

## DISABILITY CAUCUS HLS STATEMENT COP27

**SPEAKER:** Kera Sherwood-O'Regan

**TIME:** 2 minutes

---

E tio te tui, e ketekete te kākā, e kōriki te kokako e.  
Tēnā koutou kātoa, ko Kera Sherwood-O'Regan tōku ikoa.

This whakatauki recognises the many different birds whose diverse voices make up the chorus heard in my homeland of Te Waipounamu, the South Island of New Zealand. My name is Kera Sherwood-O'Regan and I greet you all as an Indigenous Kāi Tahu, neurodivergent, and disabled woman whose intersecting identities bring me to this COP.

As an Indigenous person, I see rising sea levels and coastal erosion eating away at my urupa and sacred cultural sites in Moeraki and melting the glaciers of my mauka - mountain - Aoraki. As a disabled woman, I see climate disaster after climate disaster leaving disabled people to die; I see climate mitigation policies that aim to cut emissions but do so at the cost of accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities; and I see climate movements that call for justice while being completely inaccessible for my community - least of all during an ongoing pandemic that - like climate change - has hit disabled people first and worst.

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by climate change as well as responses that do not include our communities. Climate change exacerbates pre-existing inequities, particularly harming Indigenous People with Disabilities, women and girls, and other multiply marginalised communities.

Few Nationally Determined Contributions reference persons with disabilities, despite the disproportionate impact of climate change on us and many parties' existing commitments to upholding our rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. State Parties must urgently ensure that national climate policies and plans include concrete commitments to uphold the UNCRPD and enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

After years of advocacy from disabled climate activists, we welcome the inclusion of disability rights language in the draft decision text for ACE. We recommend that this text be adopted as is, and look forward to congratulating the parties on this when concluded. This positive progress highlights the importance of both disability inclusion and advocacy within the UNFCCC, as well as the importance of mainstreaming disability rights and inclusion across the COP agenda.

Establishment of a dedicated financial facility for Loss and Damage remains the defining issue of COP27, and must be concluded swiftly to mobilise tangible support for those already suffering from climate impacts. We urge parties to ensure that such a facility is available and accessible for persons with disabilities; that non-economic losses for our communities are also accounted for; and that parties' commitments represent new, additional, and adequate finance.

Finally, it is critical that the UNFCCC implements the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy as an important measure to make all climate processes and decisions inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. This must include meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities and our representative organisations, at global, regional, national, and local levels, to ensure no one is left behind.