



TITLE: Better support needed for women with disabilities: Leave no women behind during COVID-19 and beyond

The Sustainable Development Goals place a strong emphasis on leave no one behind to ensure that government and stakeholders in devising national planning for their citizens will not any groups behind. Vulnerable groups at the national level which include women with disabilities continue to face diverse forms of discrimination at levels regardless of their capabilities and environments. Among some of the key barriers or challenges faced by women with disabilities include education, employment, access to education, etc. These challenges are further intensified during emergencies where stakeholders are unable to put in place effective measures to address local and national issues.

The surge of the global pandemic, the COVID-19 which took the world unaware for instance, deepened and exacerbated the situation of women and girls with disabilities. The crisis brought several restrictions to all in every region namely physical movements and social distances which led to lockdowns in several countries in the world especially in Africa. These greatly affected women and girls with disabilities as they were already faced with issues such as physical accessibility, discriminative laws, stigma, affordability of quality healthcare as well as education, and exclusion of political processes.

Governments at national levels in some selected countries attempted to address the challenges brought about by the pandemic and the crisis, but there were several limitations in the approach and measures implemented. In Africa, due to the scarcity of resources and clear-cut structure for the usage of the distribution of emergency support to its citizens some groups of people were left behind, others were mostly forgotten.

Government and stakeholders including CSOs working with persons with disabilities working from diverse sectors such as education, health, social protection must identify non-discriminatory ethical guidelines to protect vulnerable groups especially women and girls with disabilities whose issues are mostly unique from other groups. However, the participation of these groups in consultations and discussion are very critical in supporting all stakeholders by finding concrete solutions and addressing their challenges now and after the pandemic at all levels especially in Africa.

Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) in collaboration with its partners will therefore come together in the event titled "Better support needed for women with disabilities: Leave no women behind during COVID-19 and beyond" will highlight the impact of COVID 19 on women with disabilities in Ghana, Kenya, and Mali and give voices to these women through the sharing of their own stories. They will also provide concrete solutions on how their needs will be addressed and build better forward to ensure no one is left behind in the implementation of the SDGs. Beyond creating the platform for engagement among the target groups, the event will deepen collaboration and partnership and the participants and existing Disability Organisations in Africa.

Panelists and Programme:

1. Women with disabilities speak about COVID-19 in their countries: Alice Appiah, (TBC) Ghana, Jane Adhiambo (TBC) Kenya and Assitan Dembelle (TBC) Mali.
2. Presentation of African Report on Women with Disabilities during COVID-19: Rita Kusi, GFD, and Sylvia Beales, UK
3. Discussion on situation of Women with Disabilities during COVID-19 and key demands
Moderator: FEMNET TBC.

Organizers are Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), global, Polycor, Kenya, Ghana Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (GFD), Ghana.