



## **FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE**

*Please complete each section below.*

### **1. Contact Details**

*Please provide the following contact details:*

**Name of individual or group submitting initiative**

**Name and position of primary contact**

**Email address**

**Phone number**

**Fax number**

**Mailing address**

### **2. Name of Initiative**



### 3. What is the common regional issue or challenge that this regional initiative aims to address?

*You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?*

*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*

Persons with Disabilities represent a sizeable number in the Pacific, with an estimated 1.7million of almost the 10 million people in the region<sup>1</sup>. In addition to emphasising the facts that at least one in seven people have disability – possibly getting close to 1 million Pacific Islanders - and that people with disability and their families are disproportionately affected by poverty, it also stresses that the number of Pacific Island people with disability is increasing. This is due to ageing, increases in chronic health conditions such as diabetes and stroke, and environmental and other factors such as road traffic accidents, disasters, substance abuse and obesity<sup>2</sup>.

The importance of equal rights for people with disability to regional development, and the magnitude of the issue, is frequently not fully grasped by those not directly involved in addressing this important matter. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding amongst leaders and decision-makers often results in the issue being marginalised and not adequately prioritised and resourced. Study has shown the valuable gains of inclusion of persons with disabilities over the economic cost of exclusion. Three key life areas are education, work/employment and health, these three areas is where people with disabilities experienced widespread exclusion as a result of physical, attitudinal and financial and policy barriers<sup>3</sup>. Inclusion of persons with disabilities is not only important to their families and communities but to the society and nation as a whole. Disability therefore, is no longer a marginal issue but a priority development issue concerning human rights and good governance. It needs the leaders attention and oversight as

The **Framework for Pacific Regionalism** sets the parameters for regional cooperation and approaches, and contains the key values of **support for full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific** alongside the objective for **Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable, sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihood and well-being**. This framework sets the platform for disability inclusive development in the region where persons with disabilities can contribute and benefit on an equal basis with others to enjoy free and peaceful life in the Pacific. Other significant regional and international instruments, agreements and processes to which disability development are aligned include:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Incheon Strategy to 'Make the Right Real' for Persons with Disability in Asia and the Pacific 2013-

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pacificdisability.org/About-Us/Disability-in-the-Pacific.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Draft Pacific Disability Rights Framework presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum Disability Ministers Meeting

<sup>3</sup> Summary Report: Economic Cost of exclusion and Gains of Inclusion for people with disabilities.  
<http://disabilitycentre.ishtm.ac.uk/new-report-economic-costs-exclusion-gains-inclusion-people-disabilities/>



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- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The World Health Organisation Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021
- The UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on Disability and Development 2013
- The Agenda 2030

The new Pacific Disability Rights Framework noted that there has been a high level of dependence on development partner funding for disability in the Pacific with relatively little budgetary allocation from governments. The Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability that ended in 2015 was largely funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) with the funding ending at the end of 2015. This is not sustainable; governments need to progressively allocate budgetary resources to support inclusive development in their countries. The new framework is regional in scope with strong links to global and international agreements; however, the implementation aims to support national efforts and initiative.

#### **4. Briefly describe this regional initiative**

*You may also want to address the following in this section:*

*How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?*

*Who are the main beneficiaries?*

*How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?*

*Has the initiative been carried out previously?*

*What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?*

*Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?*

***Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.***



The inclusion of persons with disabilities in development and in our society will bring about positive changes in many ways. The study on the ‘Economic cost of exclusion and the gains of inclusion of persons with disabilities’<sup>4</sup>. The report states that education can close the poverty gap between people with and without disabilities: across 13 Least and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), each additional year of schooling completed by an adult with a disability reduced the probability by 2 – 5% that his or her household belonged to the poorest two quintiles.<sup>5</sup> Education from education may lead to lower employment and earning potential among people with disabilities. Not only does this make individuals and their families more vulnerable to poverty, but it also limit economic and growth.

The immediate beneficiaries of the initiative are persons with disabilities and their families, however, in terms of national building and economic growth the society as a whole benefits when persons with disabilities contributes positively. The **Framework for Pacific Regionalism** has a vision of a ‘region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free and, healthy and productive lives’. This vision in no exception to persons with disabilities, however, if not realized for persons with disabilities, we become more marginalized and excluded from the vision on the region. This initiative contributes and supports the values of **support for full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific** alongside the objective for **Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable, sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihood and well-being**.

The Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability (PRSD) ended in 2015, however, in 2013, Leaders endorsed the development of a new strategy to replace the PRSD. The current draft of the Pacific Disability Rights Framework 2016 – 2025 will need the leader’s endorsement. The disability community in the region strongly feels that having the political oversight with the Leaders is important to progress disability development in the region.

The key risk to the initiative would be the implementation at national level and coordination at regional level. However, a coordinated regional approach with appropriate resource allocation would guide national implementation and coordination.

## 5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?

*Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?*

<sup>4</sup> Summary Report: Economic Cost of exclusion and Gains of Inclusion for people with disabilities.

<http://disabilitycentre.lshhtm.ac.uk/new-report-economic-costs-exclusion-gains-inclusion-people-disabilities/>

<sup>5</sup> , D. (2008). Disability, poverty, and schooling in developing countries: Results from 14 household surveys. *World Bank Economic Review*, 22(1), 141-163. doi: 10.1093/wber/lhm021



*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*

Disability is no longer a marginal issue, but rather a priority development issue concerning human rights and good governance. It is poorly resourced by national government but dependent on donor funding which is not sustainable. The current prevalence rate in the Pacific continue to show that disability population will continue to increase and therefore it is a regional issue that requires leader's attention and oversight. This is because; persons with disabilities are amongst the most poorest and marginalised in societies. It needs political oversight by the leaders to ensure that the ten Forum countries that have ratified the CRPD and those working towards ratification are supported for the implementation of the Convention. In 2013, Forum Leaders called for a long term approach to addressing the situations of persons with disabilities in the region and three years later, the Pacific Disability Rights Framework 2016-2025 needs their endorsement prior to implementation at both national and regional level.

## **6. Attachments**

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

*Please attach no more than 3 pages.*