



The Power of Inclusive Design

Side event on the margins of the annual session of the Executive Board

Tuesday, 11 June 2019, 13:45–14:45

Auditorium, WFP headquarters

Lunch will be served in the Peace Garden from 13:15–13:45

Sponsors: Australia, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Uganda, United Kingdom, WFP

Background

Persons with disabilities comprise approximately one billion people worldwide, 80 percent of whom live in developing countries. The Secretary-General has highlighted this population as a critical group for inclusion under Core Responsibility 3 of the Agenda for Humanity. The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (“The Charter”) was one of the key outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit, and called for the development of guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

Later this year, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) will publish its Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (herein referred to as “IASC Disability Guidelines”). The IASC Disability Guidelines will assist humanitarian actors, governments and affected communities to coordinate, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate essential actions that foster the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, resulting in the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and changing practice across all sectors and in all phases of humanitarian action.¹

Persons with disabilities are particularly exposed to targeted violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence. Women and girls with disabilities are four to ten times more likely to experience gender-based violence than women and children without disabilities. They also often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination. Therefore, their empowerment and protection should be given particular attention.

In terms of food security and malnutrition, the research indicates that malnutrition and disability are closely interrelated in many ways. A household with a breadwinner with a disability is often more vulnerable to shocks and has less capacity to cope with food crises. Households with members with disabilities are also more likely to suffer from food insecurity due to more constrained economic resources, limited working opportunities, extra demands for health services and time spent on care work.

Disability can lead to malnutrition, due to decreased nutrient intake, increased nutrient loss, and need for increased nutrients. Countries with high levels of malnutrition and nutrient deficiency often also report higher rates of disability and developmental delays. Infants and young children who are underweight and stunted as a result of malnutrition are also more likely to screen positive for disability. Children with disabilities are consistently reported to have high incidence of malnutrition, stunting, and wasting.

In some cases, malnutrition may be a result of negative attitudes and discrimination, as families or communities may place a lower status on a disabled person and prioritize nutrition and health services for the non-disabled. In terms of community-based emergency food and nutrition programmes, persons with disabilities may experience obstacles in registering for the programmes or accessing

¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action>

nutrition centres, due to the inaccessibility of buildings and locations, cost of transportation and lack of information.

Our first side event on disability in 2017, marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Charter and provided an opportunity to highlight and discuss ways to better address specific challenges faced by persons with disabilities in times of crisis and ensure a proper response to their needs and respect for their rights in the context of food assistance and nutrition programming.

In 2018, the United Kingdom and Kenya co-hosted their first ever Global Disability Summit, which sought to raise global attention and focus on this long-neglected area, mobilize new global and national commitments on disability and showcase good practice, innovation and evidence from across the world.

This year's event will review the progress the World Food Programme (WFP) has made since the World Humanitarian Summit in addressing disability inclusion in its policy framework and next steps, provide an update on developments since the Global Disability Summit, and provide a preview of the IASC guidelines which will be released over the coming months. Through our headline speaker, Ms Elise Roy, a global thought leader on inclusive design whose TEDx talk (technology, entertainment and design) on disability inclusion has been viewed over 1.2 million times, the event will also provide a strong enabling message that all of us can make meaningful contributions to successful inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action if we first consult and listen to persons with disabilities about their own needs.

Objectives

- Reinforce the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action;
- Raise awareness about the 2019 publication of the IASC Guidelines, including how the guidelines were developed;
- Review WFP's progress and next steps on addressing disability inclusion in its policy framework and operational contexts since the 2017 side event, including sharing best practices and lessons learned from the field, and how the guidelines will apply to WFP's work.

Format

The side event will start with a buffet lunch in the Peace Garden, catered for by the Locanda dei Girasoli, a local restaurant founded in 1999, which hires personnel with Down Syndrome, Williams Syndrome, and other specific disabilities.

It will be followed by a panel discussion and a TED-style talk on the power of inclusive design, and a question and answer period.