



Center for Disability Rights, Inc.
INTEGRATION, INDEPENDENCE, CIVIL RIGHTS

To: United Nations Permanent Forum of People of African Descent

From: L. Dara Baldwin, MPA – Director of National Policy, Center for Disability Rights
(*Contact information below*)

Date: Wednesday, December 7, 2022 (Statement given) – December 12, 2022
(statement submitted)

Re: Statement for UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent on the absence of intentional discussion of Disability Issues

On Wednesday, December 7, 2022, the following statement was read (some of it was paraphrased due to time) by [L. Dara Baldwin, MPA, Director of National Policy for Center for Disability Rights, Inc.](#) during the first meetings of the UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent held in Geneva, Switzerland – December 5 -8, 2022.

Each Civil Society participant was given only 2mins to speak and this statement is a reflection further documents of assistance and information will be sent to the PFPAD for more discussions and hopefully improved meetings that are accessible to disabled people and include the issues and concerns of disabled people of African Descent.

Statement – December 7, 2022 – 3:00pm CET - given during Item 6: Thematic Discussion: Connecting the Past and the Future- Equality for All People of African Descent (Day 3 of the forum)

Harambe! Harambe!
All Power to the People!

Good afternoon I am Dara Baldwin and I am a Disability Justice Activist from Washington, DC US! (#DCStatehood)

Congratulations on this first convening of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent.

I want to thank those who made it possible for me to be here for these meetings!

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to all about our concerns with the absence of intentional discussion of disabled people of African Descent. There are millions of disabled People of African Descent around the globe and their issues MUST be part of this work. Dismantling [Ableism](#) and [Disablism](#) are at the forefront of this!

On Saturday, December 3rd [the UN Celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) but as an organization it is far from being inclusive or accessible to disabled people - as evident in these meetings! People almost lost their lives attending these meetings that did not discuss their issues. (London Bell's story was told by Brenda) According to the US CDC Center for Disease Control - 1 in 4 Black people in the US lives with a disability. This number is larger for the globe.

There are four requests of the working group to please include:

1. There should be **multiple disabled** Persons of African Descent on the working group of Experts -because those closest to the problems are closest to the solutions! We are here to assist with possible candidates!
2. The UN does lots of work on disability issues but it uses the disability rights lens which is white centered - I ask that you use [the Disability Justice](#) lens - which centers Black disabled people in particular.
3. **Stop killing disabled people of African Descent** - in all the issue and policy areas discussed throughout these sessions but for the disabled in particular: We need Pandemic and Emergency Management planning. The COVID pandemic is NOT over and there are more pandemics to come; the natural disasters discussed yesterday and man-made disasters, like mass shootings occur daily - and there are little to no effective, strategic public health or evacuation plans for this community.
4. I am an abolitionist who pushes **to end ALL institutionalization** of Black disabled people - this is also part of Bodily Autonomy policy. We must end the horrific practices of forced institutionalization and sterilization of Black disabled people NOW!

We look forward to further discussions!

Disabled Black People Power!

Disabled Black People HAVE Power!

Ase! (Ashay)

***NOTE** – there is a group of disability justice experts who are ready to discuss and assist with language about disability issues for the draft United Nations declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent.

-These are only two of the many issues that affect disabled people of African descent. We want you to use an Intersectional lens when you work on all the issues discussed at the forum and in the declaration as they are also important to disabled people of African descent.

L. Dara Baldwin – contact information: dara.baldwin@ncdr.us (work email) or daraldb18@gmail.com (personal email)

#####

[CDR](#) is an unique fusion of advocacy and supportive services. CDR is a disability led, not-for-profit Corporation. We provide services to people with disabilities and seniors within the framework of an Independent Living Model which promotes independence of people with all types of disabilities, enabling choice in living setting, full access to the community, and control of their life.

CDR works for national, state, and local systemic change to advance the rights of people with disabilities by supporting direct action, coalition building, community organizing, policy analysis, litigation, training for advocates, and community education. CDR advocates for the full integration, independence, and civil rights of people with disabilities. CDR works through a [disability justice](#) lens which centers disabled BIPOC and with an intentional framework to end racism and all systems of oppression.