Statement of approach:

Working with the Disability Movement

## Background

This document outlines our approach to working with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) – the Disability Movement- within CBM Global’s Inclusion Advisory work. Our advisory work seeks to partner with others to support governments, contractors, multilaterals and INGOs to put inclusion into practice.

Our clients are predominantly those who fund and/or implement mainstream humanitarian and development policy and programming. We partner with the Disability Movement as a matter of principle, inherent in a rights based approach and as a matter of effectiveness. We recognise that OPDs will continue to promote, pursue and defend the rights of persons with disabilities long after our advisory work has finished, and can contextualise and ground advice in ways we cannot.

We recognise that OPDs do not always exist or are not always engaged in particular areas and sectors. As part of our broader commitment to disability rights, we therefore seek to also work with individual disability activists/advocates. In addition, by making this approach explicit, we seek to empower those with whom we work to hold us accountable.

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| What are Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)?[[1]](#endnote-1)  According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; OPDs should be rooted, committed to and fully respect the rights recognised in the Convention. OPDs are led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities. A clear majority of their membership should be recruited among persons with disabilities themselves. The characteristics of OPDs include: they are established predominantly to collectively act, express, promote, pursue and/or defend the rights of persons with disabilities; they employ, are represented by, entrust or specifically nominate/appoint persons with disabilities themselves; they are not affiliated to political parties, are independent from public authorities, and other NGOs; they represent one or more constituencies based on actural or perceived impairment; they represent groups of persons with disabilities reflecting the diversity of their backgrounds, and can include transversal identities; they can be local, national, regional or international in scope; they can be individual organisations, coalitions or cross disability or umbrella organisations. There are a range of types of organisations globally: umbrella organisations; cross disability organisations; self advocacy organisations- representing persons with disabilities in different, often loosely and/or locally formed networks and platforms; organisations including family members; organisations of women and girls with disabilities; organisations and initiatives of children and young persons with disabilities. |

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## Our approach

Finding the right fit in each situation**:** We collaborate with OPDs in a range of ways in order to engage and influence mainstream humanitarian/development programming. For example, OPDs may engage through:

* representing key issues for people with disabilities in that context, relevant to the program area;
* providing high level guidance regarding CRPD compliance;
* participating in governance/accountability mechanisms
* providing specific advice on how to make x process, methodology, M&E framework etc. inclusive & CRPD compliant
* becoming an implementation partner (and a lot in between.)

We work with OPD partners to identify what type of engagement they seek, taking into account their priorities and context and the advisory request. This may be different for every opportunity and sector– an OPD might seek to provide specific technical advice in some sectors and prefer an advocacy or accountability stance in others. We seek to design our role and approach to complement the preferred role of the OPD.

In cases where OPDs are seeking to position themselves to provide technical support in the long term, but are not yet positioned to do so, where requested, we seek to strengthen capacity of the OPD to take that on, and change our role over time to enable that.

Opening up space for dialogue and connection**:** Through our advisory work, we seek to use our influence and position to facilitate effective communication between government, development actors and persons with disabilities and the disability movement. This includes brokering relationships between our advisory clients and OPDs, (and between OPDs) to undertake preferred roles as described above. This includes ensuring accessibility, and as relevant, supporting advisory clients to provide accessible working conditions.

Aiming for diversity**:** We endeavour to work with OPDs and people with disabilities in a manner which represents the diversity of experiences of people with disabilities within a relevant context, ensuring a diverse range of: impairment types; gender representation; age; sexuality and ethnicity.

Mutual, ongoing learning**:** We recognise that the policy and programming changes required for full realization of the rights of persons with disabilities is large and complex and we are all learning together. We seek to engage in mutual capacity development with the disability movement, and build upon our mutual strengths and capacity. We seek to share our learning with OPDs around how to engage in the development/humanitarian sector, including understanding stakeholders, processes, sectors etc. as requested/appropriate.

We seek to work together in ways that strengthen capacity, even if this requires additional time and investment.

We seek to support OPDs as they support emerging leaders by finding opportunities for skill development.

We commit to sharing resources that may assist DPOs with their governance and organisational development, however, the advisory group recognises that organisational development objectives are often better met by other stakeholders, including OPD-OPD learning, and potentially CBM field program teams.

Professional recognition**:** we ensure contributions from the Disability Movement are recognised and credited including through payment of fees for service as applicable**.**

Enhancing effectiveness through a partnership approach**:** We seek to develop ongoing strategic partnerships with OPDs with whom we regularly engage. Investing in getting to know one another, understanding and discussing strategy and approaches, and regularly making space to do horizon scanning, discuss communications, accountability, progress, approaches etc. is a more effective vehicle for joint influence and maximising the strength of both parties than engaging on a project/contract by contract basis.

Building an evidence base together**:** We seek to work with OPDs in building an evidence base for CRPD compliant approaches and strengthening OPD capacity in research methodologies, and how to use research findings to influence policy and practice, this includes brokering relationships between OPDs and research institutions as relevant.

We aim to model participation and inclusion to development and humanitarian actors through our approach, whilst recognising we are all learning and can always improve.

Implications of this approach for contracting advisory clients**:**

Our approach requires the allocation of adequate time and resources (including budget) to ensure effective participation of the Disability Movement in advisory work with our clients. Sufficient lead time to coordinate with Disability Movement partners is required. CBM in kind brings: our established contacts and OPD networks; our understanding of the Disability Movement context, acquired through our own investments in this area and our experience in brokering relationships with OPDs. We firmly believe this enhances the quality and credibility of our advisory services and ultimately the quality of the disability inclusive development work of client agencies.

*This approach document was developed in 2016, and updated in 2018 and 2020*

## S:\CBM\InclusiveDevelopment\Inclusion Advisory Group Branding\IAG Concepts and Assets\Logos\CBM_IAG_LOGO_MAIN.pngLogo of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)Appendix A: Example of approach

### AHP Disaster READY: Inclusion Advisory Group, A close up of a logo Description automatically generatedPacific Disability Forum and Pacific DPOs working together to influence for inclusive DRR

What is the Australian Humanitarian Partnership and Disaster READY?

The Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) is a five-year (2017-2022) partnership between the Australian Government and Australian NGOs.

The AHP focuses on [disaster response](https://www.australianhumanitarianpartnership.org/response/) (globally) as well as [disaster preparedness](https://www.australianhumanitarianpartnership.org/new-folder-2/) (in the Pacific). The disaster preparedness element is called AHP Disaster READY, which is an AUD 50 million disaster preparedness and resilience program that is implemented by AHP partners and their local networks across the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

The focus of Disaster READY is to strengthen disaster preparedness and management across the Pacific, which is one of the world’s most vulnerable regions to natural disasters, and which is also prone to political instability. Disaster READY draws on the deep networks and partnerships developed by Australian NGOs in the region to support Pacific communities and governments to better prepare for and respond to disasters. The program focuses on ensuring at risk groups, including women, people with disabilities and children, are included and accounted for in disaster preparedness, management and risk reduction activities. Disaster READY is being implemented in Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste[[2]](#footnote-1).

What are the demands for disability rights and inclusion advice in the AHP Disaster READY?

* Disaster READY requires evidence that persons with disabilities are included in all activities, and will be equally prepared in times of disaster as their peers.
* This requires disability to be considered within design, planning, monitoring and evaluation and within program activities.
* The program requires agencies to engage with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations throughout design, implementation and ME&L processes.

How are DPOs and CBM advisors working together to meet these demands?

* CBM Australia and the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) are participating in AHP Disaster READY. They participated in design processes and have advocated strongly for people with disabilities to play a leadership role in the program.
* During the design period, Pacific Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) were experiencing significant and increasing demands for engagement from not just the AHP but a range of humanitarian and disaster risk reduction related programs. Furthermore, until recently Pacific DPOs have not been regularly engaged in the work of disaster preparedness and humanitarian response, and have only just begun the journey to build their experience, confidence and technical expertise on applying disability inclusion to disaster preparedness and humanitarian action.
* All AHP agencies and their local implementing partners need to work with DPOs to get access to their lived experience and expertise on disability inclusion. DPOs are often a conduit between humanitarian actors and people with disabilities.
* However, having all 23 AHP agencies requesting support could have swamped the national DPOs. DPOs reported that they are not yet ready to provide on-demand technical support on complex questions related to disability inclusive disaster preparedness.
* To help the DPOs prepare themselves to engage with humanitarian actors and AHP Disaster READY specifically, CBM and PDF supported Pacific DPOs to develop and document their own vision for disability inclusive disaster preparedness and response, which is set out in the *PDF Disability Inclusive Preparedness for Response Strategy*. This enables Pacific DPOs to strategically engage with mainstream DRR and humanitarian programs, leveraging various programs to achieve common goals in a coordinated manner. Given Pacific DPOs have limited staff and resources, and are balancing many priorities, DPO capacity and resourcing is at the centre of this strategy.

PDF and its members explain that

“In the past, we feel that DPOs have often been pushed aside, or pulled into others’ priorities, and some efforts by others to ensure disability inclusion have been tokenistic or ticking the box. We are often included only to warm the seats. Often we feel overwhelmed when many people approach us with their different priorities. This can mean our capacity is stretched, impacting the quality of our influence. Therefore this Strategy gives us the power, not to do everything alone, but to share a vision that others can support us in achieving. […] We want others to use the Strategy, to help us achieve our ultimate vision of disability inclusive Preparedness for Response within the Pacific in the next 10 years.”

* CBM and PDF successfully advocated that AHP Disaster READY fund one humanitarian/DRR officer within the national DPO of each of the five focus countries[[3]](#footnote-2) in line with their strategy. These officers are able to focus exclusively on DRR and humanitarian work, allowing DPOs to respond to this need whilst also maintaining their existing influential activities. A Pacific regional function and the CBM+PDF Regional DPO Capacity Building Program also received Disaster READY funding to provide ongoing capacity building support to the five DRR officers and their DPOs.
* The CBM+PDF Regional Program aims to strengthen the capacity of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (disabled people’s organisations; DPOs) to become more confident at applying their lived experience of disability, their knowledge of disability rights and inclusion principles to the issues of disaster preparedness and response.
* To support DPOs in the short-term as localised capacity is developed in the longer term, CBM and PDF are providing the national DPOs with:
  + training, mentoring, on-the-job support, in-country support visits & regional cross-country learning workshops
  + support with relationship brokering,
  + internal ‘how to’ resources and sample advocacy messages
  + support to develop collaborative resources and tools,
  + access to backup technical support or options to jointly provide disability mainstreaming technical advice.
* The Regional Project is also enabling the five national DPOs to share resources and divide work among themselves, to have the widest possible reach and to build off each other and share experiences and develop collaborative resources.
* A mutual benefit approach is also being taken, through which:
  + the mainstream humanitarian agencies can over time get more access to the lived experience and valuable perspectives of people with disabilities, which can help them know how to implement their disaster preparedness activities in a more inclusive way;
  + the DPOs can over time increase their understanding of humanitarian issues, get a seat at the table, and get to influence the disaster preparedness projects the NGOs are implementing.
* The relationship between the 5 national DPOs + PDF + CBM is referred to as the “Triangle Team”, through which the national DPOs lead the engagement with AHP agencies in-country, but PDF and CBM are always available to support and back-up the DPOs. This ensures that the DPO DRR Officer staff build the skills and confidence to respond to requests for support made by AHP agencies.

### End Notes

1. Derived from Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No.7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organisations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. www.australianhumanitarianpartnership.org [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. The five national DPOs are: Fiji Disabled People’s Federation (FDPF), PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons (PNGADP), People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI), Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), and the Vanuatu Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (VDPA) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)