MONITORING PARTICIPATION OF ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (OPDs) IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

Perceptions from OPDs of Africa
(based on data from the 1st IDA Global Survey)

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Joseph Tito St. Kirkos Sub-City, Woreda 08,
Nega City Mall 5th Floor 511
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-mail: africandisabilityforum@gmail.com
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Foreword by African Disability Forum (ADF)

This baseline report sheds light on the perceptions of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in Africa concerning their inclusion in development programs and policies. It presents results and draws conclusions from the first IDA Global Survey on OPD participation in development programs and policies, the first-ever global survey led by OPDs on their participation in decision-making. The IDA Global Survey is a collective initiative developed by IDA and its members, in collaboration with the Assisting Living and Learning Institute of Maynooth University, Ireland, to take the pulse of OPD participation globally and monitor progress in realizing CRPD Article 4.3. This report complements the general report from the IDA Global Survey and focuses on findings for Africa.

Based on regional-specific analysis from the IDA Global Survey, this report contributes to understanding African OPDs’ access to decision making processes on local, national, regional and global levels. It analyses to which extent they contribute to the work of their governments, the United Nations (UN) and funding agencies. It also shows to what extent persons with disabilities themselves impact decisions that affect their own lives, in the context of the “nothing about us without us” motto of the Disability Rights Movement.

The IDA Global Survey is an attempt to turn Articles 4.3 and 32 of the CRPD into action. Article 4.3 of the CRPD legally anchors the obligation for States to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organisations. This obligation applies at all levels, in all areas that directly or indirectly impact the rights of persons with disabilities and across all decision-making mechanisms. This also applies to international cooperation, which should be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. The CRPD stresses the importance of OPDs as representative organisations and intermediary bodies between policy makers and persons with disabilities.

While participation is a two-way process, requiring initiative from both OPDs themselves and decision makers, supportive pre-conditions for participation need to be put in place not least from the side of decision makers, to guarantee meaningful participation of OPDs. The IDA Global Survey aims to capture to what extent OPD participation is meaningful, across levels (from local to international), across sectors (from health to education, disaster risk management, etc) and across stages of the project cycle (from planning to monitoring and evaluation). It helps in generating more robust evidence and learning on what works and what gaps hinder meaningful participation. Whereas this report shows that OPD participation is overall increasing, barriers to participation are, however, prevailing at the same time and much progress can still be made.

African Disability Forum, April 2021.
Acknowledgements

ADF wishes to thank all representatives of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), IDA members, their members and beyond, who took interest and dedicated their time to respond to the first IDA Global Survey on OPD participation in development programs and policies (Dec 2018). This report provides a picture of Africa OPDs’ perceptions of their participation. Our recognition and appreciation also go to their tireless efforts, as OPDs; to advance the rights of persons with disabilities by representing their unique views and ensuring they inform participatory and inclusive decision-making processes. Nothing about us without us!

The analysis of the data collected through the first IDA Global Survey was done in partnership with the Assisting Living and Learning (ALL) Institute, Maynooth University, Ireland. ADF is particularly thankful to Rebecca Daniel (PhD student at Maynooth University), Ronald Kasule (IDA Global Survey Programme Fellow) and Liz Ombati (ADF OPD Engagement Officer) for their technical assistance and writing of this report. IDA and ADF also wish to thank Dr. Joanne McVeigh, Prof. Malcolm MacLachlan, Dr. Delia Ferri (Maynooth University/ ALL Institute), Alexandre Cote (Centre for Inclusive Policy), Ailis Hardy (Inclusion International), as well as Dr. Hasheem Mannan and Iva Sokolovaska for their valuable contributions to the first IDA Global survey report.

ADF and IDA also wish to extend their gratitude to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Inclusive Futures programme funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, who provided financial support for this analysis focused on responses from African OPDs. The content of this report is the responsibility of ADF and its contributing partners and does not necessarily reflect the views of financial partners.

Special thanks and appreciation go to all those African OPD respondents to the Global Survey who took time to respond to the survey and, hence, helped to make this region-specific report come true. Their efforts and tireless contribution to decision-making processes on local, national, regional and global levels are the key to meaningful participation.
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<td>ALL</td>
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1 Background

1.1 A global momentum towards ‘disability inclusion’

Participation of citizens is a fundamental principle of democratic societies. It supports good governance and social accountability\(^1\), by allowing people to influence and exert control over decisions that affect their lives. Yet due to attitudinal, legal, physical, economic, social and communication barriers to their participation in society, persons with disabilities are very often left out of decision-making processes and decisions are made on their behalf. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from decision-making processes perpetuates and exacerbates their exclusion from all areas of society. When their perspectives are systematically ignored, it leads to public policies and programmes that are not responsive, not effective and continue to hinder their rights.

The disability rights movement demanded and took a very active part in negotiating and drafting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). As a result of the influence and decisive role played by persons with disabilities in developing the text of this treaty, the CRPD enshrines the effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities at its core. In particular, Article 4.3 of the CRPD legally anchors the obligation for States to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organisations. This obligation applies at all levels (local, national, regional, international), in all areas that directly or indirectly impact the rights of persons with disabilities and across all decision-making mechanisms. This also applies to international cooperation, which should be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities (as recalled by CRPD Article 32). The CRPD also stresses the importance of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs\(^2\)) as representative organisations and intermediary bodies between policy makers and persons with disabilities, who bring a unique perspective and represent views of persons with disabilities.

Since the adoption of the CRPD, major changes have been secured in terms of how persons with disabilities are viewed and considered in societies and in generating new commitments to include them, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, or through the adoption of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). While this global momentum is very positive, there is a significant risk that well-intended pledges may result in financing actions and programmes that contravene or only partially uphold the CRPD and/or investments in strategies that perpetuate negative stereotyping and discrimination. Participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations is therefore essential to guide reforms and transformations in order to translate inclusion into reality.

\(^1\) A/HRC/31/62, para. 13.

\(^2\) The questionnaire used Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) and respondents also use this terminology. The terminology Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), preferred by IDA and used by the CRPD Committee, is used across the report except when directly quoting respondents or sections of the original questionnaire.
1.2 A momentum for OPD participation in Africa

The momentum to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in development programmes and policies has also improved steadily in Africa.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU) declared 1999-2009 as an African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (ADPD). This was done with a call to International Organisations and non-governmental communities of Africa – including OPDs, social partnerships, and other Civil Society Organisations –, as well as in cooperation with member States and Governments of the AU, to promote awareness and commitment to full participation, equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities in Africa. The AU strategically advocates for the ratification and implementation of the CRPD and the monitoring of different protocols relating to the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa which builds on the spirit of the CRPD but contextualized in an African setting.

Based on the review of the evaluation report from the African Union Commission (AUC) regarding the status of implementation of the Continental Plan of Action (CPoA) for the ADPD; the AU Conference of Ministers in Charge of Social Development observed that the activities and efforts made during the ADPD did not have satisfactory impact on the rights, participation, and creation of opportunities for persons with disabilities in Africa. The Ministers, therefore, decided to extend the ADPD from 2010 to 2019, with a new advocacy oriented CPoA for the implementation of policies related to disability in disaster management, refugees and strategies for repatriation and resettlement.

The ADPD is now replaced by the AU Disability Strategic Framework, adopted by the Third Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment that took place in 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It constitutes policy direction expected to strengthen Africa’s inclusive and sustainable development by providing strategic guidance for disability mainstreaming on the African continent to support the AU Agenda 2063’s aspiration of a high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

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3 The Executive Council of the African Union, meeting at Durban (9-10 July 2002), endorsed the "Plan of Action for the African Decade of People with Disabilities" in its regulation no. 7, "African Decade of Disabled Persons".


7 AïdaSarr and Kudakwashe Dube. Second African Decade of Persons with Disabilities

8 ChataikaTsitsi. Supra footnote n.5

9 Ibid
disabilities\textsuperscript{10}. The AU Disability Strategic Framework formulates, amongst others, “Participatory Development and Local Governance” as well as “Engaged and Empowered Youth and Children” as priority areas to reach the strategy’s goals\textsuperscript{11}.

The African Disability Forum (ADF) with support from the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and its members has also been engaged in advocacy and rights monitoring processes on the implementation of SDGs to ensure that they include all people with disabilities. For the 2020 regional report for Africa, ADF prioritized the rights of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the SDGs\textsuperscript{12}. This was planned to coincide with ongoing regional processes of reviewing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) to advance women’s rights through the Beijing + 25 review, to monitor progress and outcomes of the BPfA in Africa over the past 25 years\textsuperscript{13}. With a particular focus on how SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8 and 17 are implemented in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Mali and Niger, the 2020 regional report for Africa highlights gaps and obstacles in the implementation of these five SDGs for women and girls with disabilities. The report also recommends reforms and measures required to ensure that all women and girls with disabilities in respective countries are able to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others\textsuperscript{14}. This includes recommendations for stronger engagement with OPDs, including women with disabilities’ organizations, as OPD engagement is a key condition and support to ensure that the SDGs effectively lead no persons with disability behind.

1.3 Why participation of persons with disabilities matters in Africa’s development programmes and policies

The African Union has been promoting the ratification and implementation of the CRPD among member states. Out of the fifty-five (55) AU member states, forty-nine (49) have already ratified the CRPD\textsuperscript{15}. Twenty-three (23) member States have presented their implementation status reports to the CRPD committee\textsuperscript{16}.

The process of the ratification, implementation, and monitoring of the CRPD, coupled with the “leave no one behind” principle of the global development Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable

\textsuperscript{10} African Union Disability Inclusion: Guidelines for Youth Exchange
\textsuperscript{11} AU Disability Strategic Framework
\textsuperscript{14} Forum African des PersonnesHandicapées. Supra. footnote n.10
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid; and United Nations UN Treaty Body Database
Development Goals, have created great opportunities for the engagement between OPDs and governments or development agencies also in Africa. The role of international cooperation stakeholders is particularly crucial for the African context, to support OPDs in terms of capacity building and effective participation as enshrined in CRPD article 32, if they are to hold their governments accountable and engage in effective policy advocacy.

The Africa SDG Index and Dashboard Report 2020 observes that in practice, ‘leaving no one behind’ requires taking explicit measures to end extreme poverty, curb inequalities in outcomes and opportunities, promote shared prosperity, confront discrimination, and fast-track progress for the ones who are furthest behind. The 2020 report of the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development indicates that progress on sustainable development have been mixed. Poverty rates were declining, with success scored on health and literacy. There was some progress on gender equality although not sufficient. The challenges associated with high population growth, inaccessible education and health care, inadequate access to decent jobs, inequalities and data gaps persisted. Women, girls and young people in general continued to be left behind. Unfortunately, how the SDGs were being met for persons with disabilities was never captured, hence, remained conspicuously invisible.

While progress has been achieved in terms of legislative and policy reforms to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in development and humanitarian programmes on national and regional level in Africa; there have not yet been any systematic reviews to date of the effectiveness and quality of this engagement specific to the continental level. To this end, there is a risk that without effective participation of OPDs to guide on-going reforms in Africa, disability inclusion commitments may result into financial investments and programmatic pledges that could disregard the CRPD standards and not take into account perspectives of persons with disabilities themselves.

A case in point can be drawn from Uganda during the planned government food relief for vulnerable people in response to Covid-19 health emergency. Without OPD representation, the National Task Force Committee considered vulnerable people to include: taxi drivers, motorcycle riders, saloon people, pregnant mothers and older persons, who were thought to have been

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19 Economic and Social Council. Report of the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. Input from the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. High-level political forum on sustainable development. 7–16 July 2020
greatly affected by the quarantine measures due to their nature of earning a living. Although persons with disabilities suffered much more consequences as a result of the quarantine measures, their concerns had totally been disregarded until NUDIPU – the national OPD- was co-opted on the National Task force\textsuperscript{21}.

This baseline report is therefore essential to support development stakeholders and duty bearers in monitoring, assessing and evaluating the participation of OPDs in development policies and programmes in light of their commitments on disability inclusion.

1.4 About the IDA Global Survey and this report

As advocacy led to securing more commitments from development stakeholders to include persons with disabilities in development and humanitarian action, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and its members felt the acute need to collect broader evidence and analyse the reality of OPDs’ engagement in decision-making. The IDA Global Survey was therefore developed as part of a strategy for holding decision makers accountable for their commitments under Articles 4.3 and 32 of the CRPD, as well as pledges made through the 2030 Agenda, the Global Disability Summit, the Charter for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, among others. It was designed to take stock of the participation of OPDs in programmes and policies, by assessing their own perceptions of the quality, depth, scope and relevance of their participation. It is meant to become a regular tool to measure progress, learn from what works, know where to improve, to strategize advocacy and support ongoing efforts. IDA’s intention is that the Global Survey can be a regular global OPD-driven accountability exercise to take the pulse of participatory practices by government, UN agencies and funding agencies, as perceived by OPDs. Participation is a complex alchemy and combination between the capacity of OPDs to articulate demands, invest in or claim space and the willingness and capacity of decision-makers to consult and effectively give consideration to their views. To understand how effective OPD participation is, and how to make it more meaningful, the IDA Global Survey aims to provide the unique perspective and experience of OPDs themselves. It aims to analyse different dimensions of participation, including:

(a) **Who**: which groups of persons with disabilities are invited to participate?
(b) **With whom**: which decision-makers engage with persons with disabilities?
(c) **Where**: at which levels?
(d) **On what**: which are the issues on which OPDs are consulted?
(e) **How**: are preconditions for participation ensured?
(f) **When**: at which stages of the policy or programme cycle are OPDs consulted?

(g) **How often**: is participation regular or occasional?
(h) **How formalised**: are mechanisms for participation formal or informal?
(i) **How much**: what is the level of? shared decision-making (from information to full co-decision)?
(j) **How effective**: are the views of OPDs effectively considered?

The survey was pilot-tested with a group of persons with disabilities who also commented on its accessibility. The questionnaire was developed in English plain language and was disseminated online, in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish and International Sign. Responses were received from 573 OPD respondents from 165 countries across all regions, of which a large majority (54.5%) work at the national level.
2 Regional specific key findings for Africa: What OPDs report about their participation

This section brings regional specific key findings regarding the perceptions of OPDs in Africa, based on the dimensions of participation outlined above. Overall, participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, is increasing, although it remains insufficient with regards to the standards set by Article 4.3 and General Comment 7.

2.1 Overall demographics of respondents from Africa

Overall, 105 OPD respondents (i.e. about 18 % of overall survey respondents) provided information on their work in the African continent, of which about 80% work in Sub-Saharan Africa and about 20% work in North-Africa.

*Figure a – Numbers of respondents per country*

Countries with the highest numbers of responses were Kenya (22), Nigeria (22), and Uganda (17), followed by Egypt (12), Tanzania (11), and Cameroon (10).

While respondents came from 53 of the 54 member states of the African Union, for none of the countries a number of respondents could be reached that would be significant enough to disaggregate the findings further by country, which was also not intended to achieve through this survey. However, since respondents from Africa formed one of the biggest groups, highly relevant key findings and recommendations for the region can be presented. They are provided in the following outlined evidence that further supports trends observed elsewhere and are regularly discussed by ADF with IDA and its members who are active in Africa.

2.2 Intersectional perspectives on participation

OPDs participating in the survey represented different constituencies as follows\(^ {22} \): 10% of the respondents represented persons with a physical impairment, deaf people and people with an intellectual disability were each represented by 9%, followed by persons who are blind/partially

\(^ {22} \text{Those participants, responding that they are “not sure” about the question/response, and those, who were not responding at all to a question, are not listed separately in this report, if not indicated/ mentioned explicitly.} \)
sighted, or hard of hearing/with another hearing difficulty (each represented by 8%), as well as persons with a psychosocial, cognitive or with multiple impairments (each represented by 7%).

Considering intersectional perspectives, it should be added that there were 49.5% females amongst African respondents, testifying to a good outreach to women with disabilities. The survey also captured which specific groups of persons with disabilities the respondents’ organizations represent: Those are older persons with disabilities (23%), indigenous people (17%), women (12%), and children with disabilities (11%). Compared to the global picture those groups are represented relatively less amongst the African respondents. Globally older people with disabilities were represented in the Global Survey by about 46% of responding OPDs, women with disabilities by 59%, children by 52%, and indigenous people by 34%. The following graphic shows the percentage by which certain groups are represented by the African OPDS in the survey compared to participation of such groups in work with different stakeholders on developmental programmes and policies.

*Figure b – Groups represented in work with different stakeholders/ by respondents*

The diagram shows that certain groups of persons with disabilities still tend to be furthest left behind in developmental work of different stakeholders on the African continent, such as persons with a chronic disease, autism, cognitive impairment, psychosocial disability, or multiple impairments, as well as children, older persons and indigenous persons with disabilities. It is
interesting to observe that women, children, older persons with disabilities and indigenous persons with disabilities are much more represented by OPDs than involved in work with decision-makers. No major difference was observed for the African continent as compared to the global picture.

Data presented above is communicating the fact that participation is not the same across all disability constituencies. It may indicate lack of diversity during consultation processes, or inadequate capacity among some disability constituencies to participate. Either way, there is a need on the side of programme and policy practitioners to deliberately make an effort to reach different disability constituencies so that they are not left behind.

2.3 Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities with governments

The survey shows that quite some OPDs in Africa are overall pleased or totally pleased (40%) with the joint work with governments or regional organizations. This should however not hide the fact that 50% respondents said that they are overall displeased (35%) or not pleased with the joint work in any way (15%). While about 10% more respondents from Africa (than globally) are overall or totally pleased with the joint work with their governments or regional organizations, about 5% more than globally are also not pleased in any way or overall displeased.

African OPDs still seem to participate only sometimes in the work of their governments on regional, national, and local level whether looking at the area of planning, budget decisions, carrying out of work, collecting data or monitoring. The level of participation in work on SDGs or implementation of the CRPD on regional or national level is also rather medium. When it comes to the frequency of their participation in the aforementioned areas, the picture seems quite similar, whether looking at regional, national or local level work - with slight differences: OPDs participate, for example, more frequently in planning or carrying out work of (national) governments, than they are involved in budget decisions on regional level.

Both formal (42%) and informal (41%) opportunities for participation of OPDs in work with their governments exist to the same extent. Only few respondents report no ways of involvement (3%), while the others are not aware of any or don’t know (14%). This is a relatively positive result for Africa, given that globally only 33% report formal ways, 28% of informal ways of involvement with local, national or regional governments.

A closer look into areas of joint work shows that OPDs are participating in governmental work on the following issues (in the following ordered by number of mentions): (Inclusive) education, social protection, health, employment, access to justice, gender equality, participation in political life, protection against violence, poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, urbanization/housing, water and sanitation, environment, climate change, nutrition, or volunteering. Globally, education, employment, social protection and health are also the most
important issues of joint work. Just like for Africa, disability specific questions and issues of accessibility are central aspects of the joint work globally.

Compared to a year ago, according to the majority of African OPDs the involvement with governments improved (53%, compared to 52% globally), however more than the global average, African OPDs said that their involvement got worse (20%, compared to 14% globally). This perception of OPDs is similar when it comes to the impact they have on the work of governments or regional organisations: a majority of African OPDs concluded that their influence improved (53%, compared to 51% globally). While few said that the influence got worse (14%, compared to 13% globally), many concluded that their influence stayed the same (30%, compared to 27% globally). Areas in which OPDs saw an impact of their work with national governments, are mainly the following: introduction/improvements of disability rights and laws; changes in policies and guidelines; inclusive education; access to employment; representation of disability inclusion at ministerial level; use of sign language in TV; access to social services; funding; data collection on disability; empowerment; involvement of persons with disabilities and mainstreaming inclusion in programmes or other activities; as well as awareness raising for disability inclusion.

The following quotations from the survey respondents for impact on governmental work also illustrate the OPDs’ perception of their influence:

“We have used our political links and the mass media as well as the social media to highlight needs and give personal case examples that have been somewhat instrumental in the process to improve legislation/concrete support schemes.”

“The government is on the drive to ensure full inclusion of persons with disabilities into different programs which came as a result of intensive Bridge CRPD SDGs training to devoted persons with disabilities advocates.”

2.4 Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities with the United Nations

Concerning their joint work with the United Nations, majority of African OPDs (60%, compared to 54% of global respondents) reported that their overall experiences were good or very good, while for the rest this experience was somewhere between poor and very bad (24%, compared to 19% of global respondents), mixed or average (16%, compared to 27% of global respondents).

This leads to an overall mixed satisfaction rate of African OPDs with their engagement with the UN, with about 50% overall or completely satisfied (compared to about 50% of global respondents), and about 36% (compared to about 35% of global respondents) little or not at all satisfied. The following quotes from African survey respondents illustrate this mixed picture:
“People with different disabilities were brought together to share experiences.”
“The issues of accessibility and reasonable accommodation were always addressed whenever pointed out.”
“Our views were taken seriously.”
“The discussions were open and interactive which means there was full and effective participation.”
“We and the disability perspective were ignored.”
“No single support given to us.”
“No sharing of correct and accurate information.”
“Very difficult to adapt to the work of United Nations.”

Figure c – Comparison of influence on work of the UN compared to a year ago

More African OPDs than OPDs globally conclude that compared to a year ago, the involvement with the work of the UN improved (37%, compared to 27% globally), while only few said that it got worse (7,5%, compared to 6% globally). Many responded that it stayed the same (26%, both for Africa and globally). This picture is almost identical to the perception of impact which OPDs have on the work of the UN, compared to a year ago.

While amongst OPD respondents globally there are more who are “not sure” how their influence on UN work evolved over the last year, for the African continent more OPD respondents were decided that their influence got “a lot worse” (about 5% more compared to respondents from all regions of the world) or that it “improved a lot” (about 6% more chose this response option).
2.5 Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities with Funding Agencies

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) engage with a wide range of funding agencies such as international NGOs (INGOs), foundations, governmental funding agencies or development banks. While amongst the OPD respondents of all regions of the world there were many who indicated that they don’t have enough information on work with funding agencies, more OPD respondents from the African continent indicated that they work primarily with INGOs focused on disability (22.9%), followed by foundations (17.7%) and government funding agencies (14.6%). OPDs indicate they work comparatively less with development banks (3.1%), humanitarian actors (6.3%) or INGOs whose primary focus is not disability (11.5%). While the order corresponds to overall responses from the Global Survey, African OPDs indicate higher levels of engagement with donors, perhaps owing to Africa being a focus region for international cooperation investments. They also indicate higher levels of collaboration with foundations.

Many African OPDs report that they are satisfied with their engagement with funding agencies (36%), however also quite some conclude that they are dissatisfied with it (28%). This mixed picture is also reflected in the responses concerning funding for OPD participation in work with funding agencies: while 21% of African OPD respondents (compared to 23% globally) report that funding support has stayed the same compared to a year ago, majority (56%, compared to % globally) responded that it has changed over time, either to the better (31% for Africa and globally) or to the worse (25%, compared to 16% globally).

Compared to a year ago, the involvement of African OPDs in work with funding agencies improved according to the majority (54%, compared to 45% globally), while it got worse according to a minority of respondents (13%, compared to 8% globally). 16% of African OPDs (compared to 18% globally) responded that it stayed the same. This overall perception looks similar for the impact, which OPDs think they have on work with funding agencies.
like the perception of involvement and actual influence which OPDs have is very much linked to each other.

2.6 Barriers to/ support for participation

The Global Survey also looked at barriers to and support for participation in work with different stakeholders. This chapter mainly shows results for the work with governments, to allow regional specific conclusions.

Looking at participation in work with governments, on the positive side respondents reported that governments are supporting OPDs likewise to:

- facilitate their participation (e.g. personal assistant, captioning, Braille),
- fund their work in general, or
- improve their skills and knowledge to understand governmental work.

On the other hand, OPDs also showed some frustration with the governmental support which manifests in the following examples from survey respondents:

“There is almost a total disconnect between the DPOs and government.”

“The Ministry thinks it should micro-manage the affairs of DPOs with little independence, while DPOs think the relationship between it and the government should be that of respectful partnership and collaboration.”

“The Government […] does not provide support to our Organization […] because of the political crisis that our country has been experiencing for several years and political instability.”

Provisions for physical, attitudinal, or informational-communicational accessibility are made by governments in some ways but not in a systematic manner. Governments also have knowledge of how to guarantee participation of persons with disabilities in some ways, but just few are fully aware of what is needed. This picture looks similar if one compares provisions for accessibility, made by funding agencies or the UN to facilitate participation of African OPDs.
Compared to OPD respondents for all regions of the world, African OPD respondents were slightly more decided or sure about what to respond to on the level of accessibility provided by the governments. However, they present a mixed picture: compared to global OPD respondents, they are reporting slightly less of some level of physical accessibility (73% for Africa compared to 81% globally) and positive attitudes (74% for Africa compared to 85% globally) in place. When it comes to informational-communicational accessibility, the picture is almost the same for Africa like globally (70% for Africa and globally respond that it is fully or in some ways provided).

As for funding provided by different stakeholders for participation of OPDs in their work, the picture is mixed as well. When it comes to funding provided for participation in work with governments, the majority of the African respondents (61%) say that no funding is provided, while a minority (26%) was aware of available funding support.

Funding agencies unsurprisingly get better results when it comes to funding provided (see additional considerations above under 2.5). However, as one respondent summarizes the overall picture: “General funding [is] made available, not specifically for consultations.”

The following quotes from survey respondents help to illustrate prevailing experiences made with inaccessibility and lack of support for participation in work with different stakeholders:

“Accessibility is still a challenge since most of the buildings are still not accessible for those with physical disability and wheelchair users. The blind cannot get Braille even when they go for meetings [...]. SLI are never present in some meetings too.”

“Leaders are the worst barriers for those they represent and lead.”

“Progress being made but there is still much more work to be done.”

“Sometimes persons with disabilities with high support requirements [...] have a risk of being left behind due to high level accommodation requirement costs.”

What seems to come out from the survey is the fact that participation of persons with disabilities is happening as space is claimed by OPDs, however it is not a deliberate intention from decision makers. Targeted efforts must be made to ensure that all constituencies of persons with disabilities effectively participate in development policies and programmes that concern them,
as some groups are more excluded than others. This requires meeting the ‘preconditions’ for effective participation of persons with disabilities, including diverse types of reasonable accommodation requirements as requested by persons with disabilities themselves (such as sign language interpretation, personal assistance, etc.).
3 Recommendations

This section highlights recommendations made by OPD respondents for governments. Due to a limited number of respondents from Africa who provided recommendations to UN and funding agencies, it is difficult to report or draw any conclusion for these stakeholders, the UN and funding agencies.

Recommendations to governments however were diverse and are outlined below.

**Ensure true participation of OPDs in all work right from the beginning:** A majority of OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (49 respondents, i.e. 8.6% of overall respondents) emphasize that participation of OPDs needs to be ensured in all national and regional policies, programmes, and projects, as well as when budgeting for and implementing them. This should be done from the beginning of a program or policy process, covering all groups and all levels until community level, rather than – as often seems to be experienced by OPDs - as an afterthought.

**Foster inclusive governance at an institutional level:** A majority of OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (46 respondents) stress that governments need to come up with and implement mainstreamed and specific policies, programmes, laws etc. in favour of persons with disabilities. All international development programmes, funded with taxpayers' money, need to be disability-inclusive and in line with the CRPD. Existing international, regional, and national policies, programmes and laws need to be implemented and improved in favour of persons with disabilities. Inclusive structures and institutions need to be built up to ensure sustainable mechanisms for consultations, such as the following: Disability Rights Commissions; disability desks in concerned councils, ministries, agencies, and departments; State Secretariats for persons with disabilities; Sector Committees on provincial level to support building of OPDs as well as to coordinate comprehensive, disability inclusive programmes.

**Provide financial support:** Financial support for disability-inclusive and participatory processes needs to be ensured, and was mentioned by a significant number of African OPDs (36 respondents). In addition to ensuring that funding is not a barrier for consultation and engagement with OPDs in decision-making and consultations, respondents also indicated the importance of investment in OPDs, so that they are able to exist and operate as civil society actors. Respondents also flagged the importance of increasing funding for disability-inclusive development, through targeted interventions to eradicate poverty of persons with disabilities, facilitate their access to employment and income generation opportunities.

**Education, awareness raising and capacity development:** The role of education, awareness raising measures and capacity development for teachers, the public, governments as well as persons with disabilities and their organizations is also emphasised in many of the OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (34 respondents). Persons with disabilities and OPDs should e.g., build up capacity to understand and monitor the implementation of the CRPD, as
well as local laws relevant for persons with disabilities. Governments should implement the CRPD, closely following guidelines of the CRPD itself, as well as recommendations of OPDs and the jurisprudence from the CRPD committee. Governments also need to foster inclusive attitudes that could eventually lead to commitment for disability inclusion. They not only need to support building capacity and raising awareness (e.g., for inclusion, SDGs, the CRPD) within the governments themselves but also amongst the public, which can, not least, be achieved using the media.

**Ensure accessibility on all levels and provide for reasonable accommodation:** Some OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (20) stress that ensuring accessibility on all levels of governmental work (e.g., of information and communication, the built environment) is crucial for OPD participation. As mentioned above, attitudinal barriers within governments need to be removed and inclusive attitudes need to be built up to support commitment for disability inclusion and participation of OPDs. In addition to favourable attitudes and environmental accessibility, reasonable accommodation for participation needs to be provided for persons with disabilities and general provisions (e.g., for assistive devices) need to be made to support persons with disabilities overall and to allow them to participate in development.

**Improve communication and coordination amongst stakeholders:** Some OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (20) suggest improved communication and coordination within/ by governments, as well as amongst governments and other stakeholders, especially OPDs. Generally, OPDs recommend simplified feedback mechanisms for right holders, more accessible web pages, as well as accepting local sign language as national language and supporting sign language interpreters better. Governments should also collaborate better with OPDs on local level and be better coordinated within (e.g., amongst different ministries).

**Consider diversity and all organisations and constituencies of persons with disabilities:** Some OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (9) emphasize the importance of considering all constituencies of persons with disabilities and looking at intersectional issues of diversity, too. This includes, amongst others, fostering gender equality and empowerment of women with disabilities, as well as the consideration of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families.

**Improve monitoring and evaluation of inclusive development:** Last but not least, some OPDs’ recommendations from African countries (6) focus on the need for improved monitoring and evaluation of inclusive development in accordance with CRPD articles 4.3, 31, 32 and 33. This involves improved and disaggregated national data collection and more evidence-based work of governments. Monitoring and evaluation are required both for disability inclusion specific and general development programmes and needs to look at the impact of such programmes, too. IDA’s role to build capacities of OPDs through initiatives such as ‘Bridge CRPD-SDGs’ to support monitoring and evaluation of CRPD implementation was also stressed in this light. Governments
as States parties to the CRPD were also reminded of their role in monitoring and implementation of the CRPD in accordance with articles 31 and 33.

Drawing from the findings of the survey and respondents’ recommendations, complemented by IDA’s own experience of engagement as a global OPD network as well as recent studies, the executive summary and full version of the 1st Global survey report (for all regions) provide further comprehensive recommendations to governments, the UN and funding agencies to ensure effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in their work\textsuperscript{23}. They complement the regional specific analysis made in this report.

4 Conclusions

Overall, conclusions that can be drawn from this regional analysis/ baseline report show a picture similar to other regions of the world, however there are also specific points highlighted by African respondents:

**Participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, is increasing overall.** As civil society space is shrinking globally\textsuperscript{24}, disability issues are nonetheless still progressing on the agenda. This is possibly due to the global momentum created over the last few years, and/or owing to a comparatively lower starting point, and/or to disability being less sensitive or politically divisive than other social and human rights issues. For Africa, compared to a year ago, the involvement of OPDs in work with governments, the UN and funding agencies improved according to the survey respondents. Both formal and informal opportunities for participation of OPDs exist to a certain extent. Satisfaction with his joint work, however, is not always high.

**Participation of persons with disabilities is not equal across the diverse constituencies of the disability rights movement.** In Africa older persons with disabilities, indigenous people, women and children with disabilities seem to be represented to a lower extent than globally. In the work with different stakeholders, especially people with a chronic disease, affected by leprosy, with epilepsy, with a cognitive impairment, with short stature, or with autism are still largely left out of consultation and decision-making processes. They are followed by indigenous and older persons with disabilities, by persons with multiple impairments or with psychosocial disability.

\textsuperscript{23}Full report can be downloaded [on IDA website](https://ida.org).

Participation of OPDs in decision-making remains insufficient with regards to the standards set by Article 4.3 which relates to all groups, and all issues concerning persons with disabilities. OPDs who are consulted are primarily consulted on disability-specific issues, such as disability policies and accessibility issues, and they are mostly funded through INGOs focused on disability, which indicates that disability is not yet considered a cross-cutting issue. In Africa OPDs only participate sometimes in the work of their governments and the level of participation in work on SDGs or implementation of the CRPD on regional and national level is also rather medium. OPDs still seem to be rather seen as partners for carrying out work of governments than as equal partners on all levels of work.

Significant barriers to participation in decision-making remain, whether with governments, UN or funding agencies. Preconditions for participation are not met, such as accessibility of the physical environment, or accessibility of information and communication. There remain poor attitudes and knowledge about how to engage with persons with disabilities and a lack of funding for reasonable accommodation. In Africa physical inaccessibility as well as negative attitudes seems to be an even more prevailing barrier to participation than for the rest of the world.

Financial support remains the biggest challenge for OPDs to exist as representative organisations, although many OPDs report their funding increased or increased a lot as compared to one year ago. This strongly undermines their independence and autonomy and ability to develop their capacities and engage with others. As organisations representing discriminated groups, OPDs equally experience the consequences of prejudice and discrimination, resulting in lower levels of education, lower access to funding opportunities, and fewer invitations to participate compared to other civil society groups. In Africa, a lack of funding seems to be an even higher challenge than globally, as often no funding for participation is provided. If funding is made available, then often not for participatory processes.

OPDs also report lacking the resources and technical and organisational capacity to engage. Because of the number, complexity, and lack of coordination between different processes and stakeholders soliciting OPDs’ inputs, OPDs face significant opportunity costs when choosing to engage with different agencies. This, combined with limited financial resources, is experienced more harshly by underrepresented groups, and it results in stretching OPDs’ capacities to the maximum. In Africa financial support is mainly required by OPDs themselves, to help them operate and to support their participation in developmental work on all levels. Persons with disabilities and OPDs should, moreover, build up capacity to ensure meaningful participation.

OPDs get involved with but are not satisfied with their level of participation with their government. Levels of information and opportunity to influence are inadequate, with very few respondents indicating having significant roles in co-decision making. The majority of OPDs report that while they are indirectly aware of civil society activities, they are often not directly
informed about them. In Africa, slightly more respondents (than globally) are overall or totally pleased with the joint work with their governments or regional organizations, however a slightly higher number than globally is also overall or totally displeased with it. A lack of participation of African OPDs in budget decisions of governments stood out negatively.

At the level of international cooperation stakeholders, **OPDs are less often involved and less familiar with the United Nations than they should be.** When they do engage, experiences are mostly positive, with the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) perceived as more inclusive of OPDs across the programme cycle than other UN programmes or entities. In Africa more OPDs than globally conclude that compared to a year ago, the involvement with and impact on the work of the UN improved.

**OPDs, engaged with funding agencies, report positive experiences,** enabling them access to funding and technical guidance, for instance, to facilitate policy change. Increasing financial resources to OPDs tends to be associated with greater involvement of OPDs. Compared to a year ago, the involvement of African OPDs in work with funding agencies improved according to the majority of respondents, leaving African OPDs overall rather satisfied with their engagement with funding agencies.

**While there is evidence for the increasing engagement of OPDs, their contributions are not yet adequately being considered.** OPDs have a critical contribution to make and their participation can contribute to meaningful changes, including improvements in inclusive policy and legislation, greater accessibility, improved access to services and awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities. OPDs continue to report negative experiences regarding their participation, such as being denied reasonable accommodation or partial accessibility resulting in exclusion, co-optation or being invited to legitimize a process, without their view being adequately considered. African OPDs seem to perceive their level of involvement and actual influence on the joint work with different stakeholders as very much linked to each other. This could be due to the fact that they report about provisions for physical, attitudinal, or informational-communicational accessibility being made by governments, the UN and funding agencies in some ways. However those stakeholders also still lack knowledge of how to guarantee participation of persons with disabilities even better, African OPDs conclude.

The report provides ADF with valuable evidence of the lack of meaningful participation and will assist ADF in identifying gaps in its own strategy that will influence its activities going forward. ADF will share the report with its membership at country level, sub regional and continental level and will encourage robust discussions that will inform the manner and substance of our engagement with governments and international partners.