



## **Recommendations for Switzerland's implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) regarding international cooperation**

By the Swiss Disability and Development Consortium (SDDC)

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### **Current situation COVID-19**

Persons with disabilities, which always include women, girls, boys, men, transgender, intersex and non-binary persons with disabilities, are among the hardest hit from the coronavirus pandemic<sup>1</sup>. They risk being left behind during the ongoing relief, protection and recovery measures. However, international human rights standards must also be respected in times of crisis. Article 11 of the CRPD states that in situations of risks and humanitarian emergencies, all necessary measures must be taken to protect and ensure the safety of persons with disabilities. All actions must therefore be inclusive of persons with disabilities in line with the CRPD, ensuring that no new barriers and inequalities are created, or existing ones exacerbated. There are two guiding principles that must be applied: firstly, the "Leave No One Behind" guideline of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and secondly, the "Build Back Better" principle from Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). In resilience research, experts refer to a "Bounce Forward" where a system becomes more effective and sustainable<sup>2</sup>.

For more information and specific COVID-19 recommendations please visit:

- [Homepage of the International Disability Alliance](#)
- [Policy Paper on the coronavirus crisis and persons with disabilities by CBM and the Swiss Federation of the Deaf](#)
- [Study from HI on the consequences of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities living in humanitarian settings](#)

### **Background**

Switzerland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2014. The purpose of the CRPD is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. By ratifying the Convention, Switzerland committed itself to its full implementation. According to Articles 11 and 32 of the CRPD, this also applies to humanitarian aid and international cooperation. Switzerland has made some progress regarding

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Fraunhofer-Institut für System- und Innovationsforschung ISI. 2020. Bouncing forward – Wie Erkenntnisse aus der Resilienzforschung in der Corona-Krise helfen können.

humanitarian work and disability-inclusive development. While welcoming this progress, the Swiss Disability and Development Consortium (SDDC) considers these as initial steps, with considerable gaps and challenges remaining in order to guarantee the full implementation of the CRPD. For this reason, the SDDC makes the following recommendations for Switzerland's international cooperation and humanitarian aid:

## **Recommendations**

### **Develop a strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities and mainstream their rights across all other strategies in international cooperation**

1. Develop a strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Switzerland's international development and humanitarian action by June 2022. This should include DRR and consider the disproportionate consequences of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities. The strategy should translate into a plan of action with measurable and tangible targets and be mainstreamed across all other strategies in Switzerland's international cooperation. The strategy must also be adequately resourced with personnel and budget, be regularly monitored and reported on in SDC's annual reports and effectiveness reports, and should be both internal and external facing. A twin-track approach must be adopted to ensure that Switzerland's international cooperation efforts reach persons with disabilities both by targeting them and by mainstreaming their concerns. Special focus should be placed on those persons with disabilities that are most marginalized and underrepresented, including but not limited to: women, girls, boys, men, youth, elderly, LGBTIQ+, refugees, internally displaced, indigenous, persons with psychosocial disabilities, intellectual disabilities and deaf blindness.
2. Ensure that in line with the CRPD, the rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed into all newly developed or revised strategies of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs on international cooperation and humanitarian aid.

### **Consult and actively involve persons with disabilities**

3. Meaningfully consult with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and actively involve them throughout all strategy, policy and programme processes (including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) regarding Switzerland's international cooperation as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (i.e. participation in the Agenda 2030 advisory group). This is to ensure their effective participation in decisions affecting them, in line with Art. 4.3 CRPD and General Comment No. 7. Provide capacity-building, funding and reasonable accommodation to organizations of persons with disabilities so that they can meaningfully participate in such consultations (General Comment No. 7).

## **Ensure a Disability-Inclusive Implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

4. Ensure that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in and by Switzerland respects and promotes the rights of persons with disabilities, through the Swiss Sustainable Development Strategy 2020-2030 that is currently being developed as well as its quadrennial action plans. The “Leave No One Behind” principle should be prioritized while considering the disproportionate consequences of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities.

## **Collect and disaggregate data on disability**

5. Systematically collect and disaggregate data on disability, including for all COVID-19 relief, protection and recovery measures, by using as a minimum standard the Washington Group Short Set of Questions and the Washington Group/UNICEF Child functioning model to ensure that persons with disabilities access all services and programs on an equal basis with others. This must include the collection of data on the situation of persons with disabilities living in institutions. At the same time, we recommend using the human rights indicators<sup>3</sup> of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to track and report on the implementation of the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the COVID-19 response.

## **Implement the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**

6. Fully implement the Charter as well as the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and therefore render Swiss humanitarian action inclusive of persons with disabilities by lifting barriers persons with disabilities face in accessing information, relief, protection and recovery support, such as during the COVID-19 crisis.

## **Make all budgets compliant with the CRPD**

7. Provide for CRPD compliant budgeting by applying the twin-track approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This includes but is not restricted to reserving funds for reasonable accommodation (at least 2% of each budget) to enable participation of persons with disabilities to access mainstream development and humanitarian programs; as well as specific programs that are addressing systemic historical discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. Funds to NGOs, the private sector and multilateral agencies must as well be in line with the CRPD, upholding the principles of equality, non-discrimination and participation. Consequently, current

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<sup>3</sup> Bridging the Gap. 2018. *EU-OHCHR Bridging the Gap I: Human Rights indicators for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in support of a disability inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Einzusehen unter: [bridgingthegap-project.eu/crpd-indicators](https://bridgingthegap-project.eu/crpd-indicators).

financial support to programs or partners not in line with the CRPD need to be either re-aligned with the CRPD or to be stopped.

### **About SDDC**

SDDC was founded in 2016 by CBM Switzerland, FAIRMED and Handicap International Switzerland (HI). In 2019, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) joined the consortium. CBM Switzerland hosts the secretariat. The members' areas of work, expertise and priorities complement each other both thematically and geographically. In addition to its advocacy work, SDDC gathers, develops and shares expertise, resources and information on disability-inclusive development. The work of SDDC aims at the full implementation of the CRPD. In doing so, the consortium also contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These shall be achieved until 2030 under its guiding principle of "Leave No One Behind".