

1 September 2014

**Joint proposal to secure contributions of persons with disabilities to the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction process**

Attention to:

**Ms. Margareta Wahlström**, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction

**Ms. Päivi Kairamo**, Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee of 3WCDRR, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

**Mr. Thani Thongphakdi**, Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee of 3WCDRR, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

**Mr. Kenichi Suganuma**, Ambassador of Japan in Charge of 3WCDRR

CC to:

**Ms. María Soledad Cisternas Reyes**, Chairperson, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Excellencies,

First and foremost, permit us to express our sincere gratitude to Your Excellency, Ms. Margareta Wahlström, for leadership in focusing attention on the need for disability inclusion in disaster risk reduction.

We are also grateful to the many UNISDR colleagues who have supported Ms. Wahlström's efforts in this regard.

Ms. Wahlström, you and your team have done much to raise the visibility of the rights of persons with disabilities and related issues in the DRR discourse. Your recent initiatives, including the ground-breaking global survey on persons living with disabilities and how they cope with disasters, as well as the focus on "living with disability and disasters" as the 2013 theme of the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2013, have sparked new hope among the disability community. As evidenced at the 6AMCDRR in Bangkok in June, there is now a higher level of awareness on the part of policy makers.

Your Excellencies, Ms. Päivi Kairamo and Mr. Thani Thongphakdi, we should like to express special thanks to you both as the Co-Chairs, representing Finland and Thailand, respectively, for the many proactive references to persons with disabilities in the Co-Chairs' pre-zero draft of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. On "inclusiveness", this represents a distinct shift towards progress, when compared with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

Furthermore, we also place on record our warm appreciation of the efforts of Japan, as host Government for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (3WCDRR), for its championship of the disability inclusion cause. This championship has resulted in Goal 7 **Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management** in the world's first set of regionally-agreed, disability-inclusive and measurement-focused development goals, the **Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific**, which was adopted on 1 May 2013 through resolution 69/13 by 62 Governments in the membership of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The Sendai Statement to Promote Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilient, Inclusive and Equitable Societies in Asia and the Pacific, adopted in Sendai, Japan, on 23 April 2014, by the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction: Changing Mindsets through Knowledge, underscores our collective commitment to making concerted efforts to achieve the explicit and systematic inclusion of disability perspectives in the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.

Your Excellency, Mr. Kenichi Suganuma, Ambassador in Charge of the 3WCDRR, we are greatly encouraged by the support demonstrated by you in conveying to UNISDR the message on disability inclusion and the need to adequately and explicitly include stakeholders with disabilities and partners in the entire preparatory process for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Despite these positive developments, we recognize how critical it still is for all Member States to concur on the development of disability-inclusive DRR as a most urgent issue.

The World Bank and WHO have estimated that there are 1 billion persons with disabilities in the world. Recent data from Japan underscored that persons with disabilities were at least twice more likely to die than those without disabilities in the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

Both the above points justify the need for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to accord explicit recognition to persons with disabilities and their partners as a "major group" with their own "organizing partners", not to be subsumed under other groups.

Op. para 18 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/211 adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013:

*Recognizes, in this context, the importance of the contributions and participation of all relevant stakeholders, including major groups, parliaments, civil society, the*

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, non-governmental organizations, (...)

We trust that, with the active support of Your Excellencies, namely, SRSG for DRR, Co-Chairs and the Government of Japan, good sense will prevail on agreement that 1 billion persons with disabilities constitute a “major group”. Indeed, deprivation of the adequate articulation of that voice would severely call into question any claim that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction could possibly be “forward-looking” or relevant in the twenty-first century.

We are heartened by op. para. 20 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/211 adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013 (highlights are ours):

*Stresses the importance of **mainstreaming** gender and **disability perspectives** in disaster risk management to strengthen the resilience of communities and reduce social vulnerabilities to disasters, and recognizes the need for the inclusive participation and contribution of women, as well as vulnerable people within groups, such as children, older persons and **persons with disabilities**, to the **Third World Conference and its preparatory process**;*

And, we do appreciate the reference by the women’s stakeholder group to disability in its statement at the first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee in July, with particular reference to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Nevertheless, Excellencies, permit us to share our urgent concern over the practical issue, presented by the non-inclusion of disability representatives among the current representation of stakeholders in the remaining process concerning the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, including the meetings of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, Open-ended Informal Consultative Meetings and the 3WCDDR.

It is our considered view that, the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities cannot be achieved across all sectors and stakeholder groups without the explicit presence of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and partners, with equal representation in all consultation events on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction process, namely in the lead up to and including in the 3WCDDR.

At the first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee held in July, we found that the list of “Organizing Partners” did not include representatives of persons with disabilities. In order to follow the guiding principles set out in op. paras. 18 and 20 of the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution 68/211, we strongly request the addition of representative stakeholders of persons with disabilities to the list of “Organizing Partners”. Doing so would enable us to facilitate and formulate “the perspectives of persons with disabilities” throughout the process that remains to permit timely interventions on the

post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Furthermore, Article 43 of the Rio+20 Declaration mentions the inclusion of other stakeholder groups in the process of defining sustainable development policy and explicitly mentions persons with disabilities in “C. Major Groups and other stakeholders” (highlight is ours):

43. We underscore that broad public participation and access to information and judicial and administrative proceedings are essential to the promotion of sustainable development. Sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of regional, national and subnational legislatures and judiciaries, and all major groups: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers, as well as other stakeholders, including local communities, volunteer groups and foundations, migrants and families, as well as older persons and **persons with disabilities**. In this regard, we agree to work more closely with the major groups and other stakeholders, and encourage their active participation, as appropriate, in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development at all levels.

In support of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly the implementation of its Article 11, we four international and national civil society networks and organizations have joined hands to work for a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction that is inclusive of persons with disabilities. We deem it a moral duty to strive for such explicit inclusion so that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction truly represents humanity’s advancement.

We propose that the following contact persons be added under a new heading of “Persons with Disabilities” at <<http://www.wcdrr.org/majorgroups/organizingpartners>>

Mr. Vladimir Cuk, International Disability Alliance:

<[vcuk@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:vcuk@ida-secretariat.org)>

Ms. Maryanne Diamond, International Disability Alliance:

<[maryanne.diamond@visionaustralia.org](mailto:maryanne.diamond@visionaustralia.org)>

Ms. Tchaurea Fleury, International Disability Alliance:

<[tfleury@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:tfleury@ida-secretariat.org)>

Mr. Yasunobu Ishii, Director, The Nippon Foundation:

<[y\\_ishii@ps.nippon-foundation.or.jp](mailto:y_ishii@ps.nippon-foundation.or.jp)>

Ms. Sae Kani, Disability-inclusive DRR Network:

<[sae.kani@malteser-international.org](mailto:sae.kani@malteser-international.org)>

Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura, Rehabilitation International:

<[hkawa@atdo.jp](mailto:hkawa@atdo.jp)>

Mr. Matthew Rodieck, Rehabilitation International:

<[matthew.rodieck@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:matthew.rodieck@yahoo.co.uk)>

Once you facilitate the above as “Organizing Partners” for “the perspectives of persons with disabilities”, their expertise will be available to you, to be drawn upon for expert advice on issues related to accessibility and the equal participation of persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation for participants with disabilities, in the entire process of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

We look forward to your support and await your positive response at your earliest convenience, to enable our participation in forthcoming consultations beginning from 9 September onwards.

With our deep gratitude and respect,  
We remain, yours sincerely,

Maryanne Diamond  
Chairperson, International Disability Alliance

On behalf of:  
Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network  
International Disability Alliance  
The Nippon Foundation  
Rehabilitation International