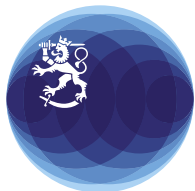


12 March 2024  
Niko Humalisto,  
Virpi Mesiäislehto  
and Hisayo Katsui



# Avenues for disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity action

Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland

Publications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2024:3

# Avenues for disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity action

Niko Humalisto, Virpi Mesiäislehto and Hisayo Katsui

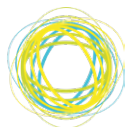
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## Avenues for disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity action

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### Abstract

This study maps the opportunities to advance disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity action. International policy frameworks oblige states to mainstream disability inclusion into development and human rights issues, yet climate and biodiversity governance has traditionally followed independent tracks. Based on a policy and literature review and key informant interviews (N=46), the findings show that specific references to disability are missing in policies, strategies and action plans, and recognition for persons with disabilities as agents of change is limited. Budget allocation for disability inclusion also remains low across the studied key stakeholders. Additionally, inaccessibility of negotiation processes, lack of official mechanisms, and necessary capacity to negotiate with other climate and biodiversity stakeholders hinder disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity action. The analysis shows that transformative changes can be enacted through four leverage points: strengthening the institutional presence of organisations of persons with disabilities in the negotiations; mainstreaming disability inclusion as a human rights issue; developing mechanisms for disability inclusion and creating systems of accountability; and integrating disability inclusion into national plans guiding climate and biodiversity action.

Publication was updated on 11 April 2024, p. 17, 22, 26, 37, 39, 41, 58.

### Provision

This report is commissioned as part of UniPID Development Policy Studies (UniPID DPS), funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and managed by the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID). UniPID is a network of Finnish universities established to strengthen universities' global responsibility and collaboration with partners from the Global South, in support of sustainable development. The UniPID DPS instrument strengthens knowledge-based development policy by identifying the most suitable available researchers to respond to the timely knowledge needs of the MFA and by facilitating a framework for dialogue between researchers and ministry officials. The content of this report does not reflect the official opinion of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The responsibility for the information and views expressed in the report lies entirely with the authors.

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**Keywords** disability, climate changes, Inclusion, governance improvement

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## Vammaisten osallisuuden keinot ilmasto- ja biodiversiteettitoiminnassa

### Ulkoministeriön julkaisuja 2024:3

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Tekijä/t  
Kieli Niko Humalisto, Virpi Mesiäislehto ja Hisayo Katsui  
englanti Sivumäärä 58

#### Tiivistelmä

Tämä tutkimus kartoittaa mahdollisuuksia edistää vammaisten osallisuutta ilmasto- ja biodiversiteettitoimissa. Kansainväliset poliittiset kehykset velvoittavat valtioita lisäämään vammaisten osallisuutta kehitys- ja ihmisoikeuskysymyksissä, mutta ilmaston ja luonnon monimuotoisuuteen liittyvä hallinto on perinteisesti kulkenut omia linjojaan. Poliitiikan ja kirjallisuuden tarkastelun sekä keskeisten tietolähteiden haastattelujen (N=46) perusteella tehdyt havainnot osoittavat, että linjauksissa, strategioissa ja toimintasuunnitelmissa ei ole erityisiä viittauksia vammaisuuteen ja että vammaisten henkilöiden tunnistaminen muutoksen tekijöiksi on vähäistä. Myös vammaisten osallisuuden määrärahat jäävät pieniksi tutkimuksen kohteena olleissa keskeisissä sidosryhmissä. Lisäksi vammaisten osallisuuden esteinä ilmaston ja luonnon monimuotoisuuteen liittyvissä toimissa ovat vaikeudet päästä mukaan neuvotteluprosesseihin, virallisten mekanismien puute ja tarvittavat valmiudet neuvotella muiden ilmaston ja luonnon monimuotoisuuteen liittyvien sidosryhmien kanssa. Analyysi osoittaa, että todellisia muutoksia voidaan toteuttaa neljän vipupisteen kautta: vahvistamalla vammaisjärjestöjen institutionaalista mukanaoloa neuvotteluissa, valtavirtaistamalla vammaisten osallisuutta ihmisoikeuskysymyksenä, kehittämällä mekanismeja vammaisten osallistamiseksi sekä luomalla vastuuvollisuuden järjestelmiä ja sisällyttämällä vammaisten osallisuus ilmaston ja luonnon monimuotoisuuden liittyviin, toimia ohjaaviin kansallisiin suunnitelmiin.

Julkaisu on päivitetty 11.4.2024, s. 17, 22, 26, 37, 39, 41, 58.

#### Klausuuli

Tämä raportti on osa ulkoministeriön rahoittamia ja UniPID-verkoston hallinnoimia kehityspoliittisia selvityksiä (UniPID Development Policy Studies). Finnish University Partnership for International Development, UniPID, on suomalaisten yliopistojen verkosto, joka edistää yliopistojen globaalivastuuta ja yhteistyötä globaalin etelän kumppanien kanssa kestäväen kehityksen saralla. Kehityspoliittinen selvitysyhteistyö vahvistaa kehityspoliitiikan tietoperustaisuutta. UniPID identifioi sopivia tutkijoita vastaamaan ulkoministeriön ajankohtaisiin tiedontarpeisiin ja fasilitoi puitteet tutkijoiden ja ministeriön virkahenkilöiden väliselle dialogille. Tämän raportin sisältö ei vastaa ulkoministeriön virallista kantaa. Vastuu raportissa esitetyistä tiedoista ja näkökulmista on raportin laatijoilla.

Asiasanat vammaisuus, ilmastonmuutokset, osallisuus, hallinnon parantaminen

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## Sätt att inkludera personer med funktionsnedsättning i åtgärder för klimat och biologisk mångfald

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Författare Niko Humalisto, Virpi Mesiäislehto och Hisayo Katsui

Språk engelska

Sidantal

58

### Referat

I denna studie kartläggs möjligheterna att främja inkluderingen av personer med funktionsnedsättning i åtgärder för klimat och biologisk mångfald. Enligt internationella politiska ramar är länderna skyldiga att inkludera personer med funktionsnedsättning i utvecklings- och människorättsfrågor, men ledningen av klimatet och den biologiska mångfalden har traditionellt sätt följt ett oberoende spår. Baserat på policy- och litteraturgranskning och viktiga intervjuer med informanter (N=46), visar resultaten att särskilda hänvisningar till funktionsnedsättningar saknas i policyer, strategier och handlingsplaner och att erkännandet av personer med funktionsnedsättning som aktörer för förändring är begränsat. Budgetanslaget för inkludering av personer med funktionsnedsättning förblir också lågt bland granskade viktiga intressenter. Dessutom förhindrar otillgängliga förhandlingsprocesser, brist på officiella mekanismer och nödvändig kapacitet att förhandla med andra intressenter inom klimat och biologisk mångfald till att personer med funktionsnedsättning inkluderas i åtgärder för klimat och biologisk mångfald. Analysen visar att omvälvande förändringar kan genomföras genom fyra hävstångspunkter: stärka den institutionella närvaron av organisationer för personer med funktionsnedsättning i förhandlingarna, integrera inkludering av personer med funktionsnedsättning som en människorättsfråga, utveckla mekanismer för inkludering av personer med funktionsnedsättning och skapa system för ansvarsskyldighet samt integrera inkludering av personer med funktionsnedsättning i nationella planer om åtgärder för klimat och biologisk mångfald.

Publikation uppdaterades den 11 april 2024, s. 17, 22, 26, 37, 39, 41, 58.

### Klausul

Denna rapport är beställd som en del av UniPID Development Policy Studies (UniPID DPS), finansierad av Finlands Utrikesministerium (MFA), och hanterad av Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID). UniPID är ett nätverk av finska universitet som etablerats för att stärka universitetens globala ansvar och samarbete med partner från det södra halvklotet, till stöd för en hållbar utveckling. UniPID DPS-verktyget stärker en kunskapsbaserad utvecklingspolicy genom att identifiera de mest lämpliga, tillgängliga forskarna för att svara på utrikesministeriets kunskapsbehov i rätt tid och att underlätta ett ramverk för en dialog mellan forskare och departementstjänstemän. Innehållet i denna rapport återspeglar inte Finlands utrikesministeriums officiella uppfattning. Ansvaret för informationen och åsikterna i rapporten ligger helt på författarna.

Nyckelord funktionsnedsättning, klimatförändring, inkludering, förbättrad ledning

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## FOREWORD

### **Exploring avenues for disability inclusion in biodiversity and climate action**

Finland has a long track record in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in international forums. Most of the disability work supported by Finland is designed and implemented by persons with disabilities themselves, and their representative organisations. This is an important principle under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In recent years, Finland has focused on promoting system-level change. The aim has been that development co-operation, development financing and humanitarian actors that Finland is partnering with take the inclusion of persons with disabilities into account in their strategies and country-level operations.

In its Fifth Assessment Report published in 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that persons with disabilities are likely to be disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change due to their increased vulnerability, limited access to resources, and the lack of inclusive disaster risk management systems. The report highlighted the need for inclusive approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, which take into account the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities. The report recommended that such approaches should involve the participation and engagement of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes and the development of policies and programmes.

Disability-inclusive climate action is an emerging area globally, and in Finland's policy advocacy. The successes and lessons learnt from earlier work done in promoting system-level change in disability inclusion now needs to be expanded to this sector.

The goal of this study is to highlight the opportunities and challenges for disability inclusion in climate and environmental diplomacy. The study looks at how disability inclusion is addressed and operationalised in climate and biodiversity treaty negotiations and implementation, and what (more) could be done to promote disability inclusion in international decision-making and financing for climate and biodiversity action. Finally, based on analysis of the collected data, the study makes proposals for leverage points and actionable items for taking disability inclusive action forward.



This study was commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and it was conducted by an independent team of experts. The views and opinion expressed in this study are exclusively the views of the team.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs intends to use this study as a basis for discussing the way forward in improving inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate and environment diplomacy and action, working closely with other Finnish ministries and agencies and civil society, led by the organisations of persons with disabilities.

We hope this study provides readers in Finland and elsewhere with inspiration for their own work.

Department for Development Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland,  
November 2023

Kerstin Stendahl  
Special Envoy on Climate and Environment

Petri Puhakka  
Ambassador for Disability Inclusion

# 1 Introduction

The intersection of disability and the changes in climate and environmental systems is becoming an increasingly acknowledged issue in international decision-making.<sup>1</sup> Persons with disabilities are among those disproportionately affected by the changes, yet they tend to be marginalised in climate and biodiversity policy-making at different scales of governance.<sup>2</sup> This neglect is at odds with the human rights principles of fair and equal access for all. Namely, the international legal and policy frameworks governing the rights of persons with disabilities are very clear on the matter: governments are obligated to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities in mitigation, adaptation and risks related to climate change. The general principles underpinning the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)<sup>3</sup> have relevance to climate change, biodiversity and related action. Disability inclusion is also gaining momentum in the UN system, demonstrated through the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS).<sup>4</sup>

It is blatantly obvious that not being able to solve the climate change and biodiversity crisis will significantly hamper the realisation and respect for the most fundamental rights for all human beings on the planet. The gravity of neglecting persons with disabilities in the endeavours to strengthen human rights-based governance is significant, because of the sheer number of persons with disabilities, around 16% of the world population,<sup>5</sup> as well as due to the fact they are among the groups that tend to be at the greatest risk of a changing climate and environment.

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1 UN. (2019). *Human rights and climate change. Human Rights Council resolution (A/HRC/RES/41/21)*.

2 Catalina, D. A. (2021). *Statement by Ms. Catalina Devanes Aguilar*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/PersonsDisability/CLIMATESRDisability.docx> [Accessed October 22, 2023].

3 For acronyms and abbreviations, see Annex 1

4 UN. (2019). *United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/> [Accessed September 28, 2023].

5 World Health Organization (WHO). (2022). *Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/publications/item/9789240063600> [Accessed September 19, 2023].

This state of fragility is not a mere consequence of physical and technological environments being non-accessible, as social, political and economic discrimination has kept many persons with disabilities in marginalised positions.

Finland has been internationally recognised as a forerunner in disability inclusion. At the 2022 Global Disability Summit, Finland made five commitments to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, including championing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in international partnerships, and supporting and advocating for disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR). Finland has determined to strengthen disability inclusion in and through its foreign climate and biodiversity policies, but it needs to sort out what the processes, tools and networks are through which it can achieve the ambitions. This research provides empirically based answers to these questions for Finland as well as other key stakeholders. It brings together a scientific literature review, analysis of the governance instruments to the biodiversity and climate crisis, and interviews and focus group discussions with diverse specialists (N=46) within Finnish foreign climate and biodiversity policy, inclusion specialists in UN programmes, and funds and experts from global OPDs.

This study aims to identify potential societal transformation opportunities regarding how the rights of persons with disabilities could be respected in a rapidly changing climate and environment. In this largely under-investigated terrain, we have developed a mapping methodology where we identified 'leverage points' for stronger inclusion among the assemblages of actors, institutions and states that have relevance in shaping the solutions to the climate and biodiversity crisis. Furthermore, as systemic transitions allowing inclusion are likely to be time-consuming and face diverse barriers, the research also maps 'low-hanging fruit': those actions through which inclusion can be advanced cost-, time- and energy-efficiently.

## 2 Literature review and key concepts

### 2.1 Disability and full and effective participation

The CRPD's emphasis on the need for social transformation and society's duty to protect rights and remove obstacles to participation for those with disabilities embodies a paradigm shift from a medical to a human rights model of disability. According to the CRPD, 'disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'<sup>6</sup> Confirming current projections, developing countries are more negatively impacted by climate change, with limited capacities to adjust to risks.<sup>7</sup> Some 80% of the world's persons with disabilities live in developing countries.<sup>8</sup>

Categorising all persons with disabilities under the broad 'vulnerable' and 'at-risk' groups may contribute to further marginalisation, as it hinders their role as active agents of change and reduces how their diverse experiences and perspectives are represented. Intersectionality becomes an important way of approaching disability and for recognising the intersecting factors, such as gender, type of disability, migrant status, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation that manifest inequality in diverse ways in the lives of such a heterogeneous group. Intersectionality is an approach that ties phenomena within different contexts and is key to understanding the multi-layered phenomenon of disability.

Typically, the participation of persons with disabilities is limited, as they have been perceived as objects of action instead of being actors with capacities of their own and as duty-bearers.<sup>9</sup> The CRPD is very clear on this matter in its general principle of full and effective participation (article 3) on an equal basis with others. This formulation emphasises that mere consultation or being present

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6 UN. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. Sixty-first session.

7 Levy, B. S., & Patz, J. A. (2015). *Climate Change, Human Rights, and Social Justice*.

8 WHO & World Bank. (2011). *World Report on Disability* (pp. 1–325). World Health Organization.

9 Katsui, H. (2005). *Towards Equality: Creation of the Disability Movement in Central Asia*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

is not participation. Persons with disabilities have the right to access all decision-making in society, and not limited to disability-related politics, which is often the assumption. Various barriers hinder the political participation and agency of many persons with disabilities,<sup>10</sup> including the assumption that they lack interest in political decision-making, educational gaps, a discriminating legal framework that restricts participation in political life, inaccessibility of physical environments, information and communication, lower levels of employment and income, inadequate capacity of different stakeholders to support with reasonable accommodation and to provide efficient and adequate services, and intersectional discrimination. These barriers also explain why many persons with disabilities have had little opportunity to make their presence felt in environmental and climate policy-formulation.

## 2.2 Social and material dimensions of risks

Traditionally, risks and environmental hazards were interpreted as disturbances from outside society, such as natural disasters.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, responsive measures were built upon technical solutions that alleviate the problems caused by changing climate and environments.<sup>12</sup> Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly recognised that even though changes caused by climate change or biodiversity loss are initiated by biophysical events, they become problems and disasters at the social, economic and political interactions of societies. The risks posed by climate and environmental change, and the ways to overcome or rebound from manifesting risks, are conceptualised via three avenues that integrate both the social and material dimensions of being at risk (summarised in Table 1).<sup>13</sup>

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10 ETYJ/ODIHR (2019). Guidelines on promoting the Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities. Varsova: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

11 Kasperson, J.X., et al., (2005). Vulnerability to global environmental change. In: Kasperson, J.X., Kasperson, R.E. (eds.) *The Social Contours of Risk*. Volume II: Risk analysis, corporations and the globalization of risk. Earthscan, London.

12 Klepp, S., Libertad C.R. (eds.) (2018). *A Critical Approach to Climate Change Adaptation - Discourses, Policies, and Practices*. Routledge, London and New York.

13 These three dimensions are referenced in the Paris Agreement, Article 7 in relation to goal on adaptation: 'Parties hereby establish the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change.' Concepts are referenced in scientific literature, see the seminal work of Gilberto C.G., (2006). Linkages between vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity, *Global Environmental Change*, 16(3): 293–303, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2006.02.004>

**Table 1.** Three avenues for social and material dimensions of risks

Concept	Short definitions <sup>14</sup>	Relevance to disability inclusion
Resilience	<i>The ability of communities, ecosystems and infrastructure to withstand and recover from the impacts of climate or environmental change.</i>	<i>For persons with disabilities, resilience is a sum of societal, material, technological and financial elements that are accessible to cope with locally manifesting risks.<sup>15</sup> Strengthening resilience might necessitate challenging existing power relationships.</i>
Vulnerability	<i>The degree to which people or ecosystems are susceptible to and unable to cope with the adverse effects of climate and environmental change.</i>	<i>Vulnerability of many persons with disabilities is not determined solely by the intrinsic properties of individuals but is also shaped by extrinsic factors, e.g. political or economic access, and freedom from discrimination.</i>
Adaptive capacities	<i>The ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, take advantage of opportunities, or respond to consequences in the context of climate and environmental change.</i>	<i>Many persons with disabilities have low agentic capacities to demand participation and their rights to be respected due to long-term marginalisation and discrimination. Thus, strengthening of their capacities is often necessitated.</i>

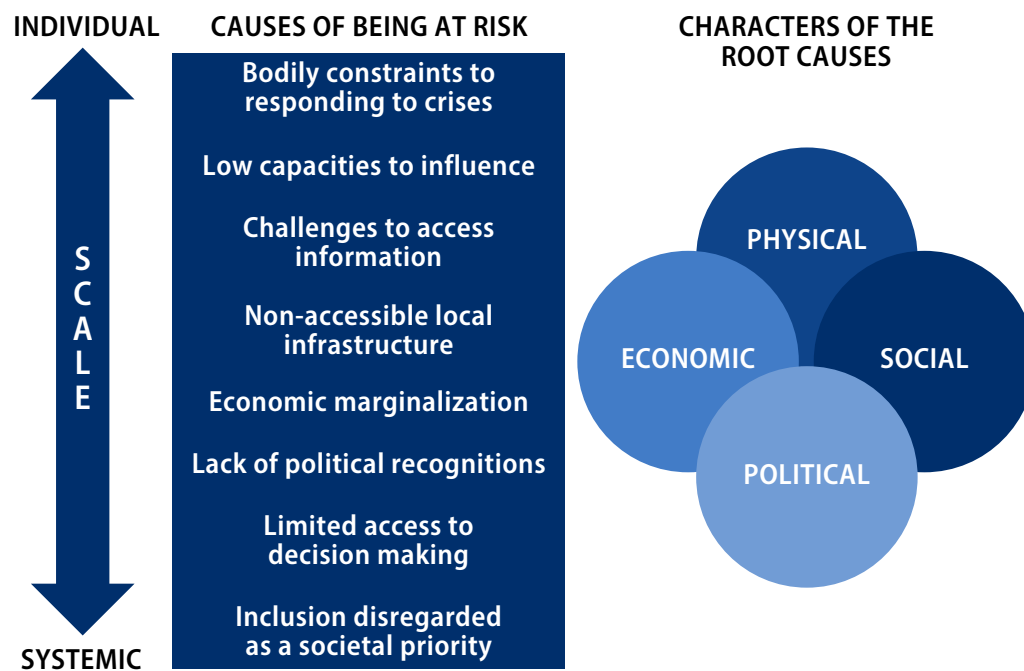
14 These concepts are defined in lay terms to illustrate the landscape of climate and biodiversity related risks to persons with disabilities. Terms are still discussed in scientific literature, see: Lesnikowski, A., Ford, J.D., Biesbroek, R. et al. (2019). A policy mixes approach to conceptualizing and measuring climate change adaptation policy. *Climatic Change* 156: 447–469. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-019-02533-3>

15 Emerging literature shows that the expertise of persons with disabilities provides useful in societal efforts to build resilience. Eriksen, Siri H, Robyn Grøndahl, and Ann-Marit Sæbønes. 'On CRDPs and CRPD: Why the Rights of People with Disabilities Are Crucial for Understanding Climate-resilient Development Pathways'. *The Lancet Planetary Health* 5, no. 12 (2021): e929–39. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2542-5196\(21\)00233-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2542-5196(21)00233-3).

The multifaceted character of the risk underscores the need for maintaining ‘critical dimensions of disability research’ that have focused on the ways in which the mobility and access of persons with disabilities is produced as part of the socially and politically unequal fabric of societies.<sup>16</sup> Global risks manifest themselves as changes in spatially and temporally bound environmental and climatic interactions with communities; when and where to cultivate, how to maintain a family water supply, or where to seek shelter from a storm. Thus, solutions also need to build on localised knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 1 illustrates the scalar multiplicity concerning vulnerability driven by the changing environments and climate. Drivers of vulnerability in climate change actions have been identified through a literature review, and reports such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

**Figure 1.** Scalar multiplicity concerning the drivers of being at risk



16 Hall, E., & Wilton, R. (2017). *Towards a Relational Geography of Disability*. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(6), 727–744. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516659705>.

17 Ampairea, E., Jassogme, L., Providence, H., Acosta, M., Twyman, J., Winowiecki, L., Astena, P. (2017). *Institutional challenges to climate change adaptation: A case study on policy action gaps in Uganda*. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 75, 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2017.05.013>.

### 3 Methodology

This study aims to provide solid points of departure for Finland and other key stakeholders to increase its impacts in advancing disability inclusion within the policy formulation as part of climate and biodiversity negotiations, as well as through its international biodiversity and climate financing. For that aim, the study responds to two key questions: 1) *How is disability inclusion addressed and operationalised in climate and biodiversity negotiations and implementation?* 2) *What could be done to promote disability inclusion in selected international decision-making and financing forums for climate and biodiversity action?*

Literature and policy reviews, interviews and focus group discussions were employed as research methods. Moreover, data was supplemented by sending sets of questions through email to those unavailable for interview. Study participants included key Finnish government stakeholders, networks and OPDs, UN programmes and funds, as well as selected institutions affiliated to the World Bank. In total there were 46 study participants. Persons with disabilities were included as key informants as well as in the steering group of the study. This allowed us to access their expertise and experiences in line with the principle of ‘nothing about us without us’. (For more details on methodology see Annex 2.)

This research investigates multi-scalar climate and biodiversity negotiations and finances. Finding the right entries in such a complex set of actors, flows and processes needed methodological innovation. Advancing disability inclusion needs to operate on multiple fronts. We acknowledge that localised technical improvements responding to unfolding crises can save the lives of many persons with disabilities. Yet, without a strong perspective on structural challenges to inclusion, the suggested remedies may remain incremental – or, at worst, strengthen social injustice.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, this research has a premise that

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18 Wise, R. M., et al. (2014). *Reconceptualising adaptation to climate change as part of pathways of change and response*. *Global Environmental Change*, 28, 325–336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2013.12.002>.



a transformational shift is called for.<sup>19</sup> Those shifts would, according to the IPCC, entail a ‘change in the fundamental attributes of a system including altered goals or values’ and furthermore, concern ‘worldviews, ideologies, structures and power relationships’.<sup>20</sup>

As a solution to proceeding on multiple fronts, this study *first* seeks to identify *policy leverage points* that would allow greater disability inclusion to emerge and consolidate in both policy and implementation. Such a point refers to a specific moment in time and place when a particular policy issue or problem shifts from being a marginal concern to an embedded mainstream political priority.<sup>21</sup> By identifying such points and building strategies on how to reach them, policy-makers and key stakeholders may begin to take action to address disability inclusion, which could act as ‘boundary objects’ from practical incremental solutions towards transformative societal changes. The *second* analytic concept is ‘low-hanging fruit’,<sup>22</sup> which refers to policy issues or actions that are relatively easy to address or achieve. These are typically problems or solutions that require minimal effort, resources or political capital to implement. Addressing inclusion through the lens of ‘low-hanging fruit’ can provide a strategic approach for policy-makers – as well as for other policy entrepreneurs dedicated to the matter. When drawing the key findings of the analysis together in Section 6, those are communicated to the identified stakeholders with opportunities to advance disability inclusion as ‘actionable items’.

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19 IPCC. (2019). *Global Warming of 1.5 °C: An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*. (IPCC Special Report). Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.

20 IPCC. (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability: Summary for Policymakers. Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report)*. Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

21 Abson, D. J., Fischer, J., Leventon, J., et al. (2017). *Leverage Points for Sustainability Transformation*. *Ambio*, 46, 30–39. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-016-0800-y>

22 Kingdon, J. W. (2014). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow.

## 4 Political and legal landscape of disability inclusion

Despite the growing awareness of and commitment to disability inclusion among international development and human rights actors, the decision-making architectures of climate and environment and the established political instruments of governance are limited when it comes to disability inclusion. Among the reasons for this is the perceived technical character of climate and environmental negotiations – despite after establishing sustainable development goals (SDGs) human rights-based governance has gained political gravity. As the disability movement is only now beginning to engage more substantively with the climate debate (and even less on those concerning biodiversity), OPDs do not yet have an institutional presence in the forums of policy formulation. Alas, the participation of persons with disabilities in policy formulation is minimal and rather tokenistic. There is useful learning, particularly from advances in disability inclusion in humanitarian frameworks and DRR, and from the integration of gender, youth and indigenous people-led movements that could be pulled across this field (See Annex 3 for tools and guidance). Moreover, some of the prerequisites for disability-inclusive negotiation spaces are accessibility and data on the relationship of climate, biodiversity and disability.<sup>23</sup> Disability inclusion is, however, an established issue in the key governance mechanisms as identified below, and thus solid political grounds do exist to advance the participation of persons with disabilities.

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23 Jodoin, S., Buettgen, A., Groce, N., Gurung, P., Kaiser, C., Kett, M., et al. (2023). *Nothing about us without us: The urgent need for disability-inclusive climate research*. *PLOS Clim*, 2(3), e0000153. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pclm.0000153>

## 4.1 International governance on disability, human rights and global crises

**Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** Governments have a clear responsibility under international human rights law to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change and biodiversity loss. Although the CRPD does not explicitly mention climate or biodiversity, the general principles of the CRPD in Article 3 and many of the articles are pertinent.<sup>24</sup>

States parties are obliged to strengthen the capacity of persons with disabilities to participate in climate and biodiversity decision-making that concerns them. Preamble point 14 includes the importance of active involvement in decision-making in *all things* that affect them, and Article 4 requires states to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities in decision-making processes. Article 21 emphasises that political processes need to be accessible in order to be inclusive; and Article 24 emphasises the importance of making disability issues part of mainstream policy and political processes. Furthermore, Article 29 makes provisions on the right to enjoy political rights on an equal basis with others. CRPD also demands recognition for contributions made by persons with disabilities to advance the development of societies in point 13 of the preamble.

States parties are obliged to assess and consider the specific impacts of climate change on the rights of persons with disabilities. While the CRPD does not use the term 'intersectionality', it recognises the importance of addressing multiple forms of discrimination and promoting equality and non-discrimination for all persons with disabilities, including in the preamble (p), in Article 6 on women with disabilities, and in Article 7 on children with disabilities. As per the extraterritorial stipulations in Article 32, states are obliged to support international cooperation efforts to address impacts of climate change and strengthen the climate resilience of persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, states parties are responsible for developing and implementing policies to prevent and minimise the adverse impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities.<sup>25</sup> According to Article 11: 'States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian

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24 Disability Inclusive Climate Action Research Program at McGill University & International Disability Alliance. (2022). *Status Report on Disability Inclusion in National Climate Commitments and Policies*. McGill University.

25 Ibid.

law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.' Furthermore, Article 13 can be interpreted to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to access justice when experiencing adverse effects of climate action or inaction.

Article 9 stipulates that states parties are to take measures to ensure accessibility to information and communication, and Article 21 concerns the right to seek and receive information on an equal basis with others through forms of communication of their choice. This makes states parties responsible for providing accessible information on climate change and biodiversity loss to persons with disabilities. Moreover, Article 31 makes provisions for statistical and research data. Such data is needed to inform climate and biodiversity-related policy-making and the implementation of the CRPD.

CRPD obligates states parties to address the changes in the present and future of work due to the climate crisis in a way that advances social justice and promotes decent work creation. States parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. Thus, a 'just transition' to sustainable economies is understood as a unique opportunity to advance decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty,<sup>26</sup> and is aligned strongly with the principles of CRPD and Article 27. In addition to the right to work, the climate and environmental crisis affects the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights of persons with disabilities, which states parties are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil. These include but are not limited to the right to health (Article 25), education (Article 24), adequate standard of living (including access to water) and social protection (Article 28), self-determination (Articles 12 and 19), and the constellation of rights related to bodily autonomy (Articles 16 and 17).

Finally, the architecture of national implementation and monitoring (Articles 33–38) and the thorough approach to implementation and monitoring have the potential to advance disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity action if these thematic areas emerge in the states parties' reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Thus, equipping national monitoring mechanisms on climate action is a key point of departure. The results show that among UN agencies and OPDs the CRPD is understood as the foundation for disability-inclusive climate

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26 ILO. (2022). *'Nothing about us without us': Realizing Disability Rights through a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies.*

and biodiversity action. The challenges with its implementation relate to the limited interaction it has with other conventions and UN system bodies working on climate change and biodiversity.

**Human Rights Council resolution (48/13) ‘The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment’:** Treating environmental and climate change as a question of human rights was solidified in 2022 when the general assembly of the UN agreed on a recognition to treat access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right.<sup>27</sup> At its core, the recognition encourages states implementing their environmental and human rights obligations and commitments, and furthermore scaling up their efforts to realise the right. It recognises the issue of justice and the significance of disability inclusion in discussing vulnerability in a changing environment and climate by expressing that ‘while the human rights implications of environmental damage are felt by individuals and communities around the world, the consequences are felt most acutely by women and girls and those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations, including indigenous peoples, children, older persons and persons with disabilities’.

**Founding framework conventions on climate and biodiversity:** In 1992, the Earth Summit of Rio (formally the UN Conference on Environment and Development) ushered in the age of international policy formulation concerning climate change and biodiversity. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty that was established to combat ‘dangerous human interference with the climate system’, in part by stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was also established in Rio. The CBD is also a multilateral treaty that aims to promote the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

Both are framework conventions that establish general frameworks for addressing particular issues or problems. In other words, the CBD and UNFCCC solidified the general principles, goals and objectives for countries to work together to address biodiversity and climate change. CBD and UNFCCC pay little attention to human rights, let alone disability inclusion. However, the conventions acknowledge that

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27 UN. (2022). *The Human Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment (A/75/L.75)*. Retrieved from <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/289/50/PDF/G2128950.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed August 16, 2023].

there are differences in terms of vulnerability to biodiversity loss and climate change and that population groups have distinctive capacities to act, which grounds the later attention to specific focus on inclusion based on the principle of equity and justice.

## 4.2 Contemporary politics and tools for tackling biodiversity loss and climate crisis

**Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** is a global plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. It was adopted by all the UN member states and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development. The agenda lays out 17 SDGs with 169 targets, which are ‘integrated and indivisible’. Through setting such a holistic approach to developmental challenges, the interviewed persons highlighted a foundational transition in the mode of governing environment and climate issues – human rights became more tightly intertwined to policy formulation.

Its key principle, ‘leave no one behind’, points to inclusion as SDGs’ implementation cannot afford to leave 16 per cent of the population out of the equation, and the successful implementation of Agenda 2030 hinges on whether persons with disabilities are supported in fulfilling their intellectual and creative potential on a par with everyone else in society. SDGs specifically reference disability seven times, but disability inclusion does not have a specific target like SDG5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Although persons with disabilities should be integrated to all goals, they are not specifically addressed in climate targets.

**The Paris Agreement** is, according to the UNFCCC, *a legally binding international treaty on climate replacing the Kyoto protocol as the primary instrument of climate governance*<sup>28</sup> that was adopted in 2015. It sets the cornerstone to negotiating contemporary climate policies. Although the Paris Agreement does not have specific targets for disability inclusion, human rights are identified as a key point of departure for the diverse aims and ambitions. It was already in the Cancun Agreement, adopted at the Conference of Parties (COP 16) in 2010, that parties

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28 World Economic Forum (WEC). (2021). *Is the Paris Climate Agreement legally binding? Experts explain*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/11/paris-climate-agreement-legally-binding/> [Accessed November 20, 2023].

identified persons with disabilities as one of the segments of the population whose human rights are acutely affected by the impacts of climate change (decision 1/CP.16). The Paris Agreement continues by:

*'[A]cknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.'*

The implementation of the Paris Agreement rests on the shoulders of ratified state parties and subsequently, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are among the key instruments through which inclusion can be turned into practice. Despite the prospects, a systematic analysis reveals that only 37 of 192 state parties to the Paris Agreement currently refer to persons with disabilities in their NDC.<sup>29</sup> The situation for NAPs was slightly better, 46 countries mentioning the issue. Although there were some examples concerning specified targets or mechanisms of evaluating impacts, references to inclusion were considered superfluous, described in the long lists of groups that were specifically vulnerable but lacked any specified action on how to remedy the situation. The co-author of the research, Professor Jodoin, summarises this shortcoming:

*'Where they do include persons with disabilities, it is usually to indicate their vulnerability to climate change or to signal the need for their inclusion, without providing concrete measures to promote their resilience and/or to involve them in efforts to transition to low-carbon societies. The failure to consider persons with disabilities or their rights in climate policies only reinforces social inequalities and undermines their effectiveness.'*<sup>30</sup>

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29 Jodoin, S., et al. (2022). *Disability Rights in National Climate Policies: Status Report* (Centre for Human Rights & Legal Pluralism & International Disability Alliance). Retrieved from <https://www.disabilityinclusiveclimate.org/researcheng/project-one-ephnc-76974-dsc4y> [Accessed November 21, 2023].

30 International Disability Alliance. (2022). *States fail to include Persons with Disabilities in response to climate change*. Retrieved from <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/states-fail-include-persons-disabilities-response-climate-change> [Accessed November 7, 2023].

**The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** (GBF) is a global strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for the next decade and beyond, which was ratified in 2022.<sup>31</sup> It is not legally binding similar to the Paris Agreement, but sets clear responsibilities for states to implement collective goals, such as the 30 billion dollar financial contribution from developed to developing countries by 2030. It aims to define targets and pathways to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and achieve a nature-positive world by 2030. The challenges in biodiversity action resemble those witnessed in avoiding the climate crisis: in the previous Aichi Biodiversity Targets, international targets for biodiversity were not properly translated into national policy, parties did not mobilise adequate funding for implementation,<sup>32</sup> and the goals were set without defining specified action, subsequently making it difficult to measure progress and hold countries accountable.<sup>33</sup>

By drawing on the challenges, the GBF is action- and results-oriented and aims to guide and promote, at all levels, the revision, development, updating and implementation of policies, goals, targets, and national biodiversity strategies and actions plans. The GBF has multiple avenues to advance human rights-based approaches, and the framework makes specific references to human rights law. Disability inclusion is referred to once in target 22:

*'Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.'*

**The Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** is a 15-year global agreement to reduce, prevent and respond to disaster risks across the globe. It was adopted by UN Member States at the Third UN World Conference in March 2015. The framework aims to strengthen social and economic resilience to disasters caused by natural, biological and technological hazards, and which are further exacerbated

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31 UN. (2022). *CBD/COP/DEC/15/4, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf> [Accessed August 16, 2023].

32 Green, E., et al. (2019). Relating characteristics of global biodiversity targets to reported progress. *Conservation Biology*, 33(6), 1360-1369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13322>

33 Nature Editorials. (2020). The United Nations must get its new biodiversity targets right. *Nature*, 578, 337–338. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-00450-5>



by climate extremes and slow onset events. It recognises that recovery provides an opportunity to 'Build Back Better' and empowers persons with disabilities to lead and promote 'universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches.' Subsequently, the framework has placed persons with disabilities and their organisations as proactive stakeholders in the development of effective DRR policies.<sup>34</sup> It exemplifies the role that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations can and should play in both its implementation and monitoring.<sup>35</sup> Specifically, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) facilitates the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities: Thematic Group on DRR, which supports persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to engage in the Sendai Platforms and monitoring processes. Furthermore, the Sendai Framework plans to lay out concrete indicators and steps to be taken in order to ensure disability inclusion. As of 2023, 81 member states have a disability-inclusive post-2015 DRR strategy.<sup>36</sup>

**The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** has gained momentum in ushering climate change into the sphere of human rights in the UN Human *Rights Commission*. It involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 United Nations member states. Recently, the UPR is increasingly addressing the links between climate change and human rights. The OHCHR web pages highlight that, between 2008 and 2018, states made 114 recommendations explicitly addressing climate change, and on top of that a larger number of recommendations were made on matters related to climate change, such as those concerning disaster risk reductions and displacement related to climate change.<sup>37</sup> Recommendations about disability inclusion have also been put forward, which is why the instrument allows for the simultaneous review of inclusion matters in tackling the human rights aspects to climate and environmental change, such as displacement, risk and recovery.

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34 Stough, L. M., & Kang, D. (2015). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Persons with Disabilities. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 6, 140–149.

35 Simard, M., et al. (2017). *Disability and Climate Resilience: A Literature Review*. UK Aid. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320800956> [Accessed August 18, 2023].

36 UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction). (2023). *Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction*. Retrieved from <https://www.undrr.org/partners-and-stakeholders/disability-inclusion-disaster-risk-reduction> [Accessed November 9, 2023].

37 OHCHR. (n.d.). *Human Rights Mechanisms Addressing Climate Change*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/human-rights-mechanisms-addressing-climate-change> [Accessed November 7, 2023].

### 4.3 Disability-inclusive climate and biodiversity action in and through the UN system

The overarching structure of disability inclusion within the UN is set through the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) (2019). UNDIS has been said to lay the groundwork for progressive, transformative progress on disability inclusion. It is the first ever UN system-wide disability inclusion strategy with an accountability framework of 15 performance indicators on which each UN entity is annually required to report. UNDIS is remarkable in the sense that it introduced accountability to disability inclusion in UN agencies' operations and programmes. The strategy enables the UN system to support the implementation of the CRPD and other international human rights instruments. UNDIS also supports the achievement of SDGs, and climate-related international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework on DRR. The **UNDIS Secretariat** is responsible for the implementation of the strategy and is uniquely positioned in the Executive Office of the Secretary General and sits within the Sustainable Development Unit, which looks at climate action and climate change and is very actively engaged in the Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate change negotiations. It is the only entity in the UN system with overall visibility of disability inclusion.

**The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** is a key institution for advancing human rights and inclusion, and it has taken a strong focus on climate change. Its current policy asserts that 'it is critical to apply a human rights-based approach to guide global policies and measures designed to address climate change.'<sup>38</sup> OHCHR has published a wide set of instruments and reports that have particular relevance to tackling climate change. Furthermore, the **UN Human Rights Council** has a Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Council published a landmark study (A/HRC/44/30) concerning the relationships of climate change and disability inclusion in 2020. Furthermore, the council adopted a resolution (Res 41/21) in 2019 that urged states to consider disability rights when addressing climate change, which notes that 'international human rights instruments provide roles for states and other duty bearers, including businesses, to promote, protect and respect, as would be appropriate, human rights, including those of persons with disabilities, when taking action to address

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38 See OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights). (n.d.). *Human Rights and Climate Change: Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/impacts-climate-change-effective-enjoyment-human-rights> [Accessed November 20, 2023].

the adverse effects of climate change.' In 2023, OHCHR policy on disability rights<sup>39</sup> was updated to respond to UNDIS requirements. In 2022, OHCHR 'met' or 'exceeded' six out of the 15 UNDIS indicators.

**The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** (UNDRR) is the United Nations focal point for disaster risk reduction and coordinates the UN-wide implementation of the Sendai Framework. UNDRR's Strategic Framework for 2022–2025 recognises the importance of disability inclusion. Through strong in-house expertise on disability inclusion and institutionalised consultation with persons with disabilities through stakeholder group engagement, UNDRR is a UN forerunner in disability inclusion within the area of climate action. This is reflected in the UNDIS performance, which demonstrates a steady growth from zero indicators met in 2019 to six being met or exceeded in 2022. The entity has invested in disability disaggregated data,<sup>40</sup> which has enabled a deeper understanding of the progress made in disability inclusion in DRR.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, UNDRR has made significant efforts towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities during the Global and Regional DRR platforms. Finland's support has been deeply felt in the area of disability inclusion, for instance in the piloting of the scorecard tool for the inclusion of persons with disabilities<sup>42</sup> within the Making Cities Resilient 2030<sup>43</sup> programme, as well as in intersectionality initiatives.<sup>44</sup>

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39 OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights). (2021). *UN Human Rights Disability Rights Policy, 2021*. Retrieved from [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/OHCHR\\_Ind1\\_DRS-Policy-2022.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/OHCHR_Ind1_DRS-Policy-2022.pdf) [Accessed October 23, 2023].

40 UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction). (2021). *Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM) Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD)*. Retrieved from <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-monitor-sfm-sex-age-and-disability-disaggregated-data-saddd> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

41 UNDRR. (2023). *Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters*. Retrieved from <https://www.undrr.org/report/2023-gobal-survey-report-on-persons-with-disabilities-and-disasters> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

42 UNDRR. (2024). *Advancing disability inclusion in local disaster risk reduction: Analysis and Recommendations from the Pilot Implementation of the Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities - Annex for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.undrr.org/publications/report-disability-inclusion-scorecard-assessment> [Accessed April 4, 2024].

43 UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction). (2023). *Making Cities Resilient 2030*. Retrieved from <https://mcr2030.undrr.org/join> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

44 UNDRR Africa. (2023, October 23). *Tweet*. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/UNDRR\\_Africa/status/1655508059601395713?s=20](https://twitter.com/UNDRR_Africa/status/1655508059601395713?s=20) [Accessed October 23, 2023].

**The UN Development Programme's (UNDP)** Strategic Framework for 2022–2025 includes a commitment to disability inclusion. Strategic direction on disability inclusion is embedded in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy: People for 2030<sup>45</sup> and strategic guidance note on Disability Inclusive Development in UNDP.<sup>46</sup> UNDP is part of the UN system-wide coordination of disability inclusion. For instance, UNDP was part of the development and operationalisation of the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) multi-partner trust fund, and hosts its technical secretariat. Currently, UNDP is co-implementing the UNPRPD Fund Climate Change project, which comes with the potential of also strengthening capacity and technical expertise across UNDP programmes on disability-inclusive climate action. Furthermore, UNDP works to integrate biodiversity considerations into various sectors, promoting sustainable practices and reducing negative impacts on biodiversity. In addition, UNDP's Climate Promise is the world's largest offer of support for countries to enhance their pledges (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Through nature-based climate solutions, UNDP promotes the conservation, rehabilitation and climate-informed management of biodiversity and ecosystems. There has been success in on-going efforts to institutionalise consultations with persons with disabilities regarding these programmes by bringing in southern OPDs and those with fewer resources into processes related to planning and implementation.

For the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**, UNDIS provides direction, although the organisation does not have a specific disability inclusion policy in place. There has been steady progress in UNDIS performance: in 2019, UNEP reported 'missing' 11 and 'approaching' three indicators, in comparison to 2022, when the report showed 'missing' five and 'approaching' 10 indicators. UNEP's environmental and social sustainability framework<sup>47</sup> makes references to persons with disabilities as a specifically vulnerable group to environmental risks and hazards, and mentions CRPD article 9 regarding accessibility and stakeholder engagement with persons with disabilities. The Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) briefly mentions

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45 UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2019). *People for 2030: United Nations Development Programme People Strategy 2019–2021*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-03/Careers-OHR-People-for-2030-Strategy-1.pdf> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

46 UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2018). *Strategic Guidance Note on Disability Inclusive Development in UNDP*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/publications/disability-inclusive-development-undp> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

47 UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). (2020). *UNEP's Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework*. Retrieved from <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32022/ESSFEN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

disability inclusion in the guiding principles. In a human rights-based manner, it asks if persons with disabilities have been identified and *engaged* on an equal basis with others to assess both the positive and negative implications of the project approach and their roles in the implementation. All UNEP projects are required to submit SRIF for internal approval of the proposals, thus the agency considers this a beneficial tool for making sure persons with disabilities are considered in environmental action.

**The World Food Programme (WFP)** has made a strategic-level commitment to advance disability inclusion in its programming through the Disability Inclusion Road Map for 2020–2021.<sup>48</sup> The 2023 Disability Inclusion Work Plan has a similar structure to the previous road map. These strategic documents are aligned with the UNDIS structure, to which WFP reports annually. In 2019, WFP reported ‘missing’ performance in all of the UNDIS indicators. Comparatively, in 2022, WFP ‘met’ and ‘exceeded’ nine indicators, ‘approached’ seven and ‘missed’ zero, demonstrating strides towards disability inclusion. The WFP has a dedicated disability inclusion and accessibility desk and integrates disability inclusion into its Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) to ensure that its programming is disability inclusive. The WFP has partnered with the Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) to access technical advice to progress its road map commitments and advance disability inclusion. A recent overview<sup>49</sup> from the Asia and Pacific Region highlights disability inclusion in the region, where participation with OPDs is highlighted as a key action area.

**The International Labour Organization (ILO)** has an UNDIS-informed Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy in place for 2020–23.<sup>50</sup> ILO’s disability inclusion work focuses on just transition, green jobs, and equal opportunities for workers with disabilities. The ILO has produced a policy brief as part of the ILO Just Transition Policy briefs series: “Nothing about us without us”: Realising disability rights through a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and

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48 WFP (2020). *Disability Inclusion Road Map for the period 2020–2021*. Retrieved from <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000119397/download/> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

49 WFP (2023). *Disability Inclusion in Asia and the Pacific: A Regional Overview 2023*. Retrieved from [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000151396/download/?\\_ga=2.83890969.1238582623.1701098226-1003661156.1697621782](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000151396/download/?_ga=2.83890969.1238582623.1701098226-1003661156.1697621782) [Accessed October 23, 2023].

50 ILO (International Labor Organization). (2020). *Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2020–2023*. Retrieved from <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000119397/download/> [Accessed October 23, 2023].

societies.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the ILO has been actively engaged in the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action Working Group (DICA-WG), the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network, and COP side events to bring about awareness on disability and climate action, especially in the thematic area of the just transition of economies. Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all do not make references to disability inclusion. The ILO is among the implementing partners in the UNPRPD Fund's thematic climate change multi-country programme.

**The UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund** (UNPRPD Fund) is a funding mechanism that brings together UN entities, governments, OPDs, and broader civil society to support CRPD implementation. In 2023 it launched a two-year 'Climate change, disability inclusion and intersectionality multi-country programme', which aims to strengthen the climate resilience of persons with disabilities. It is implemented in partnership with UNDP, OHCHR, ILO, IDA, African Disability Forum, Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities, and local OPDs in Jordan, Somalia and South Africa. The programme builds on the capacity of key national institutions, government departments and policy-makers in all three countries and equips them with guidance and recommendations for how to strengthen disability-inclusive and intersectional approaches to national climate change policies and systems, including the disability-inclusive development of NAPs. The knowledge products of this programme have the potential to advance disability inclusion in climate action, especially at the national level.

As the above demonstrates, within the UN system there are mechanisms, resources and guidance on disability-inclusion, much of which has been guided by the UNDIS and anchored within the CRPD. The study suggests that approaches are known and applied, through which disability inclusion can be advanced in the context of climate and environmental action. Specific emphasis is placed on UNDIS as an overarching disability inclusion framework that holds entities, specifically those with a focus on environment and climate change, to account on disability inclusion. UNDIS implementation is progressing based on the analysis of performance ratings. The disability-inclusive capacities of different entities therefore differ substantially. However, it was not possible to conduct a thorough analysis of UNDIS ratings as

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51 ILO (International Labor Organization). (2022). *'Nothing about us without us': Realizing Disability Rights through a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies*. Retrieved from [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed\\_emp/--emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_860628.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_emp/--emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_860628.pdf) [Accessed October 23, 2023].

not all participating entities wanted to disclose their UNDIS ratings to the study team. Also, UNFCCC had not reported on UNDIS performance since 2019, nor did it respond to the invitation to participate in this study. Moreover, platforms such as those provided UNPRPD and GLAD that bring UN entities and OPDs together have the potential to amplify messages and bring about a more coordinated approach to supporting disability inclusion in climate change and biodiversity processes.

## 5 Financing disability-inclusive action on biodiversity and climate

### 5.1 Outlook of finances dedicated to biodiversity, climate and inclusion

Without finances, there is no substantial action to tackle the biodiversity or climate crisis. There are multiple different finance flows ranging from private sector and governmental subsidies to development banks' capital investments and many others. Subsequently, it is important to maintain conceptual clarity when moving to issues related to financial obligations that affect Finland. Namely, we discuss climate finance as stipulated in the Paris Agreement Article 9 and biodiversity finance as it is presented in Target 14 of the GBF.

**Table 2.** Collective finance targets per year (in USD) set in the Paris Agreement and GBF, and Finland's contribution

Type of finance	Pre-2025	Current situation	Finnish contribution in 2022 (in EUR) <sup>52</sup>	Post-2025	Purpose as articulated in the agreement and the framework
Climate finance	100 billion	Around 100 billion <sup>53</sup>	168 million	Over 100 billion	Balanced to mitigation and adaptation – Loss and damage unresolved question
Biodiversity finance	20 billion	Under 10 billion <sup>54</sup>	6.6 million	30 billion	Aligned with the overall goals and objectives outlined in the GBF. To the implementation of national biodiversity action plans

52 Numbers received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland upon request in November 2023.

53 Climate Policy Initiative. (2023). *Climate Finance*. Retrieved from <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/the-programs/climate-finance/> [Accessed September 14, 2023].

54 OECD. (2020). *A Comprehensive Overview of Global Biodiversity Finance: Final Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/environment/resources/biodiversity/report-a-comprehensive-overview-of-global-biodiversity-finance.pdf> [Accessed November 20, 2023].



The global outlook on biodiversity finance is rather bleak. Even though the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes with concern that the overall understanding of biodiversity finance is fragmented, the conclusion is that the levels of finances are far from what the needs are.<sup>55</sup> Depending on the mechanisms of quantification, international public expenditure of international biodiversity finances was USD 3.9–9.3 billion per year on average in 2015–17, and the majority of the funding to developing countries comes via official development aid. The key international biodiversity fund is the Global Environment Facility (GEF).<sup>56</sup> An important player in the (near) future is the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, which was established under GEF in 2023 to support the implementation of the GBF.

In Finland, the share of official development aid dedicated to biodiversity is small – less than one per cent in recent years – and the trend has been decreasing, being highest in 2011 (around 27 million euros), whereas the 2022 sum stood at 6.6 million. The main channel is the core financing to GEF and due to the cycles of when contributions are made, the amount of biodiversity finances changes a great deal from one year to another. Other notable destinations are the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Environment Programme and civil society organisations. Some of the rare examples of how disability inclusion might be advanced in environmental actions come via collaboration between WWF Finland and Abilis.<sup>57</sup>

The recent OECD estimation showcases that a *climate finance commitment* of USD 100 billion might be reached in 2023.<sup>58</sup> Even though the aim is set to a balanced approach, finances to mitigation still overshadows that to adaptation. Finances to loss and damage are not tracked yet, as they are not integrated to the climate finance target. Although the vast majority of climate finance is derived from official development aid (ODA), the main bulk of mobilised financing is delivered as loans

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55 *ibid.*

56 Biofin. (2023). *State of Biodiversity Finance*. Retrieved from [https://www.biofin.org/sites/default/files/content/publications/workbook\\_2018/1-2.html](https://www.biofin.org/sites/default/files/content/publications/workbook_2018/1-2.html) [Accessed September 14, 2023].

57 Pensala, V., Seppinen, L., & Heinonen, M. (2021). *Disability Inclusion in Environmental Conservation: An Analysis of General Aspects and Review of the Status of Inclusion in WWF Finland's Partnership Programme*. Abilis Consulting.

58 OECD. (2022). *Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2016–2020: Insights from Disaggregated Analysis*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/286dae5d-en.pdf?expires=1694697296&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=3AB3FC80EE52F6A6EAB6D140C259E377> [Accessed September 14, 2023].

and other market-based mechanisms, which illustrates the strong role of businesses as key actors to climate action. Finland mobilised around EUR 170 million of climate finance in 2021 and 2022. The Action Plan for Public International Climate Finance (2022) assesses that the sum will stabilise around 200 million for the next four years.<sup>59</sup> Almost all ODA instruments are made use of in mobilising climate finance, although the emphasis is on multilateral funds and banks, as well as Finnfund.<sup>60</sup>

Monitoring official development aid dedicated to disability inclusion is evolving, as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) has applied its own and OECD DAC's disability marker. The Development Policy Results Report (2022) by MFA provides an assessment that around 'a couple of percent' of ODA is dedicated to inclusion,<sup>61</sup> even though the estimation might be too low. MFA statistics show most disability-specific finances go through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), especially Abilis and Disability Partnership Finland. Moreover, several bi- and multilateral projects are presented as inclusion-advancing, such as funding to UNDP and IDA. Climate finances of Finland match with disability priorities in relatively small allocations, such as Felm's programmatic support, WaterFinns' WASH Nepal programme, and UFF Mocuba rural poverty and inequality. One interviewed advisor also highlighted that Finland supports UNDRR and its specific disability inclusion project. There are no disability-related projects concerning biodiversity in the Finnish portfolio.

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59 MFA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland). (2022). *Plan for the Implementation of Finland's Public International Climate Finance*. Retrieved from [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163925/UM\\_2022\\_2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163925/UM_2022_2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) [Accessed November 10, 2023].

60 MFA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland). (2020). *Infographic, 2020*. Retrieved from <https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/finnish-climate-finance-to-developing-countries-2019+%281%29.pdf/769acd90-1b77-a1f6-53ec-670eaa0d8cb7?t=1612436697168> [Accessed September 14, 2023].

61 MFA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland). (2022). *Development Policy Results Report 2022*. Retrieved from <https://um.fi/web/kehityspolitiikan-tulosraportti-2022/introduction> [Accessed November 10, 2023].

Concerning governance, the Finnish systems of operationalising climate finances have been under public scrutiny recently by the National Audit Office of Finland<sup>62</sup> and the Development Policy Committee.<sup>63</sup> Both reports underscore the importance of developing a robust plan for climate finances – this is an argument to be extended to biodiversity finance that has no plan – if results for specific targets such as disability inclusion are to be robustly implemented and evaluated. The Action Plan for Public International Climate Finance was not considered among the interviewees, as it mostly stated simply the state of affairs. It did not discuss disability inclusion or set targets related to the matter. Interviewees also noted with concern that the upkeep or renewal of biodiversity or climate finances in the framework of ODA is not prioritised in Prime Minister Orpo’s governmental programme titled ‘A strong and committed Finland’. Furthermore, as the Finnish ODA is being reduced, maintenance of the level of finances projected in the climate finance implementation plan is at risk.<sup>64</sup>

## 5.2 Private sector finances in biodiversity and climate: multilateral development funds and banks

Transitioning to environmentally sustainable zero-carbon economies builds heavily on the private sector, and subsequently they also have a substantial role to play in inclusion. Furthermore, a large proportion of publicly mobilised funding for climate action is turned into action within the private sector. The governance gap of businesses and disability inclusion is rather wide, as the UN has not reached a conclusion about the private sector’s role in protecting human rights,<sup>65</sup>

62 National Audit Office of Finland. (2021). *Tarkastuskertomus 6/2021 Suomen kansainvälinen ilmastorahoitus - Ohjaus ja tuloksellisuus*. Retrieved from <https://www.vtv.fi/app/uploads/2021/05/VTV-Tarkastus-6-2021-Suomen-kansainvalinen-ilmastorahoitus.pdf> [Accessed November 20, 2023].

63 Finland’s Development Policy Committee. (2022). *Suomen Kansainvälinen Ilmastorahoitus Tarvitsee Selkeän Suunnan*. Retrieved from <https://www.kehityspoliittinentoimikunta.fi/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2022/01/KPT-Suomen-kansainvalinen-ilmastorahoitus-tarvitsee-selkea-suunnan-analyysi.pdf> [Accessed November 20, 2023].

64 Finnish Government, Prime Minister’s Office. (2023). *A Strong and Committed Finland: Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo’s Government*. Retrieved from <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/governments/government-programme#/> [Accessed November 10, 2023].

65 OHCHR. (2023). *BHR Treaty Process*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/business-and-human-rights/bhr-treaty-process> [Accessed October 26, 2023].

trade policies are largely omitting to tackle issues of inclusion,<sup>66</sup> and businesses themselves have not, in general, taken strong steps to promote disability inclusion by themselves.

One prominent starting point for advancing inclusion among businesses originates from 2011, when the UN published Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework (the so-called Ruggie principles) to clarify the role of businesses in respecting human rights.<sup>67</sup> It introduced the principles of human rights-based due diligence that obliges companies to map human rights risks, design approaches to mitigate those risks, and remedy violations if those occur.<sup>68</sup> Although in some countries specific (large-scale) businesses are mandated to abide by human rights due diligence, abiding to Ruggie principles remains somewhat weak. Stein and Bantekas (2021) argue that *‘changing the situation requires the development and self-enforcement of disability-specific human rights due diligence (HRDD) processes, and creating a general culture of diversity, equity and inclusion that encompasses disability.’*<sup>69</sup>

Despite the lack of a common legal frame for disability inclusion of private sector actors in biodiversity and climate finances, multilateral climate and environmental funds, banks and other actors have developed their distinctive approaches on the matter. Some approach disability inclusion through the criteria of safeguards, while others have a more specific focus to take persons with disabilities on board to design action specifically improving their situation. Multilateral funds and banks emphasise the active role of their boards in setting new strategic priorities for them to implement – and the need for additional financing if such priorities are to be set in motion on programmatic work, too. Finland has a strong track record in

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66 Fontana, M., & Mitra, S. (2023). *Inclusive Trade and Persons with Disabilities*. MFA Publications. Retrieved from <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/165151> [Accessed November 21, 2023].

67 OHCHR. (2011). *The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. Retrieved from [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf) [Accessed August 22, 2023].

68 OECD. (2018). *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct*. Retrieved from [Accessed August 22, 2023].

69 Stein, M., Bantekas, I. (2021). Including Disability in Business and Human Rights Discourse and Corporate Practice. *Business and Human Rights Journal*, 6(3): 490-513. <https://doi.org/10.1017/bhj.2021.13>.

advancing gender and indigenous people's rights in cooperation with like-minded countries, civil society and businesses. As such, this is a strong encouragement that similar advancements might transpire on disability issues.

**The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** is a specialised agency of the UN that aims to eradicate poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries by providing loans, grants and technical assistance. IFAD has a specific disability inclusion strategy, as well as projects dedicated to disability. It develops monitoring and accountability to better understand the impacts on persons with disabilities. Furthermore, IFAD engages with OPDs in its decision-making on different scales and, furthermore, reflects on disability issues openly in its annual yearbooks. IFAD is committed to implementing UNDIS and reporting is made public. The 2022 UNDIS report highlights IFAD's good practice regarding the establishment of disability inclusion and accessibility desks.

**The Climate Risk Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative** is a mechanism that funds risk-informed early warning systems hosted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). CREWS' operational plan, the Guidance Document on People-Centered Risk-Informed Early Warning Systems,<sup>70</sup> is disability-inclusive in the sense that it does not only recognise persons with disabilities among the groups at increased risk but sets out an imperative for consultations and partnerships when planning, designing and implementing early warning systems. Inclusion at CREWS has primarily focused on gender aspects, but it is increasingly moving towards a more intersectional perspective, inclusive of disability. The host of CREWS, WMO, has yet to report on UNDIS.

**The Green Climate Fund (GCF)** is a financial mechanism established under the UNFCCC to assist developing countries in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In GCF, inclusion is on the 'do no harm' level within the current strategy, but the forthcoming one in 2024 is more ambitious in mobilising persons with disabilities as agents of change. Inclusion is a broad term in GCF, focusing specifically on gender and indigenous issues through specific policies. Inclusion is a mainstreamed perspective concerning safeguarding of social sustainability, but, at this stage, GCF does not follow impacts systematically on persons with disabilities. There are no large-scale projects that target inclusion specifically, and furthermore,

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70 CREWS. (2023). *Guidance Document on People-Centered Risk-Informed Early Warning Systems*. Retrieved from [https://library.wmo.int/viewer/67171/download?file=CREWS\\_Guidelines\\_EWS\\_en.pdf&type=pdf&navigator=1](https://library.wmo.int/viewer/67171/download?file=CREWS_Guidelines_EWS_en.pdf&type=pdf&navigator=1) [Accessed August 22, 2023].

OPD have not been integrated with the CSO observers of GCF. The UNDIS reporting of GCF would be part of that of the UNFCCC. The UNFCCC secretariat has reported on UNDIS in 2019 and 2020, but not in 2021 and 2022.

**The World Bank** has a specific strategy on disability inclusion<sup>71</sup> and targets dedicated to inclusion (e.g. having all education projects related to investment project financing inclusive by 2025). The World Bank has set up a specific disability inclusion and accountability framework.<sup>72</sup> However, indicators are set at project level and through International Development Assistance, and there are no global-level indicators that support monitoring of progress on disability inclusion. There are focal points in each of the sectors covered by the International Development Assistance commitments, and they report to the Disability Inclusion Monitoring Committee. Moreover, Finland has seconded several experts on disability inclusion to the World Bank in the past. Furthermore, the World Bank has a grievance mechanism that can also integrate OPDs. Persons with disabilities are highlighted in annual reports. World Bank mechanisms are enacted in heterogeneous ways in the banks and funds that it has ties with – for example, IFC does not have a specific strategy for persons with disabilities whereas the Asian Development Bank does.

**The Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has developed a road map to strengthen its approach to disability-inclusive development from 2021 to 2025.<sup>73</sup> It aims to enhance the impact of ADB's work with and for the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the region, and it sets out a practical route to greater disability inclusion in ADB projects, research and organisational systems. The road map focuses on short- and medium-term actions, including supporting the active participation and empowerment of persons with disabilities and increasing the capacity and knowledge of ADB staff. The ADB has also implemented projects targeted at

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71 World Bank. (2018). *Commitments on Disability Inclusion on Development*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/world-bank-group-commitments-on-disability-inclusion-development> [Accessed August 22, 2023].

72 McClain-Nhlapo, C. V., et al. (2022). *Disability Inclusion and Accountability Framework (English)*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/437451528442789278/Disability-inclusion-and-accountability-framework> [Accessed August 22, 2023].

73 Asian Development Bank. (2022). *Strengthening Disability-inclusive Development from 2021–2025 Roadmap*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/publications/disability-inclusive-development-2021-2025> [Accessed November 9, 2023].

persons with disabilities.<sup>74</sup> In projects focusing on biodiversity and climate disability, inclusion is approached more as a cross-cutting issue in safeguarding policies, but, for instance, in a project dedicated to protecting Bangladeshi coastal communities' livelihoods, persons with disabilities were targeted. The proposed environmental and social framework identifies persons with disabilities as a disadvantageous and vulnerable group in terms of equal opportunities to participate.<sup>75</sup> The yearbook raises attention to disability issues.<sup>76</sup>

**The Adaptation Fund** is an international fund that provides grants for adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries. It was established in 2001 and it operates under the accountability framework of the World Bank. While the fund has robust principles to respect human rights and highlight the importance of integrating vulnerable groups to action, it does not have a specific strategy on disability – although disability is acknowledged among human rights issues through intersectionality. The Adaptation Fund does not have projects dedicated to disability, and subsequently it has no specific metrics for disability inclusion, but its environmental and social policy acknowledges the importance of identifying vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and amassing aggregated data. Currently, there are no spaces for OPDs to contribute to the formulation of strategic decisions. The latest annual report makes only a brief mention of persons with disabilities.

**The Green Environment Facility (GEF)**<sup>77</sup> does not have a specific strategy for disability inclusion, but it is part of the minimum standards required from GEF's implementing agencies. In general, GEF projects and programmes are targeted at the achievement of global environmental benefits. GEF has nevertheless been funding a Small Grants Programme over the past three decades, which reports having supported 655 OPDs. None of the indicators that GEF presently makes use

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74 Asian Development Bank. (2017). *Ensuring Inclusiveness and Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities Project: Report and Recommendation of the President*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/mon-48076-002-rrp> [Accessed November 9, 2023].

75 Asian Development Bank. (2023). *Environmental and Social Framework (W\_Paper)*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/documents/environmental-and-social-framework> [Accessed November 9, 2023].

76 Asian Development Bank. (2023). *Annual Report 2022*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/documents/adb-annual-report-2022> [Accessed November 9, 2023].

77 GEF. (2023). *Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues*. Retrieved from [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/EN\\_GEF\\_C.64\\_Inf.12\\_Gap%20Analysis%20of%20GEF%20Policies%20and%20Key%20Social%20Inclusion%20Issues\\_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/EN_GEF_C.64_Inf.12_Gap%20Analysis%20of%20GEF%20Policies%20and%20Key%20Social%20Inclusion%20Issues_0.pdf) [Accessed November 20, 2023].

of include specific ones related to persons with disabilities. There is an independent GEF-CSO Network that includes membership from a wide cross-section of organisations, which would be an access possibility for OPDs, too.

In addition to funds and banks, Finland directs funding to the **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. The union lacks a disability-specific strategy, but disability inclusion is considered an institutional goal in the context of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) established in the Nature 2030 Programme. At the same time, persons with disabilities continue to be viewed through their vulnerabilities rather than as agents of change in the nature conservation agenda. Disability inclusion is of growing interest in the organisation, and addressing disability is a key strategic and programmatic next step, until it is addressed in a similar manner as youth, indigenous peoples and gender at IUCN. Partnering with persons with disabilities and OPDs is not yet institutionalised.



## 6 Enacting systemic changes: Leverage points and actionable items

The following analysis presents four interconnected leverage points through which transformative changes to integrating disability inclusion into climate and biodiversity policy and finances can be achieved. In order to actualise the leverage points, we have identified short-, long- and medium-term actionable items.<sup>78</sup> The report approaches actionable items through international cooperation opportunities. The actionable items are mainly identified as part of the official processes for policy formulation or programme development, but many of the items also necessitate forming unofficial coalitions and innovative mindsets that do not already have established processes or forums. By acknowledging the early stages of disability inclusion in this field and the fragmented progress for disability inclusion, the report highlights the need for systematic, long-term commitments to advancing disability inclusion in the much-contested field of climate and biodiversity negotiations.

**Leverage point 1:** *Strengthening institutional presence of OPDs in the negotiations processes for biodiversity and climate action*

As the core policies to climate and biodiversity have unfolded space to concretise inclusion, this advantage should be seized by the OPDs. Furthermore, the CRPD provides strong justification for inclusion, with persons with disabilities being at significant risk due to the unfolding crisis a scientifically proven fact. However, at the moment many persons with disabilities need support for their efforts to access those political opportunities. Both the structures for engagements as well as inclusion in the existing structures, such as choosing party delegations, are lacking. Inaccessibility of negotiation processes is a key hindrance as venues, communication and information remain largely inaccessible. Furthermore, the lack of data on the intersection of disability and climate and biodiversity action is a major limitation for engaging effectively in discussions.

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78 Short term refers to actions that can be implemented within a year. Medium term refers to a timespan between one to five years; whilst long term is anything that is actionable after five or more years.

*Conferences of the parties in climate and biodiversity:* Especially at international negotiation forums, persons with disabilities do not have a specific caucus at UNFCCC or CBD that would strengthen the recognition of specific risks for persons with disabilities in terms of biodiversity and climate crisis. Such a caucus would have a legitimate mandate to negotiate on behalf of persons with disabilities, much like the caucus for indigenous people under UNFCCC or the Women's Caucus under CBD, for instance. Establishing a caucus needs to go through a standard admission process and be recognised by the COP at the UNFCCC. The decision-making body that would admit official caucuses is the COP itself, which is the supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC. A similar process of admission for a caucus under the CBD is ongoing. The long-term aim would be to have a disability-specific constituency that is even more institutionalised to influence negotiation processes.

In addition to the few opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in climate and biodiversity negotiations, no action plans or work programmes specifically tackle disability inclusion. All negotiation tracks, such as those concerning finances, could then make references to the specific human rights priorities, which would enable disability inclusion to be integrated across agendas. Both the Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) and its Gender Action Plan (GAP) are prime examples of what it means to advance specific human rights issues. Having such programmes and plans for inclusion would aid in reaching the multiple transformative challenges presented at other leverage points. The Lima Programme was aimed to address the gendered impacts of climate change and to ensure that women's voices and perspectives are fully integrated into climate policy and action. Moreover, reporting and accountability frames were put forward, which increased the political gravity of the efforts in increasing equality. A similar kind of action plan would give a boost to stronger integration of disability-inclusive practices and priorities to climate and biodiversity action. The structure of the programme necessitates the parties to consider the gendered aspect of their national policies.

*Other forums of policy formulation:* The work concerning international governance of climate and biodiversity policies, as well as their finances, takes place through differently scaled working groups, stakeholder hearings, dialogue processes, technical committees and many others. The international community should also pay attention to engaging persons with disabilities and OPDs in such forums. On this matter there are positive examples in the operations of IFAD and UNDRR that have partnership models through which OPDs, such as The Inclusive Risk Management Network for Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, are involved in decision-making within those institutions. Furthermore, avenues for disability inclusion can be advanced nationally and inclusion integrated into governance structures, such as Finland having an Ambassador for disability

inclusion. Although persons with disabilities or actors representing their interests would not be part of official negotiations, they can contribute by providing statements, creating publicity, brokering knowledge or building networks, for instance.

One critical concern is the capacity limitations of OPDs. Organisations working with disability movements in localised settings have identified that they might not have adequate skills to follow the often more technical and political dialogues. Another major barrier is that the disability movement is not mobilised to amplify one singular voice. The actionable items include the following:

**Actionable item 1:** (Short-term) The hosts of forthcoming biodiversity and climate negotiations should make it certain that spaces and the means of engaging in policy formulation are accessible through careful planning and preparations with sufficient resource allocations to inclusion.

**Actionable item 2:** (Short-term): An appointed disability inclusion ambassador for a country has proven to be an effective medium in diverse negotiation processes to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. Although such ambassadors might not have an official status as a negotiator, they can generate visibility regarding the challenges of disability inclusion across sectors, act as a thought leader and strengthen network creation. Furthermore, a dedicated disability inclusion ambassador can support positioning disability inclusion and climate and biodiversity action together in high-level political dialogues and events by collaborating with other thematic ambassadors such as the climate ambassador.

**Actionable item 3:** (Short-term) Disability-disaggregated data and evidence on disability and climate change and biodiversity must be generated to support advocacy efforts, as exemplified by the Disability Inclusive Climate Action Research Programme.<sup>79</sup> One example is that COP28 registration asks about disability-related needs as part of the registration and pays attention to accessibility – that practice should be replicated in other high-level negotiations.<sup>80</sup> Although the fact that

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79 See Dicarp. (n.d.). Disability-Inclusive Climate Action Research Programme. Retrieved from <https://www.disabilityinclusiveclimate.org/home> [Accessed November 20, 2023].

80 The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations and IDA. (2023). *How to Organize Accessible Events – Handbook on Accessible Meetings at the United Nations Headquarters*. Retrieved from <https://finlandabroad.fi/documents/384951/0/A+Handbook+on+organizing+accessible+meetings+at+the+United+Nations+Headquarters.pdf/5c20dcec-b396-4109-84af-0a3359f13d31?t=1681937688726> [Accessed November 20, 2023].

the information does not reveal whether persons with disabilities have power as negotiators, there are many other avenues to take in order to influence negotiations (e.g. knowledge broker, network building, public campaigning, participating in side events).

**Actionable item 4:** (Short-term) As various OPDs may lack the sufficient funding to participate in climate and biodiversity negotiation processes, stakeholders should ensure financial support is available to guarantee a diverse representation of persons with disabilities in central climate and biodiversity related negotiation processes, including the COPs and regional climate summits such as the African Climate Summit.

**Actionable item 5:** (Medium-term) Disability inclusion should also take place at the fund, bank and programme level. Country representatives on boards can create spaces for sharing best practices on which disability inclusion could build through the official forums at this level. For instance, some banks, funds and programmes have already established working operations with OPDs, but more horizontal learning and sharing of good practices regarding stakeholder engagement with OPDs in the context of climate and biodiversity action must be enabled.

**Actionable item 6:** (Medium to long-term) Parties to the UNFCCC and CBD ultimately approve the establishment of a new disability caucus. At the moment, the admission process is stuck in a situation of two applications for the disability caucus and the conflicting interests should be sorted out in order to move forwards. With due respect to NGO self-determination, parties should be actively advancing a fair resolution between stakeholders on how the process of forming a caucus could develop. The long-term aim should be to have a disability constituency that is approved at the UN General Assembly.

**Actionable item 7:** (Long-term) Lessons learnt from the GAP endorsement process should be harnessed to advance disability inclusion. This includes the importance of broadening the support for OPDs so that also those at grassroots, sub-national, national and regional levels are supported. This is something that can be learnt from the experience with gender movements, as voices from all levels are equally important and need a space for intersectional representation. In this effort, countries that have been recognised as front-runners in disability inclusion matters should align to negotiate (and potentially pledge funding) to develop an action plan and the steps required for its endorsement.

**Leverage point 2:** *Mainstreaming disability inclusion as a salient human rights issue in biodiversity and climate governance*

Human-rights based discourse has penetrated the governance of biodiversity and climate policy formulation and financing. However, in many strategies and policies, persons with disabilities are mentioned merely as part of the long list of social or ethnic categories that are vulnerable, or as categories of people whose knowledge might be integrated in the operationalisation of targets. In many contexts and institutions, inclusion is sidelined by promoting other more well-established human rights concerns, especially those of women, young people and indigenous people. The attention to advancing human rights is, thus, selective. It should be acknowledged that, vice versa, political negotiations concerning disability issues have not been fully immersed in tackling the unfolding climate and biodiversity crisis.

The co-evolution of strategic priorities and programmatic capacities to turn willingness into action are both needed. However, to avoid putting the cart before the horse, before concrete action targeting persons with disabilities can be achieved, understanding the problems and solutions needs to be acknowledged as a strategic priority. Neglect to prioritise disability inclusion in the instruments of environmental or social safeguards, consultations with localised communities or different human rights due diligence processes, for instance, is perpetuated by a strong discourse that advancing disability inclusion is laborious and time- and resource-consuming. A transformational shift is needed to refine understanding that by allowing persons with disabilities to contribute to political, economic and social life tackling climate and environmental change within their families and communities benefits whole societies. The suggested actionable items include the following:

**Actionable item 8:** (Short-term) The CRPD committee is encouraged to provide authoritative guidance about the provisions of the CRPD through general comment on Article 11 to explicitly make a link to efforts related to climate and biodiversity action.

**Actionable item 9:** (Medium-term) It is recommended that states parties advocate for climate change and biodiversity as an official round-table theme at the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD in the near future, similarly to the 15th Session.

**Actionable item 10:** (Short to medium-term) The Universal Periodic Review is a human rights instrument that evaluates the human rights records of all 193 UN member states. As such, it is a well-suited instrument for ramping up ambition when it comes to state responses to protect the human rights of persons with disabilities in nationally manifesting environmental and climate risks.

- The country reports of state parties and UN compilation reports should pay specific attention to the progress of building resilience and adaptive capacities of persons with disabilities.
- OPDs should be informed and encouraged and their capacities strengthened to provide stakeholder submissions that evaluate the progress and gaps in respecting the rights of persons with disabilities in environmental and climate change.
- Ultimately, it is up to UN member states to choose what issues to make recommendations about for countries under review in joint discussions, which feed into the outcomes of the report that is prepared with the involvement of the state under review and with assistance from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

**Actionable item 11:** (Medium-term) Parties to the UNFCCC and CBD can advance a paradigm shift in approaching persons with disabilities as capable actors through role models and solid examples of pioneering programmes and funds in the climate and environment sector that have transitioned from wording about ‘do no harm’ to treating persons with disabilities as agents of change, such as GCF’s new strategy, and spreading such wording horizontally among banks, funds and programmes.

**Leverage point 3:** *Developing robust mechanisms for disability inclusion and creating the systems of accountability for financing disability-inclusive climate and biodiversity action.*

Strategic focus on persons with disabilities needs to develop into disability-specific action. At this stage, very limited knowledge exists about the implications of diverse climate and environmental action on and with persons with disabilities, as few organisations gather aggregate data on the matter. Advancing or evaluating disability inclusion through the work on boards of banks and funds is challenging, as the level of detail through which projects are evaluated and discussed does not necessarily contain specificities such as inclusion, or board representatives do not have adequate time to go into detail. Furthermore, the project cycles can be decades long, thus being able to trace details of the implementation remains challenging. Therefore, the specific focus on evaluating accountability of inclusiveness takes place closer to actors related to the ‘localised’ implementation of the projects.

Countries mobilising climate and biodiversity finances also have avenues to make the funded projects more accountable and inclusive. As noted by the interviewees and the evaluations concerning international finances, changing governmental programmes, development policy priorities and diverse modalities of different ODA instruments create ambivalence towards enacting inclusion as a strategic priority. Furthermore, the need to develop metrics that can translate climate and biodiversity related projects into positive impacts for and with persons with disabilities is urgently needed if the financing decisions are to be governed based on evidence. The transition, however, hinges on governmental visions about what mechanisms of development cooperation are favoured, if policies that survive governmental changes are in place. The suggested actionable items include the following:

**Actionable item 12:** (Short-term) Biodiversity and climate finance-mobilising countries need to systematically advance disability inclusion through financing biodiversity and climate action as part of the strategies, action plans or other instruments guiding these finances.

**Actionable item 13:** (Short-term) Countries mobilising climate and biodiversity finances can favour those instruments and institutions that have demonstrated capacities to advance disability inclusion through their projects, such as UNDRR, IFAD, CREWS or civil society actors, or projects that are earmarked to target biodiversity or climate as well as disability inclusion under organisations developing their approaches to disability inclusion.

**Actionable item 14:** (Short-term) Countries mobilising climate and biodiversity finances can enhance their national and international reporting about the impacts created through their finances to persons with disabilities. In addition to developing accountability, transparent reporting can create political and public willingness to engage in the matter, thus strengthening the identification of disability as a salient human rights issue in climate and biodiversity action.

**Actionable item 15:** (Short-term) Advancing UNDIS throughout the UN systems and institutions is one of the most obvious points of entry. State representatives could advocate in particular for the accountability of the UNFCCC Secretariat, UNDP and UNEP in disability inclusion by requesting UNDIS ratings to be made public, and for the overall UNDIS compliance for entities with a particular mandate on environment and climate issues. This is especially important for the UN Secretariats, including UNFCCC, for which disability inclusion appears to be more difficult. Remedial plans of action should also be requested if entities do not meet or exceed requirements.

**Actionable item 16:** (Short-term) UN Secretariats, especially those involved in climate and environment action, should be held accountable to report progress related to the disability marker of UMOJA, the new integrated planning, management and reporting solution for all secretariat entities.

**Actionable item 17:** (Medium-term) Longevity of UNDIS requires donors pushing for more accountability on UNDIS implementation by holding the UN Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General to account. Without member states' endorsement of the UNDIS, its longevity and effectiveness may be affected, for instance, in the case of a change of Secretary General. Leveraging the role of UNDIS as a system-wide approach requires member states to support the UNDIS Secretariat, which is uniquely positioned to push for system-wide accountability on disability inclusion and provide technical support.

**Leverage point 4:** *Integrating disability inclusion into national plans governing biodiversity and climate (National Adaptation Plans, national strategies to GBF and the Sendai Framework)*

Ultimately states are the primary duty-bearers for protecting the human rights of their citizens in the global biodiversity and climate crisis. The key international policies and laws are to be implemented nationally, and subsequently they allow robust means to turn rather vague and broad characterisations on disability and human rights into tangible action. Also, the CRPD national monitoring mechanisms as stipulated by Article 33 direct attention to the national level. In practice, these national political tools provide avenues to setting targets, plans of participation, reporting and other tangible issues to create the accountability mechanisms for disability inclusion. Most states have not considered inclusion in their national plans and, vice versa, national implementation of CRPD should consider disability rights in an era of global change.

These national implementation plans also hold significant gravity because climate funds are allocated to action that are included in these policies. In other words, these strategies and plans express the willingness to advance inclusion and, in many funds and programmes, projects need approval from the authorities in the countries where action takes place. The role of national implementation is also backed by scientific literature: among the failures of tackling biodiversity and climate crisis, there has been weak national implementation of the international targets and furthermore, only a handful of countries have considered disability inclusion in their national responses. In addition, the private sector needs strong



signals and frameworks on how their biodiversity and climate action is to advance disability inclusion, as many of the root problems also involve the private sector. Actionable items include the following:

**Actionable item 18:** (Short-term and five-year cycles) There are multiple avenues in climate and biodiversity policy formulation that can provide specific guidance to advancing disability inclusion. Among the key instruments is the Global Stocktake (GST) negotiated for the first time during COP28 in late 2023, as it ideally provides guidance for renewing NDCs and NAPs. GST occurs place in five-year cycles.

**Actionable item 19:** (Short-term) Parties to the global biodiversity framework and the Paris Agreement who have put specific emphasis on advancing disability inclusion in their national approaches to implementing the joint targets should lead by example and encourage others to follow. Examples of national planning can be taken, for instance, from NAPs in both developed and developing countries, such as Finland and Nepal.

**Actionable item 20:** (Short-term) Funds, banks and programmes, as well as bilateral development cooperation that is targeting disability inclusive biodiversity and climate action, would benefit from building capacities (e.g. training, knowledge transfer, awareness-raising) at the localised environments. Not all OPDs, especially those in national and sub-national contexts, are capable of joining the (often) technical processes of planning action or the mechanisms of its evaluation.

**Actionable item 21:** (Short-term) Initiatives that equip national CRPD monitoring mechanisms, independent national human rights institutions and the civil society in terms of climate change and biodiversity loss impacts on persons with disabilities should be supported and monitored.

**Actionable item 22:** (Medium-term) Robust guides on how to tackle challenges of disability inclusion in national adaptation plans should be developed in GCF, IFAD and other institutions and programmes financing the development of NAPs in developing countries. Similar guidance to disability inclusion should be developed for those institutions providing support for the national planning of the global biodiversity framework.

## 7 Conclusions

This study concurs with existing literature that disability inclusion in climate and biodiversity actions remains limited. While acknowledging increasing attention to disability inclusion in international policy guiding biodiversity and climate action, persons with disabilities remain marginalised in processes of decision-making and the creation of knowledge to tackle these crises.<sup>81</sup> References to persons with disabilities in climate and biodiversity policies and guidance are mostly related to their disproportionate vulnerability to the impacts of the changing climate and environment. Ensuring the meaningful, informed and effective participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes remains limited.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, the operationalisation of disability inclusion in financed action is typically at the level of ‘do no harm’ as part of safeguarding or due diligence processes. Because the financed projects rarely monitor and evaluate the impacts on persons with disabilities, making accountable, evidence-based policies is challenging due to the data gaps.

Despite these challenges, this study demonstrates that there are also opportunities for a more disability-inclusive way forward in this critical and often overlooked area of human rights and sustainable development. Finland is well positioned to advance disability-inclusive climate action and biodiversity, due to its reputation and long-term commitment to advancing disability inclusion in domestic policies as well as in international arenas. The study suggests that by learning from the identified policy leverage points, disability inclusion can be advanced in climate and biodiversity negotiations and operationalisation. A ‘four-track’ approach<sup>83</sup> could

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81 Wolbring, G. (2009). A culture of neglect: Climate discourse and disabled people. *M/C Journal*, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.173>; Eriksen, S. H., Grøndahl, R., & Sæbønes, A.-M. (2021). On CRDPs and CRPD: why the rights of people with disabilities are crucial for understanding climate-resilient development pathways. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), 929–939. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00233-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00233-3).

82 Jodoin, S., Lofts, K., Bowie-Edwards, A., Leblanc, L., & Rourke, C. (2022). Disability Rights in National Climate Policies: Status Report. Centre for Human Rights & Legal Pluralism & International Disability Alliance.

83 Katsui, H. & Chalklen, S. (2020). *Disability, Globalization and Human Rights*. Routledge. London.

be applied through which the more typical tracks of 1) mainstreaming disability into all climate and biodiversity action initiatives, 2) ensuring disability-specific initiatives are employed, 3) maintaining and negotiating with like-minded and other stakeholders to increase synergised impact as well as allies, and 4) modelling good practices of the key stakeholders in disability inclusion are included.

## Annex 1 Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBM	Christian Blind Mission
COP	Conference of the Parties
CREWS	Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
CSP	Country Strategic Plans
DICA-WG	Disability-Inclusive Climate Action Working Group
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDAN	Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGF	Global Greengrants Fund
GLAD	Global Action on Disability Network
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GST	Global Stocktake

HRDD	Human rights due diligence
IAG	Inclusion Advisory Group
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IDDC	International Disability and Development Consortium
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LWPG	Lima Work Programme on Gender
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	United Nations Human Rights Office for the High Commissioner
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
SADDD	Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sendai Framework Monitor
SRIF	Safeguard Risk Identification Form

UN	United Nations
UNDI	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNE	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme

## Annex 2 Study methodology

Literature and policy review, online interviews<sup>84</sup> and focus group discussions were employed as research methods. The main set of data has originated through interviews and focus group discussions with key Finnish stakeholders, researchers, networks and OPDs, UN programmes and funds, as well as selected institutions affiliated to the World Bank.<sup>85</sup> A total of 46 participants contributed to 1–1.5-hour interviews (see Table 1 below for the study participants). The research design was participatory in the sense that persons with disabilities were included as interviewees as well as in the steering group of the study.

**Table 3.** Study participants

Stakeholder group	Number of participants
Disability movement	5
Government representatives	17
Funds and banks	9
UN agencies	15
Total	46

84 One interview was conducted in person. For one interview answers to the interview questions were sought in writing.

85 Organisations that participated in the study: **Disability Movement:** IDA, EDAN, CBM, IDDC, The DICA-WG at GLAD, Global Green Grants Fund. **Government representatives:** UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Energy, Climate & Environment Directorate, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Ministry of the Environment. **Funds and banks:** GEF, GCF, ADB, IFAD, Adaptation Fund, CREWS, World Bank. **UN Agencies:** ILO, OHCHR, UNDIS Secretariat, UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNPRPD, UN Women, WFP. **Other:** IUCN **Did not respond:** UNFCCC

The examination began by harvesting the relevant literature through using mainly targeted searches in Web of Sciences. The scope of literature specifically discussing disability inclusion and climate or biodiversity was scarce (< 30 articles). Thus, we also expanded on the literature discussing human rights and climate or biodiversity. In addition, we made use of Google Scholar and ResearchGate to take into consideration grey (non-peer reviewed) literature prepared by governmental, private and third sector actors. Conducting the literature review guided us towards identifying the key political documents affecting inclusion within climate and biodiversity action. In addition to the most recent reports including those of OECD and the Climate Policy Initiative, the financial flows to biodiversity and climate action were investigated to grasp the key actors and mechanisms of governance. Additionally, the report presents the 2022 statistics of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland concerning the relevance of inclusion in Finnish biodiversity and climate finance.

The study was prepared in accordance with ethical standards for science. Informed consent was obtained from all participants at the outset. Furthermore, concerted efforts were made to provide reasonable accommodation for interviews upon request. Data management and protection measures were implemented to ensure confidentiality, privacy and data quality. Additionally, a non-disclosure agreement was signed by the research team. Individuals are not referred to in the statements within this report. The requirements of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) related to the processing of personal data were taken into account. By integrating these ethical considerations into the study, the aim was to promote the highest standards of research integrity while upholding the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities.



## Annex 3 List of guidance documents on disability-inclusive climate and biodiversity action

### International governance documents

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Framework Convention on Climate Change

The Convention on Biological Diversity

Paris Agreement

### International normative frameworks

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, (A/75/L.75)

Human Rights Council resolution 41/21 on human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/41/21)

### Strategic guidance and tools

CCD, Inclusiva and CIEL, 2019. *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*

GEF, 2023. *Gap analysis of GEF policies and key social inclusion issues*

GLAD secretariat, 2021. *Promoting Disability-Inclusive Climate Change Action*

GLAD, 2021. *Disability Inclusive Climate Action COP26 Advocacy Paper*

GLAD, 2021. [Issue Paper to Promoting Disability-Inclusive Climate Action](#)

IFAD 2022. [Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027](#)

ILO, 2020. [Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2020–2023](#)

ILO, 2022. [‘Nothing about us without us’ Realizing disability rights through a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies.](#)

Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines, 2019. [Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#)

OECD, 2018. [Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct](#)

OHCHR, 2022. [Policy on disability rights.](#)

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Sébastien Jodoin, Katherine Lofts, Amanda Bowie-Edwards, Laurence Leblanc, & Chloe Rourke, 2022. [Disability Rights in National Climate Policies: Status Report](#) (Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism and IDA).

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations and IDA, 2023. [How to Organise Accessible Events – Handbook on accessible meetings at the United Nations Headquarters](#)

UN, 2019. [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](#)

UNDP, 2019. [People for 2023, United Nations Development Programme People Strategy 2019–2021](#)

UNDP, 2018. [Strategic guidance note on Disability Inclusive Development in UNDP](#)

UNDRR, 2021. [Sendai Framework Monitor \(SFM\) Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data \(SADDD\)](#)

UNDRR, 2022. [Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities: Annex for Inclusion of Persons with Disability](#)

UNDRR, 2022. [Strategic Framework 2022–2025](#)

UNDRR, 2023. [Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters](#)

UNDRR, 2024. [ADVANCING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN LOCAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: Analysis and Recommendations from the Pilot Implementation of the Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities - Annex for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#)

UNEP, 2020. [UNEP's environmental and social sustainability framework](#)

UNHCR, IDMC, IDA, 2021. [Disability, Displacement and Climate Change](#)

WFP, 2020. [Disability Inclusion Road Map for the period 2020–2021](#)

WFP, 2022. [Update on the WFP disability inclusion road map \(2020–2021\)](#)

WFP, 2023. [Disability Inclusion in Asia and the Pacific: A Regional Overview 2023](#)

World Bank, 2018. [Commitments on Disability Inclusion on Development](#)

World Bank, 2022. [Disability Inclusion and Accountability Framework](#)



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