



**COMMONWEALTH
PARLIAMENTARY
ASSOCIATION**

**CPwD Strategic Plan
2021-2024**

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Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat

CPwD Network Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Foreword

From Hon. Dennitah Ghati, MP

Member of the National Assembly of Kenya and CPwD Chairperson

As Chairperson of the CPA's Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network, I am delighted to present the Strategic Plan for the period 2021 – 2024. This Strategic Plan continues the tremendous growth of the CPwD network over the past year and sets the most ambitious path forward for the Network. The previous activities of the Network have laid the foundation for this growth and provide a stable basis for future success. This Strategic Plan places at its centre the issues that persons with disabilities across the Commonwealth face in what is a rapidly changing world as a result of COVID-19, the onset of climate change, and threats to democracy worldwide. The priorities contained within the Strategic Plan reflect the role that both Parliamentarians and the legislatures that they belong to play in empowering persons with disabilities across the globe.

My own work, as a Parliamentarian with a disability, shares the aims of the CPwD network in promoting the representation and participation of persons with disabilities in democratic institutions. From my tenure as the Vice Chairperson of the Kenya Disability

Parliamentary Association (KEDIPA), the launch of my charitable foundation, my participation in the first Global Disability Summit in 2018 representing the CPwD network and in hosting the first CPwD Africa Regional Conference in 2021, there have been many gains made in ensuring that persons with disabilities are included in parliament. However, this is not an easy challenge to face, and it cannot be tackled alone, the CPwD network enables its members to work together, share knowledge, exchange experiences and provide for a more unified voice advocating for Parliamentarians with disabilities on the world stage.

I hope the Strategic Plan will be a valuable guide for the Network in working towards these ends. I am excited, in my capacity as CPwD Chairperson, to support the collective efforts in delivering on the commitments contained within the Strategic Plan and continue the excellent work started by the Network's first Chairperson and former Speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Kevin Murphy. Furthermore, I look forward to working alongside the wider CPA membership, colleagues at the CPA Headquarters Secretariat and international partners as we make progress over the next three-years and beyond, embracing the challenges and charting a common way forward.

About the CPwD

History

Since 2017, the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network has advocated for the importance of persons with disabilities being represented in the Commonwealth's Parliaments. The Network encourages all Parliamentarians to include a disabilities perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation - and helps Parliaments to become institutions that are sensitive to issues that persons with disabilities are confronted with, as an often marginalised group.

The Network helps to support Parliaments in sensitising themselves to disability issues in a variety of ways, including supporting changes to facilities for accessibility, the development of research publications and the coordination of workshops and events to further promote the disability agenda.

Structure

The CPwD network represents Parliamentarians with disabilities in Commonwealth jurisdictions and operates within the framework of the CPA to promote the representation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in CPA member Parliaments. It is governed by a Chairperson, who acts as the Network's focal point, providing leadership and direction to CPwD activities. The Chairperson is elected every 3 years and was first elected in November 2020. The current Chairperson's term will conclude at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 2023.

The Network is also governed by a committee of Regional Champions, representing each of the CPA's 9 Regions. These Regional Champions promote the rights and opportunities for Parliamentarians with disabilities within their respective jurisdiction and wider CPA Region.

Staff from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat support the Network by coordinating activities alongside its Members and providing resources for its Members.

Overview

CPwD Strategic Plan 2021-2024

The Strategic Plan was approved by the CPwD Regional Champions in 2021 and was informed by a review process led by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat involving input from the CPwD membership. This has enabled the CPwD network to build upon the results achieved and lessons learned from the period covered by the previous activities of the Network. This Strategic Plan has been designed with brevity and clarity in mind. It is goal-oriented and focused on the needs of the Network's membership. At the same time, it will provide the CPA Headquarters Secretariat and international partners with greater understanding as to what the CPwD network wishes to achieve.

The Strategic Plan seeks to establish a streamlined strategic results framework to ensure greater linkage between the overarching mission statement and the subsequent outcomes, outputs and thematic activities set out to achieve the Network's mission. A separate Business Plan will accompany the Strategic Plan and will be produced on an annual basis. The Business Plan will include specific planned activities, deliverables and budgets for the year, which will be linked to the Strategic Plan's mission statement and outcomes.

Definition

For the purpose of setting out the disabilities that the CPwD network seeks to address, the following definition of disability, from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has been agreed by the Regional Champions.

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

The above definition encompasses the impairments that the Network will respond to via the activities that emerge from this Strategic Plan. The Network will remain conscious of the tendency for invisible disabilities to be overlooked by work on disabilities in a parliamentary context.

This definition also emphasises the Network’s potential to make a contribution towards the achievement of UN SDG 16, and in particular, target 16.7 on ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Format

Mission Statement

The mission statement provides one clear and powerful statement of intent. The mission statement is aspirational and, although not achievable by the Strategic Plan alone, will strive towards the goal in the long-term. The mission statement seeks to be outward looking and ambitious.

Outcomes

A set of desired outcomes will lead to the overall mission statement. The outcomes incorporate the strategic purpose and priorities from previous activities of the Network, but does so at a higher and broader level. This approach removes the need for having pillars and other sub-categorisations, which can create potential duplication and confusion.

Outputs

Outputs are a set of tasks that have been completed which lead to a specific result. Together, a set of outputs then contribute to an outcome. The outputs will, therefore, be linked to planned actions contained within the Business Plan.

Thematic Priorities

The CPwD network will continue to identify priority themes, over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan. Throughout the chosen thematic priorities, the CPwD network will embed the core theme of parliamentary strengthening and democratic governance.

Mission Statement

“To encourage Commonwealth Parliaments to enable effective and full participation of persons with disabilities at all levels.”

Outcomes

- Support Parliamentarians with disabilities in maximising their efficacy as legislators, scrutineers, representatives and advocates.
- Sensitising the institution of Parliament to be more accommodating and inclusive.
- Helping the institution of Parliament to legislate for persons with disability and better understand disability issues.
- Establish partnerships and enhance stakeholder engagement, raising the profile of the CPWD network and improving the exchange of knowledge, data and experiences.
- Proactively take a central role in the governance and performance of the CPA and linked bodies, ensuring the specific requirements of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed across the CPA.

Outputs

- Actively advocate for persons with disabilities via communications and outreach, increasing the visibility of their rights in inter-parliamentary relations.
- Produce relevant and high-quality research and learning materials to promote an understanding of the challenges faced by Parliamentarians with disabilities.
- Expand partnerships with organisations that share the CPA's value of centering disability rights in its work.
- Deliver thorough learning and development initiatives to enhance the understanding of Parliamentarians with disabilities on how they can overcome challenges they face.
- Promote measures to enhance the representation of persons with disabilities in all the Commonwealth's national and sub-national legislatures.
- Make reasonable adjustments to CPA programmes and engagements to enable the participation of people with any disability.
- Provide a platform and opportunity for Parliamentarians with disabilities to network and share experiences as legislators.
- Directly support initiatives within Parliaments to make their institutions more accessible for persons with disabilities within Parliament and in wider society.

Thematic Areas

Legislation

- Advocating for Commonwealth Parliaments to bring forward legislation that is inclusive of the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Encouraging methods for the implementation of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Representation

- Supporting Parliaments to achieve greater numbers of Parliamentarians with disabilities.
- Helping Parliaments to develop a culture of inclusivity for persons with disabilities, which can encourage persons with disabilities to run for elected office.
- Encouraging Parliamentarians to aim for leadership positions with Parliament (e.g., the chairperson of a committee or as a minister).

Accessibility

- Strengthening Parliaments by supporting measures taken to ensure that their premises are accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Adopting innovative and modern approaches to making the work of Parliamentarians easier.

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