

Excellencies, Heads of State,

I speak today on behalf of the International Disability Alliance and global, regional and national networks and organisations of persons with disabilities—DPOs—and with the support of our partners CBM International, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch and the Women’s Refugee Commission.

This partnership between DPOs, humanitarian and human rights organisations is crucial as the first step in a journey towards inclusive humanitarian action. Our partnership is necessary because today, we, persons with disabilities, **are being left behind**.

We are a global population of one billion, eighty per cent of whom live in developing countries and are overrepresented among those living in absolute poverty. An estimated 1 in 7 people affected by conflicts, natural disasters and displacement is a person with a disability. We have a morbidity rate 4 times higher than that of persons without disabilities.

We are being left behind.

“Leave no one behind” requires every single stakeholder to uphold the norms that safeguard humanity. The good news? We are not reinventing the wheel! The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as the International Humanitarian Laws already *tell us* what action we need to take to protect and ensure the rights and safety of persons with disabilities. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as a human rights and development framework, not only *obligates* States Parties to ensure inclusive humanitarian action—it *tells us how to do so*. And it says, **loud and clear**, that persons with disabilities **must be involved and consulted in decision-making processes that impact our lives**, from discussions with local humanitarian actors to the World Humanitarian Summit.

“**Leave no one behind**” requires all of us to work together to ensure that persons with disabilities no longer face barriers to policy-making and humanitarian structures, such as lifesaving services and relief operations and information and services before, during and after a crisis. It must be considered a core component of principled and effective humanitarian action and it will require deliberate efforts and a change in practices from the humanitarian community as a whole.

Together with States, UN agencies and civil society organisations, our partnership has developed a Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. As signatories to this Charter, we reaffirm our commitment to leave no one behind through five core principles: non-discrimination, participation, inclusive policy, inclusive response and services, and cooperation and coordination.

We, persons with disabilities, are here to work with you. We commit to share our knowledge and expertise. We ask you to join our multi-stakeholder partnership,

and endorse the Charter. Let us work together to ensure inclusive humanitarian response and finally leave no one behind.