**Article 11 Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.**

The Federation of Disabled Peoples' Organization Mauritius (FDPO) started its activities in October 1991 to achieve several objectives, mainly to inform the general public about disability issues in all aspects of life. FDPO is managed by people with different types of impairments and includes parents of children with disabilities. FDPO is a member of Disabled People's international.

**Overview of situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**

People with disabilities (PWDs), who account for 15 percent of the world’s population, are overwhelmingly affected by disasters (World Health Organization and The World Bank, 2011).

The most important international guidelines on disaster management emphasize the importance of disaster management suitable for people with disabilities. However, people with disabilities (PWD) are routinely excluded from the disaster management cycle and ignored or forgotten at every stage. Not including people with disabilities can lead to stigma, discrimination, and the hidden nature of some disabilities. Governments and aid agencies did not fully understand the unique needs of persons with disabilities in times of disaster, and persons with disabilities received no information on how to cope during or after the disaster.

Accordingly, disability is considered as “a complex interaction of biological, psychological, cultural and socio-political factors, which cannot be extricated except with imprecision” (Shakespeare, 2014, p. 26). In this interactional approach, they are grouped into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors involve the nature and severity of impairment an individual has, his/her attitudes to it, his/her personal qualities and abilities, and his/her personality, while extrinsic factors arising from his/her living context are community attitudes, accessibility, and disability-related cultural issues. This distinction does not necessarily deny the causal role of extrinsic factors over intrinsic factors.

For instance, wars or traffic accidents can cause impairments or upbringing context and culture can influence one’s personality. In this paper, we refer to impairments as physical and mental health conditions that may cause some bodily functioning limitations, and to disability as a restriction created by the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In most of the cases, especially in times of disaster, extrinsic factors such as social stigma, discrimination, lack of accessibility, and exclusion outweigh intrinsic factors such as physical or mental impairments themselves in leading a person with impairments to disability.

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The Incheon Strategy was developed in consultation with governments of the ESCAP region, inclusive of the the Solomon Islands, the UN system, and civil society organisations, including organisations of and for PWD . This strategy outlines the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disability for the period 2013–20 with a focus on inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based societies for PWD. One of its ten overarching goals specifically covers disability-inclusive disaster reduction and management.

The Sendai framework is an international accord on disaster risk reduction which was adopted by the Solomon Islands and the remaining UN member states in 2015 [61].

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Sendai Framework) mandates the inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster-resilient buildings (UNISDR 2015). Adopting the principles of a whole-of-society approach is the first international framework for disaster risk reduction to address the inclusion of persons with disabilities after the failure of its predecessors, the Yokohama Strategy and the Hyogo Framework for Action, to address this issue. (Stough and Kang 2015; Robinsson 2017).

**UNISDR, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030**

The Sendai Framework is consistent with Article 11 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which provides for the right of persons with disabilities to protection in situations of danger and emergency (United Nations 2006).

These instruments represent, as Stough and Kang (2015) note, the paradigm shift from viewing people with disabilities as ‘vulnerable’ to considering them as ‘active contributors’ in disaster preparedness. According to Alexander, Gaillard, and Wisner (2012, 419), empowering people with disabilities to respond to their vulnerability is critical as it allows people with disabilities ‘… to engage in the assessment of their own vulnerabilities, needs and capacities to face those needs’.

There is an emerging literature on the knowledge, expertise and experiences of people with disabilities as potentially valuable to inclusive planning and problem-solving in disaster risk reduction (Priestley and Hemingway 2007; Abbot and Porter 2013; Lovell and Masson 2014; Bourke et al. 2017; Twigg et al. 2011; Stough and Kelman 2015). Furthermore, some authors have already suggested that there are specific roles for disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) in post disaster, including identifying disabled victims (Kett, Stubbs, and Yeo 2005; Hemingway and Priestley 2006), advocating for aids and assistance (Mirza 2011) and participating in recovery assessment (Alexander, Gaillard, and Wisner 2012; Rooney and White 2007).

There are several interrelated reasons for this. Persons with disabilities are among the poorest in society and have limited access to the economic, social, material and political resources needed to respond effectively to risks. (UNESCAP, 2017; World Health Organization and The World Bank, 2011) People of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to be exposed to environmental risk factors such as poor quality housing, cramped living conditions and unfavourable neighbourhood conditions. (Chou et al., 2004; Young, 2010), hence the exposure of Persons with Disabilities to hazards are constant and increased.

Women and girls with disabilities are at greater risks of facing sexual violence and abuse as an aftermath of displacement following natural disasters in unsafe and not properly designed shelters and refugee camps. (Smith et al., 2012; National Council on Disability Affairs, 2009). Exclusion of persons with disabilities is the result of stereotypes which have been prevalent. (Brown et al., 2014; Robinson and Kani, 2014; Ronoh et al., 2015; UNESCAP, 2012a), an attitude which is present among different social class, beliefs, practices and culture.

Negative societal views of people with disabilities perpetuated exclusion. It is based on the idea that they cannot contribute positively. Unequal access to resources, poor adaptation of the built environment and poor housing are issues that make people with disabilities more vulnerable to disasters. Raising awareness, tackling negative attitudes and addressing discrimination will reduce vulnerability and lead to better disaster outcomes for all people in the Solomon Islands, including those with disabilities.

Geneva, Switzerland, 2015.

This accord specifies the inclusion of PWD in the assessment of disaster risk, and the design and implementation of plans and involvement in the promotion of accessible response, recovery rehabilitation, and reconstruction approaches. Common to these instruments and frameworks is an emphasis on equal access to information, aid, and resources, as well as the recognition of the unique insights of PWD about their own needs during disasters and the importance of their inclusion in disaster planning. Although the policies have been endorsed by the Pacific nations, progress toward disability-inclusive disaster management has been tentative [60] and existing discrimination toward PWD in general needs to be systematically addressed [32]. A. Moustafa, D. Abbott, The State of Human Development in the Pacific: A Report on Vulnerability and Exclusion in a Time of Rapid Change, United Nations Development Programme, Suva, Fiji, 2014.

ESCAP, Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, UN, Bangkok, Thailand, 2012.

People with disabilities have different demographic characteristics and may not be fully represented in opportunistic samples. Individuals with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities were particularly absent among participants. Recruitment by disaster management training programs and the current employment of participants may also mean that this group experiences less social exclusion and barriers than other persons with disabilities in the Solomon Islands. Women and girls with disabilities are at an even greater risk of violence, physical abuse and sexual exploitation after disasters than women without disability (Anam et al., 2002; National Council on Disability Affairs, 2009; Smith et al., 2012).

**The Experience of People with Disabilities in Disasters**

Disability is a controversial concept that has been inconsistently defined by a large array of scholars (Smart, 2009). In earlier disability studies (Nagi, 1965; Verbrugge & Jette, 1994), disability was viewed from medical and individual pathological perspectives. From this perspective, disability was interpreted merely as a deviation from biomedical norms or limitations in functioning and these limitations were mainly attributed to mental or physical health conditions, namely impairments (Riddle, 2014). Impairments in this regard are often viewed as an individual’s biological traits. As the experience of disability was perceived as a medical phenomenon, disability was treatable and preventable by medical or technological Interventions.

Disability has received increasing attention in recent years in disaster research (Stough & Kang, 2015). Disasters contribute to disability through injuries and loss of body parts. For example, after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, of the 3 million people affected, about 200,000 suffered various types of disability (ESCAP & UNISDR, 2012). Reinhardt et al. (2011) found that people with physical or mental health impairments during disasters were more likely than people without disabilities to experience additional disability and health problems.

**Republic of Mauritius:**

“This material has been extracted from Government of the Republic of

Mauritius (2020), **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Framework 2020-2030**.”

**The Disaster Challenge for the Republic of Mauritius**

The Republic of Mauritius is a Southern Hemisphere Small Island Developing State (SIDS) located in the upper southwest quadrant of the Indian Ocean. The island of Mauritius is approximately 5,800 kilometres (km) west of Perth, Australia, 4,650 km southeast of Mumbai, India and 150 km northeast of Reunion Island.

The Republic of Mauritius comprises the islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega, Tromelin, Cargos Carajos (St Brandon) and the Chagos Archipelago.

There is no doubt that the Republic of Mauritius has experienced significant disasters. For instance, in 1994 Cyclone Hollanda destroyed 50% of sugar plantations on the island of Mauritius, with damage totalling over US$ 135 million, or the equivalent of US$ 238 million in 20201.

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Republic of Mauritius is vulnerable to severe weather events and disasters such as cyclones, storm and tidal surges, torrential rains, floods and flash floods, landslides, tsunami and technological disasters, amongst others.

Recent studies carried out by the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) clearly shows an increasing trend in the number of storm formations over the last 32 years, as well as the number of storms reaching tropical cyclone strength (winds above 165 km/hr).

Based on the 1960-2018 data compiled by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, 814,330 persons were directly impacted, 98% due to cyclones. A total of 490 disaster related fatalities were reported for 1960 to 2018, with 161 from aircraft accidents, of which 159 fatalities were from one aircraft accident27. Of the remaining 329 fatalities, 41% were due to cyclones, 12% to other weather-related events, and 29% due to structural fire.

The Nature of Disaster Risk Facing the Republic of Mauritius with at least 41 hazards present in the Republic of Mauritius.

**Risk Reduction**

This approach corresponds to the integration of risk reduction into the development process as set forth in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015- 2030 (Sendai Framework).

The Government needs to consider whether a cross-government disaster risk reduction platform will provide an effective mechanism to ensure identified risks are being addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. This platform approach can be extended to the private sector and international stakeholders to ensure that the actions associated with this National Strategic Framework are implemented over the decade ahead.

**Warning and Alert**

The Republic has a well-developed warning and alert system for some, principally meteorological, hazards but also for tsunami, and is working in establishing a dam failure warning system. These efforts should be based on the World Meteorological Organization recommended multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and warning process.

**Preparedness, Response and Recovery**

The Republic has invested in an extensive system for preparedness, response and recovery. A clear structure of disaster response has been developed out of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2016. The National Disaster Scheme covers Cyclones, Heavy Rainfall, Torrential Rain and Flooding, Tsunami, High Waves, Water Crisis, Earthquake, Landslide and a Port Louis Flood Response Plan. Other plans cover oil spills, aircraft accidents, and health events. Contingency plans have been developed for a number of locations across Mauritius subject to flooding.

Which however needs to be improved to adapt for persons with disabilities and cater their various needs. The disaster response team which exists within the Special Mobile Force should be trained to cater for situation of emergencies that involve persons with disabilities.

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