

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2013

LIVING WITH DISABILITY & DISASTER

UNITED NATIONS



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President of FDFP
RAKESH CHAND

Speech by President of FDFP

As the world prepares to celebrate the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction with the theme: Living with Disability and Disasters on the 13th of this month we acknowledge all the work that has been done to make this year's theme a reality

Thousands for people in Fiji live with some form of disability and with increased disasters both natural and man-made; people with disabilities are

very often forgotten in disaster prevention plans or even in relief and rehabilitation strategies.

People with impairments such as vision, hearing, speech, physical and psychosocial automatically put them in a vulnerable situation due to the barriers that exist in society.

These barriers include non-accessibility of physical environments including information, poor attitudes of people that lead to stigma and

discrimination and institutional barriers that exist within our laws and policies that either directly discriminate against people with disabilities or don't exist at all.

It is important to include disability in disaster preparedness and risk management process because people with disabilities can contribute positively and be effective partners in the design and implementation process. But if for anything else, this is a human right as stated in the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD). The general principles of Non-discrimination, full and effective participation, inclusion in society, accessibility and equality of opportunity to name a few.

In our case here in Fiji, the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDFP) has developed a report and toolkit focussing on disability inclusive community based disaster risk reduction that can assist disaster stakeholders be more inclusive of persons with disabilities

We have also launched the "I DiD" (include disability in disasters) awareness campaign which is a multi-approached campaign targeting media, community outreach, and government and NGO's who work directly in disaster risk and reduction. Both initiatives are outcome of the 2 year AUSAID funded project on disability inclusive disaster risk reduction project.



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
BAN KI MOON

MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION 13 October 2013

"Persons with disabilities are the biggest untapped resource for disaster planners around the world."

These are the words of Firoz Ali Alizada, a double amputee from Afghanistan who responded to a United Nations survey which uncovered scores of stories that speak to the ingenuity and drive of persons with disabilities to manage risk from disasters.

More than one billion persons in the world live with a disability. This year's commemoration of the International Day for Disaster Reduction is an opportunity to hear Mr. Alizada's message and recognize their vital role in fostering resilience.

Unfortunately, most persons with disabilities have never participated in disaster risk management or related planning and decision making processes. They suffer disproportionately high levels of disaster-related mortality and injuries.

Early warning systems, public awareness campaigns and other responses often fail to consider the needs of persons with disabilities, putting them at an unnecessarily elevated risk and sending a harmful message of inequality.

We can change this situation by including persons with disabilities in disaster resilience initiatives and policy planning. The recent General Assembly High-level Meeting on Disability and Development recognized the urgent need for action on this issue, which is also addressed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Inclusion saves lives. And it empowers persons with disabilities to take ownership of their own safety – and that of their community.

We can already see their potential contribution in the many persons with visible and invisible disabilities around the world who already serve as volunteers and workers helping communities when disaster hits to cope and bounce back.

On the International Day for Disaster Reduction, let us resolve to do everything possible to ensure that all persons with disabilities have the highest possible levels of safety and the greatest possible chance to contribute to the overall wellbeing of society.

Let us build an inclusive world where persons with disabilities can play an even greater role as resourceful agents of change.



INCLUDE DISABILITY IN DISASTERS....

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN