My name is Robinah Nakanwagi Alambuya. I am married and a mother of four. I was recently elected Vice Chair of the African Disability Forum and I am Secretary of the Board at the PanAfrican Network of people with psychosocial disabilities.

My local organization, Triumph Uganda, provides mental health support and recovery program.

As a woman with a disability, I appreciate the opportunity to join you in the celebration as I share my life experience.

During the war in Uganda, when I was young, I experienced trauma and psychological distress. There were no support and no services available. I was fleeing with my siblings and looking for a safe space, the thickest bush. We were afraid of animals and other people hurting us. This made my condition worse and I even thought about taking away my life in order to escape to a better world. Because of my personal experience I don’t want others to go through such distress and be left behind.

This is why I am part of the guidelines for inclusive humanitarian action. Here are some of my recommendations:

* Respect the diversity of people with disabilities. We are affected differently and we have diverse support needs. People with intellectual, psychosocial disabilities, the deaf blind and other marginalized groups are often overlooked. Therefore you need disability responses tailored to specific needs.
* All humanitarian actors, including medical staff, have to learn creative and inclusive approaches. Look at the broader part of recovery. What is contributing to the mental distress? Is it a social issue? Is it a spiritual issue? Is it political issue? Is it an economic issue? Is it gender-based violence? Is it discrimination and exclusion?

In conclusion, for full, active and effective participation of persons with disabilities, in all stages of humanitarian action, we call for meaningful cooperation and partnerships.

We are committed to raising awareness about this critical tool and look forward to working together for the implementation of these guidelines.