-42) but our points should be integrated throughout the text to mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities across all sections of the report.

CHALLENGES

Women and girls with disabilities environmental human rights defenders; they are particularly at risk of arbitrary detention, threats of violence and femicide as they take action to protect their territories, ecosystem and communities from the impact of human-led habitat loss, degradation and climate change.

Climate change exacerbates violence against women and girls with disabilities, as much as it sparks conflicts more widely. It is evident that women and girls are affected disproportionately. Failure to address GBV and risks in climate change can compound risk for the safety of women and girls with disabilities and their right to a life free from violence.

Lack of involvement in processes such as planning, implementation and communication, leaves members of the community out of the projects; they develop negative attitudes and are excluded from solutions, resulting in lack of action to issues such as climate change that impact them.

Violence against women and girls with disabilities in the context of climate change limits their participation, leadership and agency which is critical for effective climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience building efforts.

Clear strategies and the domestication of policies are needed in an effort to reduce emission of harmful gases, and for adaptation to the impact of climate change.

¹ Integrated Disabled Women Activities (IDIWA), is an NGO based in Uganda that works to empower women and girls with disabilities to maximize their potential and improve their lives in Uganda. IDIWA promotes gender transformative approaches working at mainstreaming gender and disability at the environment and climate change nexus.

² Fambauone Youth Organisation (FAYO) is based in Malawi and works to empower youth with and without disabilities in knowledge and skills in sexual reproductive health, leadership, inclusive education, economic and environment and promoting one’s rights.

Women and girls with disabilities are primarily food and water collectors and most depend on natural resources and climate sensitive work for their livelihoods. Climate change leads to scarcity of natural resources.

Compromised health makes disabled people more vulnerable to extreme climate events, ecosystem services loss, or infectious diseases

Climate disasters also have detrimental effect on the health of children with disabilities, as they often lose access to crucial medical treatment and other essential healthcare services.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

[DIWA](#) and FAYO call on the African Commission to take into account the following recommendations to better address the impact of climate change on women and girls with disabilities, as well as their role in being agents of change and leaders in finding solutions.

- ❖ Incorporate the jurisprudence of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as it relates to climate change, including from their forthcoming General Comment on article 11 of the CRPD on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies that foresees to address specifically the impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities.
- ❖ Create an enabling policy environment for the elimination of violence against women and girls with disabilities (VAWGD). There should be integration of VAWGD prevention and response into national and local environmental, disaster risk reduction and recovery, adaptation and mitigation policy frameworks, strategies, planning and accountability mechanisms.
- ❖ Strengthen awareness raising, capacity building of environment, climate action and disaster risk reduction programmes in VAWGD including legal and policy frameworks and strengthen capacities of ending VAWGDs field in climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- ❖ Identify promising practices and strengthen knowledge sharing on effective strategies and interventions for tracking violence against women and girls with disabilities in the context of climate change.
- ❖ Increase investment in flexible and adaptive approaches to violence against women and girls with disabilities prevention and response, prioritizing funding for women and girls with disabilities rights and civil society organisations.
- ❖ Scale up evidence-based prevention interventions that address root cause, drivers and risk factors for violence and adaptive to work across the climate change continuum including through integrating women's economic empowerment programming such as livelihoods and social protection with ending VAWG programming.
- ❖ Integrate VAWG prevention and response interventions into climate change and environmental adaptation, mitigation and resilience-strengthening policy, programming and finance.
- ❖ Train women and girls with disabilities and other community members on planting basins, green manure, and conservation agriculture (rotations, intercropping, mulching and reduced tillage) and agroforestry as climate-smart practices to improve productivity, food availability and resilience to climate hazards.
- ❖ Ensure children with disabilities are not marginalized from educational opportunities after natural disasters.

- ❖ Collect disaggregated data on people with disabilities in the countries to better inform policy making and protection measures and protocols for effective assistance in times of crisis/ disasters/ responses.
- ❖ Specific provisions and measures should be taken to uphold the rights of women with disabilities during disaster as they are disproportionately at risk of many challenges and abuses.
- ❖ Governments should put in place laws/ strategies that will protect persons with disabilities especially women. During disaster, efforts must be made to ensure persons with disabilities have accessible, safe spaces and access to services.
- ❖ Ensure quality accessible communications and information as well as accessible dissemination platforms to reach out to all persons with disabilities.
- ❖ Governments should have budget lines for climate change/ disaster management that explicitly include persons with disabilities and ensuring response to their rights and requirements.
- ❖ Ensure that awareness raising efforts on policies and programmes concerning the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change cascade to the grassroots level.
- ❖ Empower disabled persons and meaningfully include their rights, ideas and perspectives and adopt a disability rights approach has the potential to generate climate solutions that resonate with a greater share of the population
- ❖ Climate change mitigation and adaptation policies should reliably support people with disabilities. And climate action at all levels should draw on the knowledge and insights of people with disabilities. “It’s about us asserting our knowledge and right to a leadership role in this.”
- ❖ Conduct training and outreach for increased understanding of policies and early warning signs for disability-inclusive disaster risk mitigation on climate change.