



Petition Submission Engagement meeting on the Ratification of the African Disability Protocol and Media Briefing

02 MARCH 2023



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DEAF ZIMBABWE TRUST
NASCOH



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Abbreviations

ADP	African Disability Protocol
CDD	Centre for Disability and Development
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DZT	Deaf Zimbabwe Trust
NASCOH	National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities

Introduction

DZT and NASCOH with support from Sightsavers hosted an engagement meeting and press conference with the Parliamentary Caucus on Disability and Organisations for persons with disabilities on the 2nd of March 2023 in Harare. The meeting was held at the Cresta Jameson Hotel. There were (39) people in attendance made up of 15 males and 24 females. Those in attendance consisted of Members of Parliament, Chairs of Portfolio Committees and Civil Society Organisations and several media houses including Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services (ZBC TV), Newsday, Daily News, New Zimbabwe.com and 3Ktv. Mr. Isaacs Mwale a legal officer at DZT was the Master of Ceremonies.

Objectives of the engagement meeting

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To hand over the petition on ratification of the ADP to the Parliamentary Caucus on Disability
- To hold a press conference to inform the media about the petition handed to parliament calling on Zimbabwe to sign and ratify the ADP.

Opening remarks

Ms Nyangairi, DZT's Executive Director welcomed the honourable members and everyone present. She explained that the engagement is meant to submit the petition to the Parliamentary Caucus on Disability as the petition was submitted to Parliament. The petition was signed by over two thousand (2000) petitioners who are pleading for the signing and ratification of the ADP. The objective of the engagement is to equip the members of the Disability Caucus with the petition so that it can be brought up and referenced by members in Parliament. Ratifying the ADP is important for Zimbabwe because the disability laws that are in place have become out-dated, impractical and do not serve the progressive realization of the rights of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe, therefore the need to pass the Persons with Disability Bill into law. The ADP includes issues like ritual killings of persons with Albinism which are relevant to the African context.

Action Points from the Previous Engagement

10 November 2022

These action points were noted down from the Parliamentary Engagement held on the 10th of November 2022 by Sightsavers, NASCHOH and DZT on the importance of signing and ratifying the ADP.

- Hon. T. Moyo suggested the need to submit a motion in Parliament for the ADP to be signed in Parliament.
- Hon. S. Mathe agreed with Hon. Moyo's suggestion stating that they create a question on the 'Question without notice' to debate on ADP and to come up with Talking points until they are provided with the answers they seek on the pertinent matter.
- Hon. Sen Manyau also suggested that petitions be written to parliament as they are one of the most powerful tools to get matters on the agenda.

- Mr. Kuchera mentioned that the best way to forward talking points is through Parliament Secretariat and other committee clerks. Mr. Chinoona from Sightsavers requested to know progress on the ratification of the ADP to date.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs could not respond because the ministry was not represented to provide feedback and to confirm the position of the ADP and which Ministry is looking after the Protocol and what timeline can be given on it.

Plenary Discussion

- Ms Nyangairi raised a question on whether the national elections season would affect the advocacy for ratifying the ADP and if there were strategies the disability communities and organisations could put in place to ensure continued advocacy on the ADP.
- Hon. Member of Parliament D Molokeli responded to the question posed by stating that the advocacy for ratifying the ADP can continue for some months even if there are national elections. He explained that as the political parties are making their manifestos and the election process is happening this is an opportunity that persons with disabilities can take to mainstream disability inclusion as in the ADP.
- Hon. Member of Parliament J Sithole added in agreement with Hon. Molokeli that the advocacy for ratification of the ADP should not stop but the momentum should continue even after the elections. He stated that even if the Parliamentary Disability Caucus members change after elections there must be continuity in the advocacy.
- Hon. Molokeli responded to the comment that was made that this Parliament maybe dissolved before the Persons with Disability Bill is passed into law. He stated that it is very possible for the Bill to be passed before the national elections. He added that that the disability community and organizations for persons with disabilities can draft a model Persons with Disabilities Bill with provisions that they want to be recognized and present it to the caucus and the Parliament of Zimbabwe.
- Hon. Maphosa pointed out that the Ministry that is responsible for signing and ratifying the ADP must be petitioned via the committee clerk. This will help the Disability Caucus members to call on the Minister in

Parliament so that they ask the relevant questions that pertain to the signing and ratification of the ADP.

- Hon. Molekeli stated that the disability community is lagging behind in terms of its advocacy for inclusion in elections. He noted that the women's rights sector has been pushing for women's inclusivity very aggressively. He stated that political parties are not likely to push disability inclusion on their own and that the disability community must fight for inclusion. A disability manifesto made by persons with disabilities needs to be developed and distributed to political parties.
- Hon. Molekeli answered the question that was put forth by Mr Tsikai on the efforts made by persons with disabilities to push for inclusion. Hon. Molekeli stated that the disability community needs to learn from the women's movement where organisations have been training and equipping women to be political leaders in order to fill in political positions. Persons with disabilities must at least present a list with competent persons with disabilities when they advocate for inclusion in political spheres in order to also gain influence in Zimbabwe.
- Mr Kuchera a consultant from CDD asked that now that the petition has been handed over to Parliament what procedure will the petition go through to the point that it is debated in Parliament.
- Ms Macheza the Clerk of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, gave a breakdown of how the petition will move after its submission. Once the petition has been delivered to the Clerk of Parliament, it is submitted to the Counsel's office to check if it meets the requirements. If it meets the requirements it is considered admissible and is sent to the Speaker for approval. From there it will then be announced in the relevant House for example National Assembly that Parliament has received a petition from the specific stakeholder and the petition will be referred to the relevant Committee.

The Committee will consider the petition and conduct an inquiry for example inviting petitioners and relevant stakeholders in the petition to come and speak on the issues in the petition. A report on the inquiry will be compiled and tabled in the House. The Minister will respond to the report.

Submission of Petition and Press Conference

The petition that was submitted to Parliament was submitted to the Parliamentary Caucus on Disability through handing it over to the Chairman of the Disability Caucus Hon. J Sithole. Hon. Sithole stated that as they have received the petition the Caucus will do its best to bring the petition to be debated in Parliament the ADP is beneficial for the improvement of the livelihoods of persons with disabilities.

The press conference was held with the following media houses ZBC TV, Newsday, Daily News, New Zimbabwe.com and 3Ktv. The panellists were Ms Chiminhi from DZT, Mr Masaya Acting Director at NASCOH and Peter Bare the Programmes Manager at Sightsavers. The panellists spoke of the importance of ratifying the ADP as it not only speaks on disability generally but with an African context approach. The ADP speaks on challenges faced by persons with disability in the African continent for example killing persons with Albinism to take their body parts to do rituals to get money. Addressing the media, Mr Masaya indicated that the petition submitted to Parliament is calling for Zimbabwe to ratify the ADP. He highlighted that disability laws have become out-dated, impractical and do not serve the progressive realization of the rights of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe, therefore the need to pass the Persons with Disability Bill into law.

In response to what the African Disability Protocol is, Mr Peter Bare from Sightsavers highlighted that the African Disability Protocol (ADP) is a human rights treaty that addresses forms of discrimination that particularly affect people with disabilities living in African countries, including harmful practices, beliefs and superstitions. The ADP provides a legal framework for member states of the African Union to use as a base to formulate disability laws and policies to promote disability rights in their countries. The protocol addresses the fact that many people with disabilities living in African countries face specific forms of discrimination – for example, people with albinism in some African countries are at risk of being kidnapped, injured or murdered as their body parts are presumed to have magical properties. And in other countries, there are widespread misconceptions that disability is a curse or punishment from God. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of this century and guarantees all people with disabilities their human rights on an equal basis with others, but it does not address these unique African challenges.

Ms Paida Chimhini from DZT was asked on the level of confidence that OPDs have in Parliament to address the petition. She noted that the organisations were confident owing to the progressive strides made by Parliament and government in supporting disability rights. She highlighted that the Disability Caucus has been doing a good job in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean Government has been taking progressive steps to improving the lives of PwDs as they signed and ratified the United Nations Convention of Persons with Disabilities and brought about the National Disability Policy (NDP).

Closing remarks



Mr Masaya from NASCOH gave the closing remarks. He started off by thanking Sightsavers for their support in pushing the ADP, the disability communities and DZT for the hard work. He further thanked the press for finding time to be here. He commended the Steering Committee for their commitment to the disability sector. He closed off the remarks by giving a statement that spoke of how if people with disabilities are supported the nation will be able to create a citizen that will be able to sustain themselves.

Annex 1 Programme

Engagement on the Ratification of the ADP and Petition Submission

Cresta Jameson Hotel

02 March 2023

Time	Activity	Responsible
08:00 - 08:30	Registration	ALL
08:30 - 08:45	Introductions	Isaacs Mwale (Moderator)
08:45 - 09:00	Opening Remarks and reason for the engagement	Barbra Nyangairi (DZT)
09:00 - 09:15	Review of 10 November Action Points	Samantha Gwerevende/Parliament
09:15 - 09:25	Plenary Discussion	ALL
09:25 - 09:35	Submission of Petition and strategy to push the petition through Parliament	Parliament of Zimbabwe
09:35 - 09:45	Vote of thanks, Closing remarks and transition to Press conference and handover of Petition	Peter Bare (Sight Savers)
09:45 - 10:00	Beginning of Press Conference and handover of Petition	Isaacs Mwale/Panelists
10:00	End of engagement and departure	ALL

ANNEX 2 PICTURES



Figure 1



Honourable D Molekeli 1



Henry Masaya, Peter Bare, Paيدا Chimhini 1

