



Fact Sheet: Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The State Department's International Disability Rights team leads Department efforts to encourage and assist foreign governments and civil society organizations to increase their commitment and capacity to protect the rights, and ensure the inclusion and full participation of, persons with disabilities. Located in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Office of Multilateral and Global Affairs, the International Disability Rights team works to:

- 1) Make disability rights an integral – and integrated – part of U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance, as outlined in the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.
- 2) Increase knowledge of disability rights among State Department and USAID personnel and ensure the inclusion of disabled persons into all aspects of their work.

International Disability Rights

Disability rights are basic human rights, not special rights. Persons with disabilities have the same rights as all people to non-discrimination, access, equality of opportunity, inclusion and full participation in society. These are the basic principles underlying the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Yet the rights of disabled people are often violated due to prejudice and discrimination. Physical, attitudinal, and institutional barriers can also marginalize disabled people.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

As the Department's leader on disability rights issues, the International Disability Rights team promotes international implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This includes linking U.S. expertise and technical assistance to interested governments. The International Disability Rights team also works with civil society in other countries, including disabled people's organizations, to strengthen their ability to effectively promote disability rights and participate in the implementation of the CRPD.

Linking Disability Rights to Foreign Policy and U.S. Foreign Assistance

The International Disability Rights team works with colleagues across the State Department to include disability rights in bilateral, regional, and multilateral diplomatic engagement. The International Disability Rights team works to be inclusive of disability rights in key foreign policy areas, including: worker rights; religious freedom; child labor; gender violence; the human rights of LGBT people; trafficking in persons; refugees; and HIV/AIDS.

The International Disability Rights team works closely with the USAID to ensure that disability rights and disabled persons are included in the programs and activities of the State Department, USAID missions, and their implementing partner organizations. This includes addressing the need for terms and conditions of grant making and contracting to be inclusive of disability issues and persons with disabilities.

Sharing Expertise with U.S. Government Personnel

The expertise of Department personnel is integral to building the capacity of foreign governments and civil society organizations working to protect the rights and inclusion of disabled persons. The International Disability Rights team works directly with overseas posts and missions to strengthen Department expertise, and assists embassies and consulates in raising community awareness of disability rights and the experience of persons with disabilities. The office also collaborates with the Foreign Service Institute on disability rights training for domestic and international staff (including Locally Employed Staff).

For more information about the work of the State Department's International Disability Rights team, please visit: www.state.gov/j/drl/sadr
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