

Consultation Paper: Developing a new disability strategy for Australia's Aid Program 2015-2020

The purpose of this consultation paper is to guide stakeholder input into the Australian Government's new strategy for disability-inclusive development. Your views on how effectively the Australian aid program has implemented disability-inclusive development to date, and ideas for our future policy approach and priorities, will help shape the development of the new strategy.

In 2008, Australia released *Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014*. This strategy was designed to ensure that people with disability were included in and benefit equally from Australia's aid program, and support Australia's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The independent mid-term review of *Development for All* in 2012 found that Australia is a leading donor in disability-inclusive development. Our support has been 'considerable and impressive', and has led to significant improvement in the lives of people with disability, including through increased access to education, employment, health services, public infrastructure, and law and justice. In 2013 the OECD Development Assistance Committee Peer Review highlighted Australia's 'exceptional emphasis on disability which makes it a leader in this area internationally'.

Much has already been achieved, but there is still much to be done. The Australian Government has affirmed its commitment to ensuring that people with disability continue to be included in, and benefit from, the Australian aid program. At the UN High Level Meeting on Disability and Development in September 2013, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, confirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that our development efforts reach people with disability – that we "leave no-one behind". On International Day of People with Disability on 3 December 2013, Senator Mason, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, announced the Government's commitment to develop a new disability strategy to take effect from 2015.

The new strategy will build on the success of the *Development for All* strategy, while bringing a stronger focus on building skills, creating jobs and fostering economic growth in our region. In addition to a strategic focus on our region, the Australian Government will also be strengthening performance measures and introducing rigorous benchmarks to make sure our aid program is delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. A second-phase strategy presents an opportunity to renew our approach and explore new options for engagement and action.

Why Disability-Inclusive Development?

Disability-inclusive development is good practice development, contributing to poverty alleviation and improved economic outcomes, stability and prosperity. People with disability are the world's largest and most disadvantaged minority, accounting for around 15 per cent of the global population and 20 per cent of the world's poorest people. An estimated 80 per cent of people with disability live in developing countries. To be effective in reducing

poverty, international development assistance must actively include and benefit people with disability.¹

People with disability have generally poorer health, lower education achievements, fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty than people without disability. This is largely due to the many barriers people with disability face in their everyday lives including accessing services in areas such as health and education. Women face multiple disadvantages, experiencing exclusion on account of their gender and their disability. Women and girls also most often take on the role of carer for people with disabilities, which subsequently can deny them opportunities for education and employment. The economic exclusion of people with disability has major consequences for a country's growth, with some studies quantifying losses ranging from three to seven per cent of GDP.² Disability-inclusive development is an investment in well-functioning economies and societies, which creates better development outcomes for all.

Australia's approach under *Development for All* 2009-2014

The primary purpose of Australia's *Development for All* 2009-2014 strategy is "to support people with disability to improve the quality of their lives by promoting and improving access to the same opportunities for participation, contribution, decision-making, and social and economic well-being as others".

***Development for All* outcomes**

Core outcomes:³

- (1): Improved quality of life for people with disability
- (3): Effective leadership on disability and development

Enabling outcomes:

- (1): DFAT [AusAID] skilled and confident in disability-inclusive development
- (2): Improved understanding of disability and development

Guiding principles underpinning the strategy: (1) central role by people with disability; (2) recognise and respect rights; (3) respect diversity; (4) take into account gender and disability; (5) focus on children; and (6) support people-people links and promote partnerships

The participation and leadership of people with disability is a fundamental tenet of disability-inclusive development – 'nothing about us without us'. Ensuring an active central role in both policy development and implementation by people with disability is a guiding principle of the *Development for All* strategy. Including people with disability in aid program decision making has contributed to more effective programming. The Disability-Inclusive Development Reference Group, established in 2009, provides high-level guidance on the

¹ World Health Organisation and the World Bank, [World Report on Disability](#), 2011, p. 29

² Backup, S. 2009. The price of exclusion: the economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work (Employment working paper; no.43); International Labour Organisation, Geneva

³ Outcome 2 was removed from the strategy in 2012 to be part of health and infrastructure, as it had focused on reduced preventable impairments (avoidable blindness/road safety) not on disability-inclusion

implementation of the *Development for All* strategy. This Group includes international and Australian leaders in disability-inclusive development, as well as representatives from key donors, several of whom themselves have a disability.

Australia's programming follows what is known as a 'twin-track' approach. This aims to balance both disability-*specific* programs (targeted) to specifically increase participation and services; and disability-*inclusive* programs (mainstreamed/cross-cutting) to include a disability perspective so that all aid interventions and programs are made accessible to people with disability. While recognising that disability-inclusive development is a cross-cutting area relevant to all aid investments, countries and regions, the strategy focusses on two areas (education and infrastructure) and four countries (Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea).

Australia has a number of strategic partnerships on disability-inclusive development, including with the World Health Organisation, the UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hosted by the United Nations Development Programme), the International Disability Alliance, and the United Nations Children's Fund. Australia also directly helps to build the capacity of Disabled People's Organisations through the Disability Rights Fund.

Developing the new disability strategy

Reflecting the approach taken in *Development for All*, the strategy development process will be consultative, accessible and inclusive – recognising that this presents an important opportunity to build understanding and awareness of disability-inclusive development. Stakeholder consultations will inform development of the new strategy, including an assessment of what is working, where and why, and priorities going forward.

Consultations will prioritise the direct engagement of people with disability and their representative organisations (Disabled People's Organisations), and also include: partner governments; disability service providers in country; private sector representatives; key donors; and multilateral partners. The Disability-Inclusive Development Reference Group (DRG) will also have a key role in providing advice and input during the consultation and strategy development process.

International consultations will be conducted in mid-2014 in the current focus countries (Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea), at key multilateral Posts, and in some other countries in the region. Domestic consultations have been held in Melbourne and Sydney hosted by the Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC).

Consultations will be complemented by relevant supporting analysis, including a review of literature on disability-inclusive development; a stocktake of current activities and analysis of good practice examples from Australia and internationally; and targeted analytical policy papers on potential new strategic directions. DFAT is also conducting a review of existing and possible future international disability-inclusive development partners.

Focus questions

The strategy development process will draw on questions from the *Development for All 2009-2014* Performance Assessment Framework. A number of additional questions aiming to identify areas for greater focus under the new strategy are also listed below. Note that these questions are intended to prompt discussion – they are not intended to be exhaustive.

Improving the lives of people with disability – Australia's contribution

1. To what extent is disability embedded in Australia's development practice?
2. Have the lives of people with disability been improved in partner countries, particularly focus countries? What have been some of the enablers and barriers?
3. Have international perspectives and action on disability-inclusive development been positively influenced?
4. Have donors, government partners, multilateral organisations, and civil society organisations become more supportive of disability-inclusive developments, and how has DFAT's investments contributed to these changes?
5. Is there a greater understanding of disability-inclusive development in Australia and in our region?

Principles into practice

6. Do people with disability report they are active and central participants and contributors to the Australian aid program?
7. Does the Australian aid program recognise and respect the rights of people with disability as reported by stakeholders?
8. Do women and men, and boys and girls, equally participate, contribute and benefit in Australia's disability-inclusive development programs?
9. Does the Australian aid program address the barriers limiting children with disability's enjoyment of the same rights as their peers?
10. To what extent does the Australian aid program support people-to-people links and promote partnerships, as reported by people with disability?
11. Do people with disability know about Australia's development programs and how to participate?

New directions

12. What are the enablers and barriers to greater access to jobs and livelihoods for people with disability?
13. Are there other priorities for policy engagement where significant results could be achieved over the next five years?
14. What are the changes we want to see over the next five years as a result of a successful second-phase strategy?
15. Any other ideas or comments?

If you are unable to attend a consultation, brief comments on any of the issues outlined above may be provided to disability.strategy@dfat.gov.au by 18 July 2014.