

COP28 Statement on Behalf of Disability Caucus

Hello everyone. My name is Juan Angel De Gouveia, president of Latin American Network of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS), and board member, International Disability Alliance. I'm a deaf person so I'm speaking in sign language.

We, persons with disabilities and our allies wish to thank the UNFCCC for the opportunity to provide this statement.

Persons with disabilities constitute 16% of the global population. We are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Women with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples with disabilities are among those at greatest risk.

The number and diversity of people with disabilities attending Climate Change Conferences has been significantly increasing in recent years.

Our participation is essential. It is not only a legal obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), but we bring unique experience and knowledge.

A transition towards accessible and inclusive societies will strengthen the move towards resilience and sustainability for all.

However, we are a long way from achieving this goal. As an example, 80% of States Parties to the Paris Agreement do not include any reference to persons with disabilities in their Nationally Determined Contributions.

- We call on the parties and UNFCCC Secretariat to guarantee full and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in UNFCCC processes and decisions.
- We call on all States to plan their NDCs in line with the human rights-based approach to disability and in consultation with persons with disabilities and their organisations.
- Regarding finance for loss and damage, we urge the allocation of specific funds as well as mainstreaming disability-related costs.
- Although COP 28 has shown some improvement regarding accessibility for participation, there are still major gaps. These include a lack of sign language interpretation and captioning, and a lack of multiple formats for navigation signage and information. We demand action by UNFCCC and the COP presidency, in line with their respective obligations under the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the UN CRPD to address these challenges.

An all-of-society approach is required if climate action is to be effective for everyone. Persons with disabilities look forward to being fully involved.