

Seventy-third World Health Assembly

Statement on disability inclusion in COVID-19 response

By the International Disability and Development Consortium and the International Disability Alliance.

Humanity & Inclusion (also known as Handicap International), supported by the International Disability and Development Consortium and the International Disability Alliance, commends WHO's leadership on the COVID-19 response and welcomes WHO's brief Disability considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak. We are ready to cooperate to ensure inclusive access to health, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Some groups of persons with disabilities are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to existing health conditions, inaccessible information, lack of disability perspective in implementing protective measures.

By adding pressure on health systems, COVID-19 leads to reduced capacity and unavailability of services and medicines, including rehabilitation and assistive technologies, resulting in reduced level of functioning, increased morbidity and mortality.

We are deeply concerned about protocols and practices attaching less value to lives of persons with disabilities including triage protocols and practices.

We call on governments, health providers, UN agencies and all actors to ensure:

- **Any policy, program, action or omission amounting to direct or indirect discrimination is prohibited**, ended and remedied immediately,
- **Essential services, including rehabilitation, psychosocial support and interpretation services in medical centers**, are adapted to prevent the spread of the virus and continue to operate,
- **Health personnel are trained** on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities. Free and informed consent to treatment must be ensured,
- **Persons living in institutions have equal access** to testing, treatments, protective/preventative measures,
- Measures are taken to ensure **continued access of women and girls with disabilities to SRH services**,
- **Persons with disabilities and their organizations are consulted meaningfully** in designing and implementing recovery plans,
- **Collection and dissemination of disability disaggregated data** to monitor the impact of COVID-19.