



World Food Programme

Leaving No One Behind: Addressing the Food and Nutrition Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Crises

Side event on the margins of the Annual Session of the Executive Board

Monday, 12th June 2017, 13:30 – 14:45 Auditorium, WFP Headquarters

Light lunch is served in the Peace Garden 13:00-13:30

Context

It is estimated that 15 percent of the world's population – about one billion people – live with some form of impairment or disability. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by humanitarian emergencies and are among the most marginalized in any crisis-affected community. They face particular barriers in accessing life-saving relief and recovery support and are often denied opportunities to participate in the planning and implementation of humanitarian programs.

Following the breakdown of supportive family and community structures due to the crises, persons with disabilities often experience particular protection concerns. During evacuation or flight, persons with disabilities may be left behind by family or community members who are unable to assist them. Evidence has shown that during disasters the mortality rate of persons with disabilities can be two to four times higher than that of persons without disabilities.

Persons with disabilities are particularly exposed to targeted violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence. Women and girls with disabilities are four to ten times more likely to experience gender-based violence than women and children without disabilities. They also often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination. Therefore their empowerment and protection should be given particular attention to.

In terms of food security and malnutrition, the research indicates that malnutrition and disability are closely interrelated in many ways. A household with breadwinner with disability is often more vulnerable to shocks and has less capacity to cope with food crises. Households with members with disabilities are also more likely to suffer from food insecurity due to more constrained economic resources, limited working opportunities, extra demands for health services and time spent on care work.

Disability can lead to malnutrition, due to decreased nutrient intake, increased nutrient loss, and need for increased nutrients. Countries with high levels of malnutrition and nutrient deficiency often also report higher rates of disability and developmental delays. Infants and young children who are underweight and stunted as a result of malnutrition are also more likely to screen positive for disability. Children with disability are consistently reported to have high incidence of malnutrition, stunting, and wasting.

In some cases, malnutrition may be a result of negative attitudes and discrimination, as families or communities may place a lower status on a disabled person and prioritize nutrition and health services for the non-disabled. In terms of community-based emergency food and nutrition programmes, persons with disabilities may experience obstacles in registering for the programmes or accessing nutrition centers, due to the inaccessibility of buildings and locations, cost of transportation and lack of information.

Objectives

This side-event aims to provide an opportunity to highlight and discuss ways to better address specific challenges faced by persons with disabilities in times of crisis and ensure a proper response to their needs and respect for their rights in the context of food assistance and nutrition programming. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the first year anniversary of the Charter on inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The specific objectives of this high-level side-event are the following:

- Raise awareness on the Charter on inclusion of persons with disabilities and promote accountability to persons with disabilities in humanitarian emergencies.
- Discuss the relevance of the Charter to WFP's policy and operational work and identify key strategies to ensure non-discrimination, inclusive policy, response and services, and participation of persons with disabilities in all phases of humanitarian action.
- Highlight protection issues related to persons with disabilities in humanitarian emergencies and measures required to ensure their safety and protection in the context of food and nutrition programmes, with a special focus on women and girls with disabilities.
- Share best practices and lessons learnt from the field concerning the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

Agenda

Before the event, lunch will be served at the Peace Garden, starting at 13:00.

The event will be chaired by **Mr Amir Abdullah, Deputy Executive Director, WFP.**

Finland, Australia, Italy, Uganda, WFP, Handicap International and Pacific Disability Forum will participate in the panel and share their experience and views (5 minutes each) with the following representatives:

Setting the Scene: The purpose of the Charter of the Inclusion of People with Disabilities

- Ms Elina Kalkku, Under-Secretary of State, Department of Development Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Promoting the rights of people with disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction

- Mr Steve Scott, Assistant Secretary of the Humanitarian Response Branch, Australia

Addressing the rights of people with disabilities in national humanitarian policies

- Mr Andrea Senatori, Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Fragile States, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Best Practices in addressing the needs of people with disabilities in the context of refugee crisis

- Ambassador Dr. Mumtaz Kassam, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Uganda in Rome

Disability inclusive assistance - lessons learnt from the Cyclone Pam

- Ms Nelly Caleb, National Coordinator of Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association of Vanuatu and Co-chair of the Pacific Disability Forum

Addressing the right of people with disability – the way forward

- Ms Anna Hery, Director of Advocacy and Institutional Relations, Handicap International

Video-message from UNICEF Executive Board President

- Ambassador Walton Aubrey Webson of Antigua and Barbuda

After the statements, there will be remarks and music by Signmark the Finnish Goodwill Ambassador for Disability. The performance starts around 14:25.