**Concept Note**

**Subsidiary body to develop IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**

**Background**

1 billion people or 15% of the world’s population are persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized in any crisis-affected community and are disproportionately affected by disaster and conflict situations. They face particular barriers in accessing life-saving relief and recovery support and are often denied opportunities to participate in the design and implementation of humanitarian programs. There are currently no system-wide inter-agency guidelines to ensure a coherent, accountable and effective approach towards inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

The Secretary-General has highlighted persons with disabilities as a critical group for inclusion under Core Responsibility 3 of the Agenda for Humanity. The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action was one of the key outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit, with endorsement from over 140 organizations and agencies, demonstrating the political leadership required to progress effective inclusion of persons with disabilities across the humanitarian system. Furthermore, concrete commitments have been made by a range of States, UN agencies (including IASC members), organizations of persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations to support the development of globally-endorsed guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, which will strengthen accountability to persons with disabilities in humanitarian emergencies.

A multi-stakeholder group has been established to advance the guidelines development process, and is calling for the IASC to launch a new subsidiary body that will oversee the process of guidelines development.

**Purpose of IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**

IASC guidelines will assist humanitarian actors and affected communities to coordinate, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate essential actions that foster the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities, changing practice across all sectors in a humanitarian response.

**Alignment with IASC Working Group strategic priorities and outputs**

The development and implementation of Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities will support the IASC Working Group in advancing the overarching goal of the IASC by ensuring system-wide policies, guidelines and tools that strengthen effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action for persons with disabilities. More specifically, the development of such guidelines is closely aligned with ***strategic priorities on accountability and inclusivity***, and will directly contribute to 2016-2017 work plan output on ***strengthening and operationalizing accountability to affected populations***.

**Rationale for a Subsidiary Body**

Effective inclusion of persons with disabilities will require system-wide coordination and cross-sectoral guidance. At present, there is no formal inter-agency group within the humanitarian system focused on inclusion of persons with disabilities. Establishment of a specific subsidiary body would demonstrate that this issue is a key thematic and strategic priority for the IASC. It is proposed that the IASC launch a new subsidiary body, such as a time-bound Task Team, to oversee the specific task of guidelines development, including coordinating and consulting with relevant actors, developing detailed concept notes and work plans, sourcing funding and reporting to both the IASC Working Group and any donors.

**Leadership and membership of the Task Team**

The proposed IASC Task Team will have technical expertise on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action; regular contact with humanitarian coordination mechanisms and communities of practice; a network of partners in the field, including local organizations of persons with disabilities; and linkages with other initiatives on inclusion, to ensure guidelines are relevant, practical and implementable across different sectors and levels of humanitarian response.

The Task Team will be co-led by UNICEF, the International Disability Alliance and Handicap International. This three-pronged approach recognizes that the development of inclusive and accessible guidelines requires the combined expertise of UN agencies, organizations of persons with disabilities (’DPOs’), and humanitarian actors.

Participation and broader UN agency engagement will be facilitated by UNICEF through the Inter-Agency Support Group to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (IASG-CRPD). The IASG-CRPD Working Group on Article 11 “Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies”, which will play a role, is co-chaired by UNICEF and includes UNHCR, OHCHR, ESCWA and DESA among others.

Global, regional and national expertise of the disability community will be facilitated by the International Disability Alliance, a network of 14 global and regional DPO organizations who are networks in themselves. Covering all constituencies of persons with disabilities from the Global South and North, together, the members of the Alliance are present in over 180 countries. Handicap International, a humanitarian actor and member of the International Disability and Development Consortium (a consortium of 26 disability and development organizations) will complement this expertise and ensure knowledge of the realities, challenges and situation on the ground are brought to bear.

To date, CBM International, the Women’s Refugee Commission and Human Rights Watch have also expressed interest to contribute to the Task Team, bringing a range of technical expertise, and practical experience in translating policy into practice within the humanitarian sector. Several partners are also members of consortiums, such as InterAction and ICVA, and are actively engaged in other humanitarian coordination forums, such as the Global Protection Cluster and the Gender Reference Group. This will enable the Task Team to facilitate engagement of a wide range of humanitarian and development actors throughout the process. Furthermore, the group will have linkages with policy and technical experts in government partners, such as those in the Governments of Finland and Australia, who have been actively engaged in multi-stakeholder efforts relating to inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action at the World Humanitarian Summit. As a first step in the development of the Task Team, the co-leads will also reach out to Global South partners active in this field to ensure a cross-regional approach.

**Possible funding opportunities**

The co-leads, together with the IASG-CRPD and organisations listed above, will commit currently-available resources over the next six months to develop a structure and coordination mechanism for the Subsidiary Body. It is clear that sourcing further funding will be crucial to the wider guidelines development process, which is anticipated to take at least two years. Collaboration among the co-leads and other committed partners to develop coordinated funding proposals will begin in the third quarter of 2016.

**Proposed timeline**

June 2016 – December 2016: Establishing essential mechanisms for IASC guidelines development

January 2017 – December 2018: Establishing funding; developing and piloting guidelines

January 2019 – December 2019: Dissemination and implementation of guidelines

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