

UNESCAP 7th Session on Committee on Social Development

Agenda 3 Statement by the Pacific Disability Forum

Tuesday, 06 September 2022

Madam Chair, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted inequality and drawn attention to the reality that persons with disability have been living at the intersection of poverty and exclusion for far too long.

Less than 30% of people with a severe disability globally is estimated to have any Social Protection coverage at all. With the onset of COVID19 we have seen an increase in the number of social protection schemes being developed and implemented across the globe as well as in our region.

As we see social protection scheme for person with disability being developed, important questions need to be raised.

how can social protection be prioritised and sustainable particularly in terms of Fiscal space in small economies like those in the pacific?

How can we ensure that mainstream social protection schemes are also accessible for persons with disabilities, and

how do we ensure that the extra costs of disability are also being considered?

Determination of eligibility raises complex questions for any poverty targeted social protection programme, even more so when the process involves disability assessment and determination. In order to comply with the CRPD, disability assessments should not only consider impairment and activity limitations, but also the attitudinal and environmental barriers faced by persons with disabilities, as well as their support requirements which contribute to the additional costs of Disability. Particular attention should be dedicated to preventing the exclusion of more vulnerable groups including those with psychosocial and intellectual disability, women and girls with disabilities and ensuring that sound, accessible and resourced grievance redress mechanisms are in place.

These are important questions to grapple with as we develop sustainable, equitable and inclusive social protection systems for the future. Inclusive social protection is an essential element to safeguarding the full, dignified and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities so they can take an active part in the social and economic life of their communities.

Thank you.

Setareki S. Macanawai

Chief Executive Officer