



UMBRELLA DES ORGANISATIONS DES PERSONNES EN  
SITUATION DE HANDICAP LUTTANT CONTRE LE HIV ET  
POUR LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTE  
**(I I P H I S I)**



## **NATIONAL FORUM ON DISABILITY AND GENDER EQUALITY REPORT**

**Sports View Hotel, August 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**THEME: « A MULTISECTORAL RESPONSE TO DISABILITY AND GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES »**



August, 2015

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ABASIRWA:</b>	Association des Journalistes Rwandais qui luttent contre le VIH/SIDA
<b>AGHR:</b>	Rwanda Association of Disabled Persons
<b>AIDS:</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>CBO:</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>CEDAW:</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against women
<b>CRPD:</b>	Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DPO:</b>	Disabled Persons Organizations
<b>EDPRS II:</b>	Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategies
<b>FENAPH:</b>	Federation Nationale de Personnes Handicapees
<b>GBV:</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GMO:</b>	Gender Monitoring Office
<b>HI:</b>	Handicap International
<b>HIV:</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IEC:</b>	Information, Education and Communication
<b>M&amp;E:</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MIGEPROF:</b>	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
<b>MINALOC:</b>	Ministry of Local Government
<b>MoH:</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>NCPD:</b>	National Council of Persons with Disabilities
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NOUSPR:</b>	National Organization of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry in Rwanda
<b>NUDOR:</b>	National Union of Disabled Organizations of Rwanda
<b>NPC:</b>	National Paralympic Committee
<b>PWDs:</b>	People with Disabilities
<b>RBC:</b>	Rwanda Biomedical Center
<b>RGB:</b>	Rwanda Governance Board
<b>RICH:</b>	Rwanda Interfaith Counsel of Health
<b>RNP:</b>	Rwanda National Police
<b>RNUD:</b>	Rwanda National Union of the Deaf

**RUB:** Rwanda Union of the Blind

**SGBV:** Sexual and Gender Based Violence

**THT:** Troupe des Personnes Handicapées Twuzuzanye

**ToRs:** Terms of Reference

**TUBAKUNDE:** Collective of Parents dealing with Children with mental impairments

**TVET** : Technical and Vocational Education Training

**TWG:** Technical Working Group

**UNAIDS:** United Nations on AIDS

**UNCRPD:** United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**UNDEF:** United Nations Democracy Fund

**UNWOMEN:** United Nations for Women

**UPHLS:** Umbrella of Organizations of Persons with Disability in the fight against HIV/AIDS and  
For Health promotion

**WHO:** World Health Organization

**WWDs:** Women with Disabilities

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## **CHAPTER ONE: GENERALITIES**

### **I.1 Context and justification**

PWDs in Rwanda are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the country with limited access to basic needs and services such as health, rehabilitation, education, employment and microcredit just to name a few. The myths and beliefs associated with disability have created ignorance about their capabilities and have led to their low status in society. As a result, their participation in the social and economic processes at the family, community and national levels is limited. This problem is most acute in the rural areas, where access to facilities and services is more limited.

The social support system in Rwanda is not yet well developed. For PWDs, there is no system of welfare or support and therefore most PWDs are reliant on support from within the family, with the result that a high proportion of them are home bound. There is currently little communication between the public service providers in Rwanda and the disabled community, resulting in a lack of understanding of disabled needs. The Baseline survey undertaken by UPHLS 2012 identified three clear levels of need within the disability sector in Rwanda: -access to social services, -participation and inclusion of PWDs in national development plans; and -improving the legal and institutional framework.

The forum on disability and gender equality has been organized in order to look for solutions to many problems and challenges that PWDs and DPOs are facing in gender and family promotion, gender mainstreaming and Gender Based Violence that PWDs are likely to face. It will contribute to the advocacy for the improvement of the legal and institutional framework enabling Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in general.

This big event on disability, gender and disability equality has been organized by UPHLS/UNDEF project steering committee; and will involve 100 participants including key note speakers, decision makers from different government institutions, development partners and /stakeholders in disability movement in Rwanda to share learning and networking on disability, gender and disability equality.

## **I.3 Goal, objectives and results**

### **1.3.1 Main goal**

The main objective of the forum was: “To raise awareness of disability issues especially in gender and disability to different persons: decision makers, stakeholders/development partners and governmental institutions.

### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

Four specific objectives were set for the forum on disability and gender equality:

- To share learning and networking on the disability issues
- To strengthen and sustain disabled people’s organizations through the ideas sharing between DPOs leaders and invitees in the areas of gender and disability equality
- To discuss on the implementation of laws/policies of gender equality on the side of persons with disabilities
- To call upon the decision makers, development partners and stakeholders in general for the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in the areas of gender equality

### **1.3.3 Expected results**

- ❖ The experience is shared to Partners
- ❖ Network on the disability and gender issues,
- ❖ Strategies for well implementation of laws/policies of gender equality on the side of PWDs
- ❖ Disability mainstreaming of PWDs in the areas of gender equality.

## **I.4 Organization of the forum**

The organization of the National Forum has been carried mainly by UPHLS/UNDEF Project steering committee and UPHLS staff which ensured its coordination, with the close cooperation and support from NCPD.

## 1.5 Agenda of the Forum

Day	Time	Activity	Facilitator
Day one	08:00 -09:00	Arrival and registration	Hotel
	09:00 -09:20	Welcome Remarks	UPHLS Legal Representative
	09:20- 09:50	Official opening	MIGEPROF
	09:50 -10:20	Introduction, forum objectives and participants expectations	Executive Director
	10:20- 10:40	Overview of the UNDEF Project	Project coordinator
	10:40- 11:00	Coffee break	Participant
	11:00 -11:45	Concept of disability in Rwanda: history, data, laws and policies on disability and gender	NCPD
	11:45 -12:30	Inclusion of Persons with disabilities and especially women and girls with disabilities in gender policies and programs: issues arising and tentative responses worldwide.	UNWOMEN
	12:30 -13:00	Group work/discussion & presentation	Participant
	13:00 -14:00	Lunch	Hotel
	14:00 -15:00	Participation of men and women into Rwandan development and the inclusion of persons with disabilities: achievements, gaps and government response	UPHLS
	15:00 -15:45	Group work/discussion & presentation	Participant
	15:45 -16:15	Coffee break	Hotel
	16:15– 16:30	Recapitulations	UPHLS
	16:30- 16:45	Evaluation and closer of Day 1	UPHLS
Day	Time	Activity	Facilitator
Day	08:00-09:00	Registration and review of Day 1and expectations of	UPHLS

two		day 2.	
	09:00-09:30	Disability and gender equality: youth, women and girls with disabilities and disability minor groups in Rwanda	UPHLS
	09:30-10:00	Assessment of factors of risk and vulnerability of women and men with disabilities to sexual and GBV in Rwanda	HI Rwanda
	10:00-10:30	Group works/discussion & presentation	Participant
	10:30-11:30	Coffee break	Hotel
	11:30-12:00	Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Rwanda and Persons with disabilities: Current situation, challenges and how to overcome them	National Police
	12:30-13:00	Group works/discussion & presentation	Participant
	13:00-14:00	Lunch	Hotel
	14:00-15:00	Recapitulations and time for Recommendations	Participants
	15:00-15:30	Official closing	MINALOC

**Facilitators:** Project team

### **1.6 Logistics**

UPHLS ensured the overall coordination and logistics. UPHLS under the financial support of UNDEF and NCPD had covered expenses related to conference room, sign language interpretation, media, lunch, and coffee break, accommodation of participants from remote areas, entertainment, promotional materials and transport refund. The following tools were available: forum documents including concept notes, disability mainstreaming guide, agenda in English, T- shirts, badge, banners, etc.

## CHAPTER II: EVENT IN DETAILS

### 2.1. Forum participants

A hundred of participants were invited to participate to the forum and were ranged into different categories as follow:

- Representatives of local DPOs
- Representatives of Government institutions
- Development agencies
- Country agencies
- Netherland Embassy
- UN Agencies
- Local NGOs and Umbrella

### 2.2. Opening remarks



A welcome note was addressed to participants of the forum by Mr NIYOMUGABO Romalis, The UPHLS Legal representative. He emphasized on the good participation of the invitees in the forum, which show their level of understanding disability issues and their need and efforts to collaborate in solutions findings. He also thanked the Rwandan government who show a big role in the support of PWDs and in establishment of laws and policies protecting them especially for the creation of the NCPD as an organ which monitor disability activities. He also thank the forum organizers, UPHLS and its partners, who took the initiative to put together different influential persons to discuss on disability and gender equality issue aiming to look for Multisectoral response to disability and gender equality issues saying that health is an key to development.

The UPHLS legal representative introduced briefly the UPHLS, its ongoing projects and continued with participants' introduction. After short self-presentation, he reminded to the participants that the forum is expecting to look for sustainable solutions on those challenges that PWDs are likely facing and asked everyone present to contribute the discussion. He reminded that disability is a crosscutting issue and required participants to refer to forum recommendations in planning and implementation of development programs. He wishes a good stay to everyone and invited the guest of honor to officially open the forum.

The forum was officially opened by Rose RWABUHIHI coming from the Gender Monitoring Office representing the MIGEPROF. She addressed a welcome note to all participants and reminded the participants that the Rwandan government struggles for the disability and gender equality which required the Government to establish various policies against any sort of discrimination, the reason why PWDs and women are today represented in Rwandan parliament as sign of inclusiveness.

She indicated some inclusive indicators in terms of economy, politics, and social. There are inclusive policies such as equal rights to properties, having access to social services, having representatives in decision makers. She continued to say that in order to eradicate any sort of inequality every Rwandan especially we participants, are required to be the first to fight against stigma, discrimination and any other sort of violence.

An example was given to show some of the policies put in place which was before discriminating women such as the law on the land, the Rwandan building code which define some perspective regarding people with disabilities, etc and stated that this forum on disability and gender equality is in line with the government mission and vision of eradication of any sort of discrimination and inequality.

The guest of honor explained that discrimination is done for PWDs but also for women and gave an example of the case found in Rubavu district while monitoring, where they visited an association of parents with disabled children and the parents explained that sometimes they are violated and discriminated by their husbands and their family members. The problem remains and such cases are not reported.

She closed her speech saying that they are against any sort of violence and discrimination and that free hotline telephone are in place to report and ask for advice. She declared the forum officially opened

## **2.3 Presentations**

### **2.3.1 Introduction and overview of the UPHLS/UNDEF Project**



**UPHLS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GIVING AN OVERVIEW OF UPHLS/UNDEF PROJECT**

Before the overview of the UNDEF project, The UPHLS Executive Director gave an introduction of the forum and presented the UPHLS background from its foundation in September 2006 up today. He presented the vision and mission of the organization, its members, beneficiaries and partners. The Executive Director presented the organs of the UPHLS and the legal document of UPHLS as its ID from RGB. He explained the ongoing activities into different projects that UPHLS is implementing including the UNDEF Project which is the funder of the forum within its objective of improving access to social services for people with disabilities in Rwanda 2014-2016.



**UNDEF PROJECT OFFICER PRESENTATION**

An overview of the UNDEF project was presented By Mr William SAFARI, the Project Officer. He explained that since a decade, PWDs have been organizing themselves at grassroots level to improve their livelihood and demand their rights; unfortunately DPOs currently lack funds and skills to carry out self-advocacy in the community they live in but still PWDs are facing many challenges such

as overrepresentation among the poor due to both the impairments coupled with discrimination and stigma (Ref: Baseline Survey on social inclusion of PWDs into social inclusion, 2012).

It is in this regard that the project “Improving the access to social services for people with disabilities in Rwanda” funded by the UNDEF is focusing on creating an inclusive and supportive environment for PWDs to increase their access to health and social services which will allow them to participate into community life.

The project objectives are: Empowering people with disabilities in Rwanda and to contribute to better access to health and social services to people with disabilities.

To achieve this, 3 main strategies are put in place:

- Build sustainable local capacity of a range of stakeholders who have a role in supporting PWDs, and ensure that their work reaches a high Proportion of the population;
- Improve community abilities to raise awareness of PWDs and the Public to fight stigma and to advocate for necessary changes in policy framework.
- Ensure that strengths of key co-ordinating structures are in place during the lifetime of the project and beyond.

As the project last for two years from April 2014 to March 2016, some elements will help for the implementation of those main strategies such as capacity building, quarterly coordination meetings of the steering committee, study tours, support organization development of PWDs self-help groups, joint platform with action plan, coalition of disability actors, media campaigns and inclusive sports events.

PWDs are the beneficiaries of the project especially youth with disabilities and women with disabilities. Community members, the general population, leaders in disability movement and decision makers in social and health services are considered as the secondary beneficiaries of the project.

### 2.3.2 Concept of disability in Rwanda: History, Data, Laws and Policies on disability and gender



**NCP EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EXPLAINING THE CONCEPT OF DISABILTY IN RWANDA**

This was presented by NCPD Executive Secretary Mr. Emmanuel NDAYISABA, who explained the disability movement in Rwanda from the consideration of religious institutions (Gatagara center by Father Ndagijimana Fraipont) and the creation of the first PWDs association in 1978 (AGHR)

After 1994, many other organizations created such as UPHLS in 2006, FENAPH in 2007, and NUDOR in 2010 and in 2011 the NCPD was established by the Rwandan Government with the mission of assisting the government in programs implementation.

The first law related to disability was established in Rwanda in 2007 and in 2008 Ratification of UNCRPD by Rwandan government. From that time disability is considered as a crosscutting issue in EDPRS II. He indicated the data of PWDs from the National census and said that women represents a bigger number than their counterparts.

He explained that comparing to the period before 1994, today some opportunities to support PWDs are available such as the political will, the disability movement which is active, the availability of data about PWDs, the categorization exercise done, the staff in districts in charge of disability mainstreaming, the process of developing the sign language dictionary, the promotion of education for all, the National employment program which is inclusive, etc.

The Executive Secretary went on to indicate the barriers faced by PWDs including:

- ❖ Attitudinal barriers
- ❖ Systems which are not operating properly
- ❖ Lack of updated policies and not inclusive
- ❖ Lower level of implementation of legal instrument
- ❖ Lack of a National rehabilitation center

He ended up mentioning the strategies to overcome the faced challenges such as ongoing advocacy and monitoring of policies and laws implementation and evaluation of disability as a crosscutting issue. Furthermore this will be achieved in collaboration with public institutions and civil society. The plan of building a National rehabilitation center is in place and he expects that works will start as soon as possible in collaboration with the Ministry of health, the Christian Blind mission and OTOBOK.

### 2.3.3 Inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in gender policies and programs



**UN WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE INDICATING THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EXISTING GENDER GAP IN DISABILITY**

This presentation was given by the representative of UN WOMEN Mrs. Clara ANYANGWE, who indicated the factors contributing to the existing gender gap in disability: Invisibility of Men, women, boys and girls with disabilities, Misunderstanding disability, heterogeneity, stereotypes and data on disability

The presenter said that there is an intersection between disability and gender and that discrimination against people with disabilities is constructed in a very similar way to the discrimination against women.

Just as we understand the difference between women and men, society constructs the difference between a person with disabilities and persons with no disabilities (see CEDAW and CRPD definitions). She said that from this intersection, women and girls face a double discrimination. She shared good practices in Fiji, Colombia, Costa Rica, Kenya, Israel, Rwanda, and Uruguay etc.

She addressed also the major factors of disability which can be due to :Illness / disease, wars, accidents,Etc. Based on the data from the 2011 World report on disability, she indicated that female disability prevalence rate is 19.2 percent whereas it is 12 percent for men. She also determined that women and girls are three times more likely to experience gender based violence compared to nondisabled women.

She continued by indicating the specific targets to promote gender equality for disability inclusive development and existing legal framework to provide protection and support to PWDs. At the end of the presentation, some recommendations were provided by the UNWOMEN representative as follow:

- Use CRPD, CEDAW and other relevant normative instruments to impact the rights of women with disabilities and achieve gender equality
- Strengthen the collection, compilation and analysis of national disability data and statistics, disaggregated by sex and age, using existing guidelines on disability measurement.
- Increase the leadership and participation in decision-making of women and girls with disabilities
- Ensure inclusion of the rights and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, in development policies, programs
- Increase cooperation, partnerships, and synergies between UN entities, organizations of women and girls with disabilities, women's development, and human rights organizations, etc. to provide sustained and sustainable support for the empowerment of women with disabilities.
- The domestication of the SDGs should take into account the voice and needs of all persons with disabilities.

### 2.3.4 Participation of men and women into Rwandan development and inclusion of PWDs



**GMO PRESENTATION**

The presentation on the “participation of men and women into Rwandan development and inclusion of PWDs” was given by Mrs. CYIZANYE Allen from the Gender Monitoring Office. In her presentation, based on data from the national census, she said that Rwanda is people centered country. She has shown many comparisons among men with disabilities and women with disabilities and explained that things become more bad and difficult to women.

She said that once while monitoring GBV cases, they have remarked that reporting violence cases for PWDs is a problem, that sometimes those cases are not reported due to types of disability(Lack of appropriated communication) or to the consideration that violating PWDs is not a big problem and then GBV cases are never taken seriously and goes unnoticed. She reminded that there is a law protecting PWDs in Rwanda and that there are organizations in charge of protecting all those persons.

An example was given that Article 18 in the Rwandan regulations on the employment that when 2 persons, one disabled and one non disabled have the same note in the job exams, the panel may select a PWD. When the two contestants are PWDs, selection may be based upon the experience. And from this example, she focused on saying that disability should be captured as a crosscutting issue as mentioned in the EDPRS II.

Some key challenges were mentioned:

- Stigma and discrimination
- Community behavior
- GBV cases not reported
- Lack of accessibility
- In education: - limited number of schools with capacity to teach PWDs
  - Limited capacity in the area of gender equality
- In governance:- Inadequate accountability mechanisms for gender equality
  - Limited number in both central and local structures
  - Lack of documentation of success stories and lessons learnt
- In ICT and employment:- Lack of adapted materials to facilitate PWDs with ICT
  - Discrimination in the employment sector

To overcome those challenges, The GMO also provided some recommendations:

- ✓ Enhance inclusive education program thought increased number of schools with capacity to receive and educate PWDs
- ✓ Sign language should be incorporated in national education curriculum
- ✓ Strengthen accountability mechanisms on gender and support PWDs
- ✓ Enhance strategic capacity development initiatives in the area of gender
- ✓ Empower disabled people at community level
- ✓ Review the existing policy and legal framework to incorporate concrete affirmative actions that further can enhance support

### 2.3.5 Disability and gender equality: youth and women with disabilities and disability minor groups



#### UPHLS CBO PRESENTATION

The presentation was given by Mr BAHATI Omar Satir from UPHLS who introduced by mentioning that Persons with disabilities represent 15% of the world population, Women/girls and youth represent the majority in any country (70% of the population). Those two groups remain under represented in any decision making structures, programs and policies; Women/girls and youth with disabilities face very similar in disability communities worse in the mainstream societies (WHO/WB, 2011).

Some groups of disabilities like intellectual disabilities, mental health, and behavioral, psychosocial disabilities are not well understood by both disability fraternity and the society (WHO/WB, 2011).

He said also that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (UN CRPD).

Mr. Bahati went on to indicate that from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (UN CRPD). He ended his presentation by addressing some recommendations to the government, Stakeholders/Partners and Community in general.

The government was recommended to Involve PWDs and stakeholders in the development, revision and implementation of disability friendly programs, Accessibility to information, infrastructure and social services, Research to collect data specific to each disability type and related needs, Establish the Disability Mainstreaming Office to foster full inclusion of PWDs in all programs, A specific budget line for Disability activities such as Schools fees for TVET candidates with disabilities, medical care, rehabilitation etc.

The Stakeholders/Partners were recommended to Include girls/youth and women with disabilities in their funding priorities, share technical support and best practices among their networks, be advocates for disability and gender cause. Community in general was recommended to Change mindset on disabilities, Create a barrier free society for PWDs, Treat girls/women and youth with disabilities equally to their counterparts, protect girls/women/youth/men with disabilities from any sort of torture and violence.

### **2.3.6 Assessment of risk factors and vulnerability of women and men with disabilities to SGBV**

The presentation was given by Mr GASHEMA Emmanuel from Handicap International Rwanda. He started by giving the definitions of disability, sexual violence and rape as defined by WHO. He said that their presentation focus on the research done by Handicap International Rwanda Program to assess risk factors of women and men with disabilities to SGBV. They have found that there are limited data available on the prevalence of SGBV among PWDs but given the extent of the situation in Rwanda, we could hypothesize that persons with disabilities in Rwanda particularly face additional risk.

From the sample of 65 persons, 32 women and 33 men, all over 18 years old, they have found that factors of risk are grouped into 4 categories:

1. Individual factors of risk and vulnerability to SGBV
2. Family factors of risk and vulnerability to SGBV
3. Community factors of risk and vulnerability to SGBV
4. Societal factors of risk and vulnerability to SGBV

All those factors got from the HI research have shown that:

- ✓ persons with disabilities, most notably girls/women are most vulnerable to SGBV:
- ✓ A response to SGBV must include a response to the pervasive and deep-rooted stigma and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Addressing SGBV among persons with disabilities requires a multisectoral approach
- ✓ Awareness should be raised on SGBV and the laws protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities

While ending the presentation, he also made some recommendations addressed to PWDs themselves, to family members, guardians and careers, to broader community, to local/district and government leadership and to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to help overcome all those challenges faced. He reminded that when barriers are removed beneficiaries are the entire community not only PWDs but also children, old persons, pregnant women and sick people would benefit from the environment.

### 2.3.7 Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Rwanda and PWDs



**RWANDA NATIONAL POLICE PRESENTATION**

The presentation was given by Senior Superintendent MASASU MUGENGANGABO, the Director of criminal record Office in the RNP. In his presentation, he focused on saying that the RNP is not discriminating any person there reason why there are no data for PWDs only, all data are combined. He said that addressing the problem of GBV in any society, requires coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders and must simultaneously address issues of health, psychosocial and security of the victims.

This requires a holistic and protracted approach, which needs involvement of all stakeholders. The RNP has joined hands with other partners in the country and beyond in order to address this problem. He also gave the definitions of GBV and SGBV.

While talking about victims, he said that around 15% of the world's population is disabled people, and disability prevalence rates among women and children are higher than men. So that persons with disabilities are twice as likely to experience domestic violence and other forms of gender-based and sexual violence as non-disabled persons.

Some solutions to those problems of GBV and SGBV are found in the Rwandan penal code like some regarding the defilement, rape, stigmatization, refusal to different rights, abandonment or neglect of a child, unpaid work, etc.

But even if RNP is committed to give its support, some challenges remains complicated such as Ignorance, Rwandan culture disabled people do not deserve life, difficult to collect evidence during investigation because the offences are committed in the families where there is a negative solidarity, lack of communication in language and signs (blind & deaf people) and carelessness of local leaders to report violence.

Here are some of the objectives that the RNP has:

- Investigation on activities considered as offenses to persons with disabilities
- Public awareness towards the rights of persons with disabilities
- Law enforcement
- Partnership with others institutions
- Establishment of Isange one stop centers at police hospital.

The following strategies are:

- ✓ Enhance investigations
- ✓ Enhance public awareness
- ✓ Training of investigators
- ✓ Action to promote the voices of disabled persons in the process of changing social norms
- ✓ Remove barriers to disabled people in accessing services and support

## 2.4 Group work



**GOUP PRESENTATION**

In the group work, participants were asked to give five major challenges faced by PWDs and here are the main challenges as got from the 5 working groups:

- Lack of self esteem for PWDs
- Society mindset
- Ignorance and lack of knowledge
- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of appropriate communication
- Educational materials kit which are not disability friendly
- Traditional beliefs & myths
- Service providers mindset
- Stigma and discrimination

- Poverty
- Violences and sexual abuse
- Financial barriers
- Lack of information regarding their rights
- Lack of representation of girls and WWDs in the 30 % of women in parliament and decision makers
- Existing gender programs does not take into account WWDs
- Unemployment
- Lack of startup capital

#### **2.4.1. Group discussion**

After the group discussions presenters from working groups formulated the following strategies that can help to overcome all those challenges faced by PWDs as follow:

- ❖ Continued outreach trainings on the ability and capacity building
- ❖ Building awareness on themselves, parents, society for the girls formal education
- ❖ Sensitization of policy implementation on inclusion of girls and women
- ❖ Create a conducive and friendly communication environment for girls and WWDs
- ❖ Avail special funds to accelerate economic development of girls and WWDs
- ❖ Avail prothesis and orthosis by community health insurance known as mutuelle de santé
- ❖ Keep on advocacy for change in mindset on the part of policy implementers, PWDs and policy developers.
- ❖ Fully implement provision of the law especially on mutuelle de santé
- ❖ Link programs with performance evaluation
- ❖ Sensitization and awareness raising on the CRPD
- ❖ Punishment for those abusing PWDs rights
- ❖ Integration of disability concerns into gender related programs
- ❖ Awareness raising to local and official leaders

## 2.4.2. Questions, interventions and answers

1. From your point of view, what are the major actions that can be taken to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls with disabilities to SGBV (List and discuss at least 5 actions)
2. What are the challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities victims of SGBV (List at least 5 major challenges)
  - Unplanned pregnancy
  - Sexual transmitted disease , sexual transmitted infections including HIV
  - Inability to express themselves
  - Lack of judicial dispensation to redress the situation
  - Societal and self-rejection
  - Lack of partners regarding marriage
  - Poverty
  - Lack of knowledge
3. From your point of view, what are the actions that can be taken to resolve those challenges
  - Community protection to girls and women with disabilities
  - Counseling and care for the victims of trauma
  - Awareness campaign to the community/ family and police
  - Enforcement of provisions of the law to punish perpetrators
  - Training basic communication skill to the different service providers including health personnel
  - Awareness campaign to men that girls and WWDs are able
  - Create special funds guarantee for girls and WWDs
  - Creation of women's cooperative/ loan facilitation
  - Strengthening of Inclusive education

No	Question/Intervention	Answers
1	lack of statistical data for children under 5 years	International regulations require that children under 5 years are not considered in order to not distort data
		Thematic report details data on disability
2	What is the level of understanding	The level of understanding is low in rural areas

	disability in rural areas?	Mobilization and awareness campaign are planned on their rights
		Inclusive sports events organization in rural areas
		Creation by next year a PWDs team in every district
3	60 persons trained by UNDEF project are a small number	Those are not the only one trained because they are trained to be trainers
		More different trainings have been done those 60 persons are only youth and women trained one one subject which is gender equality.
		More trainings also to come in the milestone of the project
4	Why there is no Disability monitoring office as it is in other programs like the GMO?	The Honorable representing PWDs recommends that there should be the Disability monitoring office and when discussing on the activities, there should be evaluation on the gender based budgeting issue how much percentage is dedicated to WWDs
		Recommend to all districts to insert in their plan the issues regarding women with disabilities
		Establishment of the gender based statement in all public institutions
5	Girls and WWDs got a double discrimination and they do not find husbands	Awareness campaign to men that girls and WWDs are able
6	Lack of representation of children with disabilities in the children's commission	Advocacy will be done for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the national Children Commission
7	What is planned for those PWDs begging?	In collaboration with YES Rwanda (Youth Employment System) will train them for self-employment culture

		Creation of cooperative for self-help and financial support
		A research has been done to assess the cause
		Vocational training to help them create small income generating activities
8	The interventions of UNWOMEN representative regarding inclusion of monitoring budget in the plans on gender equality programs. If the budget is not planned, things look impossible.	Agreement
9	The reports on disability and research reports must be shared to partners in disability	Agreement
10	Why the RNP does not facilitate deaf persons to get driving permit and sign post vehicles used by them?	The representative of the RNP accepted to advocate for that issue and see how this problem can be solved with the use of advanced technology
11	Data confidentiality is needed for service providers	Recommendations that training on sign language should be provided to different service providers and the use of braille
		Hot line telephones for call and messaging are available to call for protection from the police

## **2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations given within this Forum were addressed to different categories as follows:

### **Government**

The government should:

- Involve PWDs and stakeholders in the development, revision and implementation of disability friendly programs
- Accessibility to information, infrastructure and social services
- Research to collect data specific to each disability type and related needs.
- Establish the Disability Mainstreaming Office to foster full inclusion of PWDs in all programs
- A specific budget line for Disability activities such as Schools fees for TVET candidates with disabilities, medical care, rehabilitation etc.
- **Make** Local and district authorities fully aware of the rights and laws protecting PWDs
- Establish capacity building programs which provide adequate training, awareness, and knowledge of SGBV and needs of PWDs
- Great need for Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to work with local authorities and DPOs to build support groups of families and community members who support persons with disabilities

### **Disability Organization**

- Mobilize their members to join their organizations
- Participate in national programs like umuganda, community meetings etc.
- Build a strong relationship with the local government in order to get more information
- DPOs should have a unified voice on disability and gender related issues

## **Stakeholders/Partners**

- Include girls/youth and women with disabilities in their funding priorities
- share technical support and best practices among their networks
- Be advocates for disability and gender because all stakeholders should promote research on SGBV and persons with disabilities.
- Future research also needs to provide data on the prevalence on SGBV.
- All stakeholders should promote research on SGBV and persons with disabilities.
- Future research also needs to provide data on the prevalence on SGBV.

## **Persons with disabilities**

- Great need to raise the awareness on the rights and laws protecting persons with disabilities in Rwanda along with awareness of SGBV.
- Empower persons with disabilities with the knowledge and procedures of reporting cases of SGBV
- Awareness raising materials should be available and adapted to different communication needs.
- Persons with disabilities must have access to inclusive sexual health education that is designed any other population

## **Family/Guardian/Caregivers**

- Parents, family members, and other caregivers of PWDs should be aware of and promote the rights and laws protecting PWDs and SGBV.
- Family, guardians, and caregivers should also recognize that persons with disabilities are sexual, just as any other human being.
- Strategies addressing negative attitudes against PWDs should be established and increase access to services such as health, education, and justice

## **UN WOMEN RECOMMENDATION**

- CRPD, CEDAW and other relevant normative instruments to impact the rights of women with disabilities and achieve gender equality
- Strengthen the collection, compilation and analysis of national disability data and statistics, disaggregated by sex and age, using existing guidelines on disability measurement.
- Increase the leadership and participation in decision-making of women and girls with disabilities, identifying key factors, strategies or approaches that can be shared in this regard. Ensure inclusion of the rights and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, in development policies, programs, M&E with gender based budgeting at all levels, including international cooperation.
- Increase cooperation, partnerships, and synergies between UN entities, organizations of women and girls with disabilities, women's development, and human rights organizations, etc to provide sustained and sustainable support for the empowerment of women with disabilities.
- The domestication of the SDGs should take into account the voice and needs of all persons with disabilities.

### **2.6 Closing remarks**

The closing ceremony was done by Honorable Gaston RUSIHA, Member of Rwandan Parliament representing PWDs. He said that the forum was helpful for all the participants especially for PWDs because the recommendations got from it will help present decision makers and others to adjust the policies and to integrate disability in their plans. He thanked all the participants for their support and the organizers who took the initiative to put together different partners in disability. He reminded that once PWDs know their rights they will contribute to their own development.

The collaboration of all, public institutions, civil society, development partners and PWDs themselves will lead to a good coalition of forces to advocate for integration.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

The National forum on disability and gender equality have been a good occasion to put together different persons with disabilities, decision makers and development partners in order to look for a multisectoral response to disability and gender equality. Regarding the organizations represented during the forum, it is sure that the information shared, ideas shared and the recommendations produced on the issue concerning disability and gender equality, will facilitate and help to mainstream disability in the area of gender equality and to implement laws and policies of gender equality on the side of PWDs.

The awareness rising of disability for different organizations and for the community in general will change the mindset and beliefs which have been for longtime considering PWDs as abnormal. The removal of barriers discriminating PWDs from non-disabled persons is an asset for the entire community because those barriers discriminate also the population like pregnant women, sick persons, children and old people. The facilitation in communication is also another opportunity to increase people's knowledge.

Minutes taker:

Chairman:

Alexis UYISABYE

Romalis NIYOMUGABO

UPHLS LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Mediatrice MUNEZERO