



**Statement of individuals and organizations concerned
with disability for
The 5th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk
Reduction, 22-25 October 2012, Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

We, individuals and organizations dealing with disability from countries in Asia and the Pacific attending the 5th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (5th AMCDRR):

Noting that despite the efforts made under the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) persons with disabilities and the elderly remain at high risk with respect to natural disasters. A large proportion of the casualties during disasters are persons with disabilities and elderly persons with impairment. This situation is mainly due to the lack of inclusion and/or involvement of persons with disabilities and their representatives within disaster mitigation and preparedness planning from community to national levels as well as within international DRR frameworks.

Noting that in most Asian and Pacific countries, persons with disabilities tend to be excluded from mainstream social activities such as livelihoods and participation in social and political affairs. Community level DRR initiatives are also not an exception to such exclusion. Factors contributing to exclusion include barriers relating to physical accessibility, access to information, and existing social and cultural attitudes. Moreover, the global emergency response approach and current DRR policies exacerbate such exclusion as they do not recognize disability as an underlying factor of vulnerability across communities and, therefore, consideration for inclusion of disability is still at a minimum level. Inclusive DRR considers the whole community, but pays specific attention to persons with disabilities and caregivers since their vulnerability reduces the entire community's resilience towards disasters.

Noting the target population for inclusive DRR are not only persons with disabilities, but also their families as their caregivers. The WHO (2010) estimates that 15% of the world's population are persons with disabilities. The largest proportion of these people is living in the Asia and Pacific region. Persons with disabilities are often living with their family as caregivers and when disaster strikes, it is family members who are often the only people in a position to provide evacuation assistance to persons with disabilities as well as they can. In such circumstances, and under severe conditions and situations, the vulnerability of the family increases and impacts negatively on the household's capacity to cope with the disaster. Therefore, disability increases vulnerability not only of persons with disabilities themselves, but also of their caregivers. Hence disability increases the vulnerability of the community as a whole. Experience also shows that persons with disabilities can effectively contribute to community-based DRR initiatives by identifying possible solutions based on their needs and experience, which in turn increase the overall resilience of the community. In order to foster maximum effectiveness of collective efforts for risk reduction, it is therefore important to work inclusively across communities.

Recognizing that disability is, therefore, more than just vulnerability. Disability is a condition, which adds to other vulnerabilities creating multiple-layers of possible discrimination and exclusion.

Noting that disability amplifies vulnerability across populations and within communities. From this perspective, there is an urgent need to embrace the issue of disability as a crosscutting core theme within mainstream DRR strategies and to include persons with disabilities within planning and response.

At the conclusion of the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Disability Inclusive DRR Network for Asia and Pacific (DiDRRN) makes the following commitments:

We commit to:

- Conduct multi-country surveys on the impact of disasters on the quality of lives of persons with disabilities and their caregivers to fill the gap of the lack of data on persons with disabilities and disaster.
- Compile good practices and lessons learnt of disability inclusive DRR in the region in order to promote an achievable vision of disability inclusive DRR.
- Provide capacity building and regional pools of expertise to Disabled People's Organisations on DRR to enable them to effectively participate in national and sub-national level consultations for the Post-2015 strategy and beyond.

We call upon non-government and government stakeholders participating to the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to:

Commit

- To increase awareness that disability increases vulnerability across all populations not only limited to persons with disabilities, and that disability decreases the resilience of an entire community
- To take special efforts to increase and ensure the effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and their caregivers within DRR planning, preparedness and response. To prioritize people focused end-to-end early warning systems which take into account the needs of persons with disabilities.
- To increase the number of DRR plans which are disability inclusive based on the inputs, needs and requirement of persons with disabilities and their caregivers. Secure and sustain political commitment and leadership as part of the process in developing the regional strategy. Advocate for a holistic values-based approach to DRR promoting the social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups within society.

In conclusion:

We call upon the United Nations secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and Asia-Pacific governments to increase their commitment to mainstream disability inclusive DRR as part of their core programme and to advocate the need to better address disability within the Post-2015 strategy by clearly addressing the disability issue in subsequent Global Platform in 2013 and next AMCDRR in 2014. We further call upon the UNISDR secretariat to coordinate and work with national and international NGOs and governments concerned with disability and DRR, Disabled People's Organisations and UN ESCAP to realise disability inclusive DRR at national and regional levels in the Asia and Pacific.