



**INSIDE
THIS
EDITION**

**Strengthening political participation
of Persons with disabilities**

Persons with disabilities celebrate their day

**Disability rights activists take Mental health act to court
plus many more**

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The Norwegian
Association of Disabled

EDITORIAL COMMENT

By Wamundila Waliuya - Director

Since Zambia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010 the momentum for its implementation can only increase with active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organisations. We are proud to have spearheaded the process of development and submission of the alternative report to the UN in the year 2020 a process which started some four years ago. Without the watchful eye of civil society and engagement in the various treaty monitoring mechanisms, the Zambian government will always lag behind in fulfilling its human rights obligations to persons with disabilities. We thank all organisations and individuals who took part in the consultation process we undertook countrywide with the Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations. It is important that in country processes such as the development and enactment of statutory instruments be concluded expeditiously as they are an important step to the implementation of the UNCRPD in Zambia.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

We are excited to present to you this edition of our newsletter. This edition brings information from the work we delivered with our partners in the year 2020 in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Disability Rights Watch celebrates 9 years of existence in the civil society space championing the rights of persons with disabilities in Zambia and in the Southern Africa region.

We have forged an excellent partnership with the government through the Ministry of Community

Development and Social Services and its statutory agency the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) which have facilitated our participation and engagement in various processes including supporting the national disability mainstreaming process.

The year 2020 was a challenging year for us as an organisation and for persons with disabilities in general with the advent of COVID-19.

Our response to the pandemic has been swift and proactive. We have provided personal protective equipment and sanitation materials and equipment to our partners and individual beneficiaries in all our areas of operation.

We applaud the partners who have worked with us in tackling COVID-19. These are GIZ Zambia through the PLEED programme who have enabled us to procure prevention materials and invested in our IT infrastructure to enable us work from home and have back up power supply.

We have also worked with Cheshire Homes Society of Zambia supported by CBM to deliver emergency cash transfers to homes of children with disabilities in Lusaka Province and produce accessible public service information on COVID-19. We also commend SOS Children's Villages for our work in Eastern province.

DRW Team



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STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

It is our time and we are unstoppable!" exclaimed disability rights activist Sylvester Katontoka when he was asked to comment on the launch of a project to promote political participation of persons with disabilities.

In recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities to participation in political and public life, Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL), DEMO Finland and Disability Rights Watch have partnered on an innovative project to promote inclusive politics at all levels.

The project supports political parties to put in place disability inclusion policies, builds their capacity in disability mainstreaming, and supports persons with disabilities in Lusaka and Mansa to acquire vital political participation skills such as public speaking, campaign strategies and messaging. It also seeks to link persons with disabilities to mentorship opportunities from seasoned and experienced politicians.

Speaking at the launch of the project on 5th November 2020 at Sarovar Neelkanth Premiere Hotel in Lusaka Ambassador of Finland to Zambia Pirjo Suomela-Chowdhury called for increased tolerance in politics and inclusion of women and persons with disabilities across all decision-making structures in the Zambian society.

"for political processes to produce good and sustainable decisions, legislation and services that take into account society as a whole person with disabilities must be included in political decision making, in one way or the other"

She further stated that persons with disabilities are also able to bring to the table their specific experiences that are necessary for decision making to take disability into account.

Serah Brotherton, a prominent disability activist with disability lived experience, who took the Electoral Commission of Zambia to court in 20 for running a discriminatory electoral process described the launch of the project as timely and very

important for persons with disabilities in their quest to enjoy their fundamental human rights.

She is also an executive member of the recently launched Movement for Democratic Change.

She stressed that the time is now for persons with disabilities to claim their right to participate in leadership and decision-making processes and an opportunity to redeem themselves from historical marginalization.

"we do not seek inclusion in political leadership merely to take up or fulfil a requirement, but to deliver to the expectations of the people that will put us in office. This project is therefore the necessary vehicle that we need to drive us to our destination of political leadership" she said.

Speaking for DEMO Finland through a pre-recorded video, chairperson of demo Finland Sebastian Tynkkynen said that functioning democracy is founded on the principle of equal opportunities and every citizen has a right to participate in politics as a voter candidate or as an elected representative.

He said it is important to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life because it helps

"there was need to support the political participation of women and persons with disabilities as the 2021 general elections draw near"

curb the challenges and stereotypes, they face.

"Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in political, public and social life is crucial also in the challenges of stereotypes and segregation faced by them." he said

He further stated that the project serves as an excellent continuation for the long-term collaboration of demo Finland and the Zambia national women's Lobby. He also hailed Disability Rights Watch as an expert in the implementation of the programme.

Speaking on behalf of government, Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) Director General Julien Mwape said government is committed to ensuring improved access and participation of persons with disabilities across the social, economic and political strata.

She stated that it was gratifying to see civil society organisations like ZNWL and DRW

supplementing government's efforts by working with men and women with disabilities so that they confidently pursue political leadership and effectively participate in political and public affairs at different levels.

Ms Mwape also called on the media to take interest in reporting on the rights of persons with disabilities as this will help change the negative attitudes in the communities.

"Journalist play a huge role in changing public opinions and agenda setting. Their ability tell positive stories of persons with disabilities can go a long way in assuring their rights and changing attitudinal barriers." she said.

Disability Rights Watch Board Chairperson Mr Joseph S Munsanje told the meeting that the project aims to influence the political participation of persons with disabilities by positively influencing cultural and attitudinal barriers through increasing knowledge and essential skills of persons with disabilities and political parties.

"There is need to remove barriers in society and empower persons with disabilities so that they can do self-advocacy because the absence of persons with disabilities in politics equals to their voices not being heard" he said

Speaking at the same event, Zambia National Women's Lobby Board Chairperson Beauty Katebe said the launch of the project was timely because there was need to support the political participation of women and persons with disabilities as the 2021 general elections draw near.

In a bid to appreciate the existing gaps between men and women in politics, Ms Katebe shared the statistics indicating the participation of women in politics in the country by stating that the number of female members of parliament and councillors has been steadily reducing from the initial number elected during the 2016 general elections.

She expressed confidence that the project will seek to address some of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities adding that this will be done through capacity development, mentorship programmes and the creation of a network for men and women with disabilities.

The same project was also launched in Mansa on 20th November 2020. The event was attended by the provincial permanent secretary, representative from the ministry of community development and social services.

Also, in attendance was representatives of political parties, the District Commissioner, District Provincial Officer, International Labour Organisations, Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities and other stakeholders.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CELEBRATE THEIR DAY

Zambia joined the rest of the world in commemorating International Day of persons with Disabilities. The commemorations were held in different parts of the country.

Minister of Community Development and Social Services Hon Kampamba Mulenga Chewe led commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) that was commemorated on 3rd December 2020 in Lusaka.

The minister said government will ensure that all national policies, plans and legislation mainstream disability issues in order to enable persons with disabilities to fully participate in all activities and decision-making processes on the COVID-19 response and recovery plan.

"My government will ensure that national policies and plans mainstream disability as enshrined in the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCPRD), the persons with disabilities Act no.6 of 2012 and the national policy on disability. This will enable persons with disabilities to participate in all activities and decision-making processes in the COVID-19 response and recovery plan." She said

She further uploaded persons with disabilities who participated in this important event and urged them to always take centre stage in the campaign for the equality and dignity they deserve.

In Choma the event was held at the Provincial Administration and officiated by Deputy Permanent Secretary Mr. Kennedy Mubanga. The commemorations were also graced by the Mayor and the Choma District Commissioner.

Mr Mubanga condemned all manner of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

"Discriminating against persons with disabilities is inhuman and needs to be condemned in the strongest terms," he said

He added that persons with disabilities were vulnerable to discrimination and it was important for the community to understand that persons with disabilities have the potential to excel in an enabling environment.

Mr Mubanga further stated that disability inclusion is essential

**"persons with disabilities
need to be recognised
included in the fight
against Covid-19 because
this is a step towards
upholding human rights."**

human rights, sustainable development and peace.

He stressed that it is also central to the promise of the 2020 agenda for sustainable development and the 7th national development plan to leave no one behind adding that the commitment to realising the rights of persons with disabilities is not only a matter of justice but an investment as well.

"The aim of this day is to promote the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life," he said.

He further stated that the coming of the novel corona virus put the lives of persons with disabilities at risk as they were more



**Minister of Community Development and Social Services
Kampamba Mulenga Chewe giving a speech at the IDPD in Lusaka**

vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.

He further called on persons in the health sector to attend to persons with disabilities and desist from discrimination on persons with disabilities when they want to access different services including sexual reproductive health.

"sexual reproductive health information is meant for all human beings so when you the people in charge discriminate against persons with disabilities you are signing their death warrant." He said

ZAPD Southern province provincial coordinator Ruth Litebele called for the need to recognise disability inclusion as an important element in upholding human rights especially in the fight against Covid-19.

"persons with disabilities need to be recognised included in the fight against Covid-19 because this is a step towards upholding human rights." She said

And speaking at the same event, Disability Rights Watch Board Chairperson Joseph S Munsanje disclosed that a major focus of the day is practical action to mainstream disability in all aspects of development as well as to further the participation of persons with disabilities in social life and development on the basis of equality.

And a person with a disability thanked ZAPD and DRW stating that it was a great platform given to persons with disabilities as it would help boost the confidence of persons with disabilities.

"I would like to thank you sincerely for the platform because it reminds us that we as persons with disabilities are counted."

The 2020 theme was building back better through a disability inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID 19 world.

IN PICTURES

Launch of strengthening political participation of persons with disabilities project in Mansa



Southern province provincial symposium in Choma



Political party training workshop in Lusaka





**International day of
persons with Disabilities
celebrations in Choma**



DRW BOARD EXECUTIVE MEMBERS



**JOSEPH MUNSANJE
BOARD CHAIRPERSON**



**GRACE NKHUWA
VICE CHAIRPERSON**



**SYLVESTER KATONTOKA
BOARD MEMBER**



**DAVID MUKWASA
BOARD MEMBER**



**MAUREEN TRESHA
BOARD MEMBER**



**GERTRUDE KAPULISA
BOARD MEMBER**



**BELIA MULENGA
BOARD MEMBER**

DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVISTS TAKE MENTAL HEALTH ACT TO COURT

The Mental Health Users Network of Zambia (MHUNZA) and Disability Rights Watch (DRW) have asked the Lusaka High Court to nullify Section 4 of the Mental Health Act, 2019.

The two organisations on 27th November 2019 launched a constitutional petition against the State in the High Court at Lusaka contesting the constitutionality of Section 4 of the Mental Health Act of 2019 which they allege infringes on the rights of persons with mental disabilities.

In particular, the Petitioners Sylvester Katontoka and Waliuya Wamundila have argued that their rights and the rights of all persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities as protected by Articles 11 (a), 13 (1), 19 (1) and 23 (1) of the Constitution of Zambia ("the Constitution") are violated by section 4 of the Mental Health Act, No 6 of 2019 ("The Mental Health Act").

The Petitioners have alleged that Section 4(1) of the Mental Health Act restricts the universal right to enjoy one's legal capacity and deprives persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities of legal capacity which is the right to make decisions on an equal basis with others.

The Petitioners therefore seek from the High Court for an order to determine and declare that section 4 of the Mental Health Act contravenes the rights of persons with mental disabilities to personal liberty,

The Petitioners have further informed the Court that Section 4(2) of the Mental Health Act conflates mental capacity with legal capacity, instead of protecting and enabling the inherent right to legal capacity. It is also their considered view that Section 4(2) permits a person deprived of their legal capacity to be denied the



Petitioners after their Court Appearance in Lusaka

right to perform any function that requires legal capacity.

The Petitioners further allege that Section 4(5) of the Mental Health Act empowers courts to legally disqualify persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities from enjoying their legal capacity under all laws in the Republic of Zambia.

The Petitioners informed the Court that the Act fails to provide for adequate measures to provide the support that persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities may require in order to enjoy their right to exercise their legal capacity on an equal basis with others.

The Petitioners therefore seek from the High Court for an order to determine and declare that section 4 of the Mental Health Act contravenes the rights of persons with mental disabilities to personal liberty, security of person and protection of the law as guaranteed by Articles 11 (a) and 13 (1) of the Constitution and therefore should be declared null and void.

The Petitioners have further asked the High Court to determine and declare that section 4 of the Mental Health Act is discriminatory in its effect and contravenes the persons with mental disabilities right to protection from discrimination as guaranteed by Article 23 (1) of the Constitution and therefore is null and void.

The first hearing of the trial was on 30th November 2020 and the second hearing is slated for 25th January 2021

DRW AND ZAPD CONVENE FIRST EVER SOUTHERN PROVINCE DISABILITY INCLUSION SUMMIT



Stakeholders pose for a photo after Disability inclusion summit

On 2nd December, 2020, the first ever provincial disability symposium was held in Choma Southern province.

The event was attended by various stakeholders who among them included civil society organisations, government officials, Disabled Persons Organisations, Disability Rights Watch board, management and staff, ZAPD among others.

Speaking at the summit, Southern Province Permanent Secretary Mwangala Liomba called on persons with disabilities to advocate for their rights on issues that would improve their wellbeing and demonstrate why they are important stakeholders in decision making in the country.

In a speech read on his behalf by Choma District Commissioner Protatia Mulenga, the permanent secretary called on persons with disabilities and other stakeholders to take advantage of platforms such as the symposium by emphasising the need for an inclusive

and enabling environment.

"there is need to utilise events such as the symposium which will help create an enabling environment and accessible to education, health and many other rights enshrined in the constitution." He said

Speaking at the same event, Disability Rights Watch Director Wamundila Waliuya emphasised the importance of inclusion and the need to continue promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

"We believe in inclusion and act on inclusion as is demonstrated through our litigation work that has helped open doors for persons with disabilities."

He stated that persons with disabilities need to be given their full rights as outlined in the UNCRPD. He also stressed on the need to build capacity of persons with disabilities so that they can be able to advocate for their rights.

Disability Rights Watch Vice Chairperson Grace Nkhuwa addressed the symposium with a clarion call for all provincial stakeholders to effectively plan and budget for disability inclusion services in all their programmes and activities. She said the objectives of the summit included orienting provincial administration and provincial government department heads to the rights of persons with disabilities as

enshrined in domestic and international law including the mental health act.

She added that introducing government heads of departments and staff to disability inclusion and best practices is pivotal in the process of integrating the rights of persons with disabilities in the existing laws and policies.

"This will come in handy when it comes to championing a rights-based approach in all public policies and laws in Zambia," she said.

She added that it was an honour for Disability Rights watch to facilitate the platform with the support of the Norwegian Association of Disabled.

And ZAPD Provincial Coordinator Ruth Litebele said the symposium served as an eye opener to disability mainstreaming.

She hoped that the event would be an annual event that will see a lot of change in the disability sector and commended disability rights watch for the support rendered adding that it would go a long way.

"The event is a testimony to many as an eye opener and my hope is that it will be an annual event so that we continue fostering change in the disability sector. I also wish to thank Disability Rights Watch for the tremendous support." She said

"Southern Province Permanent Secretary Mwangala Liomba called on persons with disabilities to advocate for their rights on issues that would improve their wellbeing"

IMPACT STORY**VINCENT AND CHIPEGO GO BACK TO SCHOOL**

Vincent and Chipego both have physical disabilities; they were enrolled at one of the schools in Kazungula District in Southern Province. While in school one of the teachers told them to stop attending classes due to the suspicion that they had intellectual disability and that it was difficult for them to be taught.

When this happened, both parents reported the matter to the paralegal desk in the district. When the paralegal made the follow up with the cases the head teacher of the school stated that the two were difficult to teach and that they needed to undergo a medical assessment to check their intellectual ability.

As a result, Vincent and Chipego had to stop school completely and the parents had lost hope for them to go back to school. The matter was referred to the DRW paralegal officer in Livingstone to take it up.

An awareness discussion was held on the importance of education to children with disabilities.

A follow up was made on the issue, the paralegal officer had a private talk with the father to the boy who later met with the school head teacher. After the Officers met with the respective parents to the two children, the school was visited to get their side of the story.

An awareness discussion was held on the importance of education to children with disabilities. The officers further added that Persons with disabilities should be given opportunities to learn in schools on an equal basis with others without any form of discrimination, and that it is the right of each and every child to attend school.

A conclusion was made that Vincent and Chipego should report back to school. It was also agreed

that the school will ensure that children with disabilities who are not yet in school are enrolled. Upon hearing the news, the father to the boy was elated and thanked the DRW team for making it possible for his children to go back to school. The man commended the work that DRW been doing in the district and shared the news with some of the community members who faced similar challenges. A move which has elated members of the community hence making them have more confidence in the works the paralegal case workers have done in the district.

**DISABILITY RIGHTS WATCH
DIRECTOR ENCOURAGES
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO
ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN
POLITICS.**

DRW Director Wamundila Waliuya has called on persons with disabilities to take an active role in politics.

He has explained that it is prudent for persons with disabilities to take part in the political and public life because it is their civic right.

Speaking shortly after registering as a voter at Mansa civic centre, Mr Waliuya said it is important for persons with disabilities to take interest in politics if they are not disenfranchised themselves.

Mr Waliuya also called on political parties to include persons with disabilities in their political systems starting from the grassroot up to national level.

And Mr Waliuya called on persons with disabilities to exhibit the same zeal during the voting exercise in 2021.

MAKING INCLUSIVE TERTIARY EDUCATION POSSIBLE – THE STORY OF BENNEDITTA CHIMANGA

Benneditta Chimanga is a visually impaired young lady with a lot of dreams and a bright future ahead of her. She is currently a student at David Livingstone Teachers Training College in Livingstone.

Before her enrolment at the institution, she had a lot of trouble to secure a place to pursue her studies at DALICE. She then came to learn about Disability Rights Watch through her friend and decided to visit the office to seek help.

"I had no idea about the existence of Disability Rights Watch until a friend of mine who also happens to be a beneficiary of the organisation brought it to my attention, she said.

Benneditta then decided to take her situation to the paralegal officers who visited the Institution and began the negotiation process for her to be offered a place to pursue her studies.

After a number of meetings with the Institution authorities, Benneditta was successfully accepted at the institution and is currently pursuing her studies in English and Religious Education.

She has also been provided with accommodation in school which has made mobility easy. She expressed gratitude for the help rendered to her by the disability rights watch team and urged DRW to continue providing help to all persons with disabilities to acquire a better education in the country.

"I am very grateful to Disability Rights Watch for the help rendered to me. Please continue helping all the persons with disabilities in need especially those who need a better education." She said

A follow up phone call was made on 19 February, 2020 to the client to find out how she is coping and she expressed happiness and mentioned that the students and lecturers have been very helpful to her.

This case has made an impact in the district in such a way that other persons with disabilities and parents with children with disabilities also visit the office to seek help for their children to be enrolled in school.

DRW AND PARTNERS STEP UP COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR LUSAKA PROVINCE

As the corona virus (COVID-19) continues to live among us, efforts are being made to combat the virus by creating awareness.

In a bid to compliment this cause, DRW has partnered with Cheshire Homes Society of Zambia and other organisations from the disability sector on a 2-year COVID-19 response project supported by CBM International whose objective is to contribute to the implementation of an inclusive

long-term sustainable strategy. The project is a high impact intervention that combines technical support to key institutions in the response and also avails organizations of persons with disabilities the opportunity to directly attend to the pressing needs of persons with disabilities in the community. The project seeks to ensure the increased participation of persons with disabilities in sensitizing communities on COVID-19 and

pandemic related work in 3 districts namely Lusaka, Kafue and Chongwe by mid-2021.

Other partners include, Action Reach Zambia (AR); Zambia Agency For Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD); Zambia Association for Parents of Children with Disabilities (ZAPCD), Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD) among others.

CHADIZA BENEFITS FROM COVID 19 IEC MATERIALS

On 5th August, 2020, Disability Rights Watch made a donation of COVID 19 prevention and information materials to the Provincial Administration targeted at Chipata and Chadiza Districts.

The support came under the disability inclusion project targeting children with disabilities implemented with SOS Children's Villages and Archie Hinchcliffe Disability Intervention with funding support from the European Union and Austria Development Cooperation.

The donation consisted of over one thousand bottles of branded hand wash, 200 reusable face masks and 5-foot press hand wash facilities.

"I have never cared about washing my hands and if I say I had ever told my son to be washing hands then I will be lying because as a family we just wash hands when we are about to eat"

Beneficiaries under the Ana Atukuke project in Chadidza District were targeted with COVID-19 prevention and information materials consisting of 12 cases of hand wash soap, infrared thermometer, 1-foot press stand, 3 ordinary stands and assorted Information Education and Communication (I.E.C) materials.

The District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) office guided the Ana – Atukuke project implementation team on the schools with more learners with disabilities to target in the distribution of COVID-19 prevention materials. During the period of distribution, the Paralegal Officer in each meeting began by first raising

awareness to the beneficiaries on COVID-19. The issues emphasized on were the symptoms of COVID-19 and also the guide lines given by the Ministry of Health.

A simple demonstration on how hands should be washed was done at each distribution point. The paralegal officer urged the parents to take extra care of the children with disabilities during the COVID 19 pandemic by stating that they were more vulnerable as they depend on physical contact with care givers.

And headman Chiguduli from Chamandala ward said he was grateful for the gesture.

" I appreciate Ana- Atukuke project for providing us with hand wash soap at least it will encourage us to be washing hands." The headman said

He also appreciated the IEC materials on COVID-19 his ward received adding that the materials will act as a reminder on COVID 19.

And one of the parents who have a child with intellectual disability also thanked Ana – Atukuke project for raising awareness on the pandemic.

"I have never cared about washing my hands and if I say I had ever told my son to be washing hands then I will be lying because as a family we just wash hands when we are about to eat or when one is from answering the call of nature. He said

Other items donated included 10 ordinary hand wash stands, four infrared thermometers, over 500 bottles of sanitisers, over 2000 assorted information education communication materials and paid for awareness raising radio programmes. The support is made available through support of the European Union and Austrian Development Cooperation.

YOUTHS WITH DISABILITIES FORM SELF ADVOCACY ORGANISATION

Youth in Action for Disability Inclusion in Zambia (YADIZ) is a youth led organisation which came into existence in October 2019 and was registered on 20th march 2020 under Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD).

The organisation traces its roots from the Zambia Association for Parents and Children with Disabilities in Zambia (ZAPCD) with support of Disability Rights Watch and Cheshire Homes Society of Zambia through which its founders accessed training on disability rights.

The aim of the YADIZ is to

promote inclusion for children and youths with disabilities in all spheres of life such as physical, political, social and cultural life.

The organisation founder Ian Banda said the coming of YADIZ is key because it is youth led and will help in the promotion of disability rights in Zambia.

"We haven't had a youth led disability organisation for some time, this is a starting point because youths have a fresh mind so am quite confident that a difference will be made in the disability movement because most of the disabled persons organisations do not really focus

on the youths." Mr Banda said

Mr Banda has commended Disability Rights Watch for the support rendered through capacity building and mentorship since 2013 when he began his advocacy work.

He further commended Disability Rights Watch for intervening on legal issues such as child abuse where success has been scored.

YADIZ has been hired by Leonard Cheshire to undertake a national impact study on the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of youths with disabilities.

DRW ATTENDS NATIONAL DISABILITY SYMPOSIUM

Disability mainstreaming and inclusion play a vital role in stimulating inclusive development where persons with disabilities become active participants and beneficiaries from the process of development.

DRW was invited to a national disability symposium convened by the Ministry of Community Development Social Services held in Ndola where mainstreaming and inclusion was the core of the meeting.

The focus was on engagement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to engage in research on independent living.

DRW Director Wamundila Waliuya stated that the symposium birthed quite a number of recommendations such as the need to establish a support fund that would be given to ZAPD for persons with disabilities who want to engage in research and Organisations of persons with

disabilities must have their capacities built.

The other issue raised was on the relevance of disability organisations in inclusive development as well as the need for government to engage persons with disabilities whenever they are developing laws, policies and strategic plans the recommendations made were that government should adopt CBID manuals that were developed at the CBR project by ensuring that all policies and laws include issues of person with disabilities.

He added that mainstreaming was one step towards addressing the barriers in the environment and in attitudes.

Mr Waliuya said all this is achievable if there is political will and budgetary allocations are increased to every ministry to ensure that they implement what they are responsible for.

DEVELOPMENT OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS TO THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY ACT KEY

Disability Rights Watch has called on the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to expedite the process of enacting the statutory instruments which are going to operationalise the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012.

Disability Rights Watch Director Wamundila Waliuya said the Statutory instruments which have been developed and validated by Persons with Disabilities and other stake holders are meant to among other objectives operationalise part 5 of the Persons with

Disabilities Act on education.

Mr Waliuya explained that inclusive education is attainable and school authorities have a huge role to play and must be compelled to ensure that the schools are accessible.

The other statutory instrument is on health which provides for free medical care while considering the existing national insurance scheme.

He added that the other SI on employment is meant to ensure that the work place is accessible to persons with disabilities who need assistive devices while the other one is

on accessibility of all public facilities such as roads.

He further explained that the statutory instruments are vital to the disability sector and urged the Ministry of Community Development to engage all the ministries needed to achieve this cause.

"The statutory instruments are essential and it is important for the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to ensure that they engage other ministries such as health, education and transport." He said



Persons with Disabilities at the launch of a covid19 response project in Kafue

DISABILITY RIGHTS WATCH AND ENHANCING SUSTAINABILITY OF PARALEGAL SERVICES

DRW's main objective is to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities through capacity building of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and other civil society organisations as well as provision of paralegal services on cases involving disability rights issues, strategic advocacy and public interest litigation towards the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its domesticating legislation in Zambia.

In Southern Province, DRW is working in partnership with a number of CSOs namely the Livingstone Network of Disabled People's Organisations, CBR Programme of Southern Province and Kocebuka Community Foundation.

The Livingstone Network of Disabled People's Organisations advocate for the inclusion of persons with

“DRW has gone through three phases under the change project supported under the PLEED programme aimed at strengthening the delivery of paralegal services to persons with disabilities”

disabilities in community-based development. They are a network of six Disabled People's Organisations representing all categories of persons with disabilities.

CBR Programme of Southern Province run community-based



DRW Staff and board members after monitoring the paralegal desk in livingstone

rehabilitation programmes in Livingstone, Kazungula and Zimba. The programme supports rehabilitation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community using a multi-stakeholder approach with the full partnership of government.

Kocebuka Community Foundation works on HIV/AIDS awareness and access to inclusive education for children with disabilities.

Since June 2015, DRW has been working in collaboration with 6 members of staff of the named CSOs based in Livingstone, Kazungula and Zimba districts in Southern province. The members of staff work from their respective CSOs and operate as paralegals on a part-time basis, identifying and handling cases involving disability rights issues, and referring cases that require further support and possible legal intervention to DRW paralegal officer or to DRW programmes coordinator in Lusaka.

DRW has gone through three phases under the change project supported under the PLEED programme aimed at strengthening the delivery of

paralegal services to persons with disabilities and their families and raising awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities and drawing the attention of government to their duties and responsibilities. The paralegals have all undergone training at the prescribed levels of Level 2 and Level 3 and will be accredited to the Legal Aid Board once the proposed amendments to the Legal Aid Act come into effect.

In addition, DRW has been sharing its work with the Provincial Coordinator of the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) and has had good engagements with the ZAPD districts offices in the province with the view of enhancing linkages for clients who experience discrimination in access to services and most importantly for information sharing and learning.

Disability Rights Watch enjoys a strategic position with regards to providing technical support to other organisations in the area of disability inclusion and mainstreaming of disability in access to justice programmes. Going forward, DRW seeks to explore ways to build up on its model in Southern Province and extend it to Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces.

OPDs SUBMIT THE SHADOW REPORT TO THE UNCRPD COMMITTEE

Disability organizations made a submission to the UNCRPD committee on progress made by the government of Zambia in the implementation of the UNCRPD on 7th Sept, 2020 virtually at Mulungushi International Conference Center.

The govt of Zambia submitted her state report in 2017 indicating what has been done and the measures put in place to ensure full implementation of the UNCRPD. As a requirement, disability organizations under the DRIM Team spear headed by Disability Rights Watch (DRW) chaired by the Zambia Federation of Disability Organizations (ZAFOD) went around the country to get a true picture on the ground from persons with disabilities.

The team conducted provincial consultations in Lusaka, Southern, Western, Eastern, Central, North-western, Luapula and Copperbelt provinces.

The Albinism Foundation of Zambia representing persons with Albinism told the UNCRPD committee that lives of persons with albinism are at risk of ritual killings as their body parts are perceived to make one rich.

AFZ project Manager Bidon Chandipo called for need to put in place stringent measures to help curb the vice.

"it is a pity that lives of persons with albinism continue to be at a greater risk of ritual killings, there is need to put in place



ODPs representatives during Oral Virtual submission to the UNCRPD Committee 7th Sept, 2020

strict measures to bring this to an end." He said

The Mental Health Users Network of Zambia (MHUNZA) director Sylvester Katontoka appreciated the state on the enactment of the Mental Health Act of 2019 which he said will help persons with mental disabilities. They urged the government to expedite the process of establishing the

Mental Health Council.

"We wish to upload the state for the enactment of the mental health act of 2019. But we wish to call on the government to speed up the establishment of the mental health council" he said

The team further submitted that women and girls with disabilities have been left out in most of the national programs, the only programs they benefit from though with challenges are Social Cash transfer, GEWEL and FISP.

The UNCRPD committee received both the written and oral submission and indicated that they will make the action recommendations to the government to ensure persons with disabilities have full enjoyment of their rights like any other person.

"We wish to call on the government to speed up the establishment of the mental health council"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to applaud Mr. Bruce Chooma- Programme Coordinator, Mr. Rodgers Musuma - Project Officer and Miss Given Banda Communications and Advocacy Officer for ensuring that this newsletter is a success