

**Name of Organization**: Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) Nigeria

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1. **Please provide information on the legislative and policy framework in place in your country related to the status, establishment, resourcing, and functioning of representative organizations of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and local levels;**

Presently in Nigeria, the corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) is the body mandated by government to register all entities, profit and non-profit organizations that does business in Nigeria. Organizations of persons with disabilities go through same legal procedure to get registered. Furthermore, according to area of focus, NGOs, may also register with government through relative Ministries, Departments and Agencies, for example, most disability organizations may register with the department of Rehabilitation under the Federal and state ministries of women Affairs and Social Development, which is the supervising ministry for disability issues, to acquire the needed recognition to enable them work with the department on disability issues. However, I am not sure of any specific or separate legislative and policy framework I can categorically point at, as one put in place to establish, regulate or provide over sight functions for organizations of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

In terms of funding from the government side, the Federal ministry of women Affairs and other state ministries of women Affairs are supposed to fund organizations of persons with disabilities to conduct activities/project, both at National and state levels respectively, but in most cases this is NOT to be, because of the lack of funds according to government. However there were a few times where government through the Ministry of women funded some projects, workshops and International Travels for persons with disabilities, but effort by government on disability issues in terms of funding is a far cry from what persons with disabilities expects. The government needs to seriously look into the issue of funding DPOs to function effectively in Nigeria.

On the sunny side, the International Development Agencies has somehow bridged the gap to some extent, by supporting the works of DPOs which comes either In-kind or direct funding.

**The Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities-JONAPWD**; received her first direct funding in November 2014 from the **USAID Nigeria** for a project on Inclusive Basic Education for children with Disabilities, for which we are grateful for, other donor agencies have been very supportive as well, as we also enjoy In-kind support/funding from them.

At this time, it important to note here, the absence of a disability law in Nigeria, as my responses would mostly be based on this fact, it is interesting to also know that Nigeria has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities.

**2. Please provide information on existing legislation and policies aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, including children with disabilities, are consulted and involved in decision-making processes that directly or indirectly concern them;**

Again we do not have such existing legislation and policies; Not any that I can point to. In a country where there is no Law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, it would be very difficult to develop any such policy that gives such huge rights. Generally speaking, disability work in Nigeria is being done in a non-coherent manner; everyone is busy ticking the box. Most people with disabilities are not consulted especially from the government side when decisions are taken, most times disabled people are brought into many programmes only, as an “after thought” or most times just to “add up” just to enable the implementers TICK the box.

However, this is a bit different with Development Agencies, as series of advocacies from **JONAPWD** on **“NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”** is beginning to reverse the situation, but government response to **INCLUSION** in all ramifications has been very frustrating, sometimes, they still want to **THINK and ACT** on our behalf.

3. **Please provide information on any consultative body or mechanism established to consult and engage with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, including information about their composition, criteria for membership (nomination, appointment, election, etc.) and functioning;**

No such consultative body exit; in Nigeria Persons with Disabilities and their issues are place under the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, which is the supervising ministry for disability Affairs, we people with disabilities have no control over the composition of such government structure and we think that this is not good enough as most times due to some hard circumstances disabled people are made to go through some unhealthy compromises. Organizations of persons with disabilities are supposed to be the whistle blower and because of the lack of independence sometimes we are not able to function properly because of our involvement with government either directly or indirectly. Most times there are some silent conflicts between the Ministry of women Affairs and members of **JONAPWD** because persons with disabilities perceived they cannot fully exercised their fundamental rights under the Ministry of women Affairs and Social development and have therefore constantly advocated for the creation of a **Separate commission for Persons with Disabilities.**

**4. Please provide information on the efforts undertaken at national, regional and/or local levels to strengthen the capacity of representative organizations of persons with disabilities, in order to facilitate their participation in legislative, policy and other decision-making processes;**

A few steps have been taken in the direction of capacity building for Disabled people organizations, under **JONAPWD** which is the umbrella body of all disability organizations in Nigeria. These efforts however, is mostly civil society driven, the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities with several Development Agencies have organized a few capacity building workshops for persons with disabilities, though very few of those; like I said earlier, it was done in a non-coherent manner, every agency almost doing the same time. What JONAPWD wants to see is a continuous and strategic capacity building workshop/ leadership training programme that would last for at least 2-3 weeks, that way, disabled people organizations would have been fully trained and positioned to actively participate in any legislative, policy and other decision-making processes.

5. **Please explain whether and how persons with disabilities participate in monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 33, para. 3), and in the nomination of experts to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 34, para. 3);**

Since the signing and ratification of the CRPD in Nigeria over 5 years ago, there has not been a single report sent to the UN by government neither has there been any committee put in place to monitor the implementation, although Nigeria got elected as member of the CRPD committee recently, April 2015.

6. **Please identify the main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities in participating in mainstream and disability-specific decision-making processes at the national, regional and local levels, including challenges faced by persons who experience multiple discrimination (e.g., on the basis of disability,**

**age, gender, ethnic origin, geographical location).**

Participation of Persons with Disabilities in mainstream decision-making process is a huge issue in Nigeria, reason being that over 90% of the populace still view persons with disabilities from the charity perspective,- people who are just good enough to receive aids, support and other form of humanitarian efforts rather than being active citizens in society and in National development, so most times they are excluded from decision making process, especially within the mainstream organizations and development efforts. On the other hand, in some disability-specific making process, if organized by Persons with disabilities for persons with disabilities, then we mostly have a full chance for participation, although level of participation again may vary based on gender as men and women do not participate most times on equal basis. But if organized by non-disabled people, we are only involved if we get to know in time, otherwise, decisions may be taken on our behalf and they just get us informed, this happen especially from the government side, except on very few occasions.

Apart from the conception about people with disabilities, Nigerians with disabilities live in a very inaccessible world, even when we are available to participate; barriers experienced hinder our participation. For women and children with disabilities it is far worse, based on their gender and vulnerability.

7**. Please provide information on the existence of organizations of persons with disabilities in your country, including organizations of children and women with disabilities, as well as their composition and internal decision-making processes and procedures;**

In Nigeria, The Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) is the umbrella body of all disability organizations in Nigeria. JONAPWD is well recognized by both the government of Nigeria and by most if not all development agencies working in the area of social inclusion. We have a well-established organization with state chapters in all the 36 states and local government areas of the country. The structure of JONAPWD is such that there is a National Executive council headed by the National President, the Zonal coordinators and state chairpersons. JONAPWD present National Executive is male dominated; but the only interesting aspect is that the National President is a woman, the first woman so elected in the history of the organization.

Meanwhile, the composition of JONAPWD is cross-disability in nature, in that the different disability clusters came together to form a single strong organization, which serves as the umbrella body for all disability organizations in Nigeria.

**JONAPWD is made up of six disability clusters namely:**

1. National Association of the Blind
2. Nigeria National Association of the Deaf
3. National Association of Persons with Physical Disabilities
4. National Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities
5. National Association of Persons Affected by Leprosy-IDEA Nigeria
6. Spinal Cord Injured Association of Nigeria.
7. Gender is cross-cutting in all of the above, but there is women leader responsible for the women affairs within JONAPWD.

Beside the umbrella body, we also have very well established Organizations of Persons with disabilities in Nigeria who are very active in advocacy work but grossly underfunded. Specifically, there are also few organizations of women with disabilities, who are advocating for the rights and inclusion of women with disabilities in mainstream society, although not many of them.

Meanwhile, under JONAPWD, the structure is such that it recognizes the issues of women and children with disabilities, and there a coordinator for women issues, but issues of children with disabilities are sometimes lost within women issues, hence a separate committee was proposed for the issues of children with disabilities under JONAPWD in July.

8. **Please identify the main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities as members of mainstream or disability-specific non-governmental organizations, and in participating in the activities of such organizations, including challenges faced by persons who experience multiple discrimination.**

The main challenge faced by persons with disabilities participating in mainstream and disability-specific organizations has to do with the following

1. The lack of access, which mainly has to do with environmental and institutional barriers, absence of disability sensitive policies.
2. Attitude which has to do with the negative perception of disability which has it’s roots in the medical/charity model of disability
3. Negative intersection between gender and disability which women with disabilities are seriously struggling with.
4. The lack of a law to protect the rights of persons with disabilities