



House of Commons  
International Development  
Committee

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**DFID's work on  
disability–inclusive  
development:  
Government response  
to the Committee's  
Thirteenth Report**

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**Fourteenth Special Report of Session  
2017–19**

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to be printed 8 October 2019*

## The International Development Committee

The International Development Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for International Development and its associated public bodies.

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## Fourteenth Special Report

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On 30 July 2019, the International Development Committee published its Thirteenth Report of Session 2017–19, on [DFID's work on disability—inclusive development](#) (HC 1880). The Government response was received on 30 September 2019. The response is appended below.

## Appendix: Government Response

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### Executive Summary

This report contains the Government's responses to the IDC recommendations given in the report on DFID's work on disability-inclusive development. The IDC report provided 24 final points in the 'conclusion and recommendation section', within which there are 39 distinct recommendations. In summary, we fully agree with 30 recommendations, partially agree with seven and disagree with only two.

We welcome the IDC's report on Disability Inclusive Development and thank the Committee for their long-standing leadership on this agenda. The Committee's inquiry has added to the growing global momentum on disability inclusion and the learning will contribute to progress within DFID and more widely. We are pleased that the IDC concludes from its assessment that we are making significant progress, having published our first ever Disability Inclusion Strategy 2018–2023 which directly supports the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The progress the IDC notes reinforces our confidence that we have set the right direction, secured commitment and will meet our objectives. We share the IDC's view that this is a long-term and complex agenda. We will learn from, adjust and adapt our strategy as we go.

To achieve lasting change across the world for people with disabilities, we will continue our efforts to influence external partners, building on the success of the Global Disability Summit in 2018. This will achieve even greater impact for people with disabilities. We are committed to our role as a global leader on disability inclusion and will continue to lead and inspire broader change—including through recognising the importance of listening and learning from others.

We welcome the IDC's offer to continue to engage closely with DFID on this issue, and we thank them for their consistent support and challenge as we work towards the core commitment of the Sustainable Development Goals: to leave no-one behind.

## Responses to IDC recommendations

### *The Global Disability Summit (GDS 18)*

***Recommendation 1: DFID should develop a robust accountability mechanism that enables all actors to be held to account for making progress towards meeting their commitments. The accountability mechanism for GDS18 commitments should be hosted by an independent agency and resourced in such a way as to prevent risks of conflict of interest that may be associated with receipt of programme funding from donors, DFID being no exception. This should be developed in partnership with disabled people and their representative organisations, who should also continue to play a leading role in the process of following up on Summit commitments and informing DFID's future decisions on disability inclusion.***

Government position: **Agree**

We are developing plans for an independent secretariat and governance structure so that everyone, including DFID, is made accountable for their commitments.

A Key Stakeholder Group comprised of a diverse set of representatives from across different stakeholder sectors, including DPOs, have been designing and developing this long-term accountability process over the past 12 months. This has taken place in consultation with a wider Partnership Forum (comprised of 90 stakeholders), which is open to all and has many people with disabilities and DPOs engaged in it.

The accountability process will take a partnership approach, encouraging delivery of commitments and convening partners to learn from one another. It will also support and track progress with a focus on national level accountability, while linking in with existing mechanisms as far as possible. We expect the independent secretariat to be supported by working groups, CRPD committee advisors, and a high-level advisory group of representatives from across relevant stakeholder sectors including DPOs. We plan to have this in place at the beginning of 2020.

We will continue to work in close partnership with people with disabilities and their representative organisations to inform all future decisions on disability inclusion, and on international development and humanitarian assistance more broadly.

***Recommendation 2: A schedule of regular reports on progress against commitments should be set. We recommend that governments and actors update their progress on the online portal on a six-monthly basis. DFID country offices could play a role in encouraging national governments to submit progress updates by the set timeline. It is important to capture lessons from the data collected to inform future planning and funding decisions. DFID should develop a specific plan on how to do so.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

We have published the one-year-on progress report on the Global Disability Summit in September 2019. It included updates from governments and other actors on their commitments.

As part of the planning for an independent secretariat we will also plan for progress to be reported on a regular basis. The secretariat will be expected to convene partners (globally and nationally) to learn from each other, share best practice and inform future planning. However, we do not agree with six monthly reports as this would place a high level of burden on governments and other stakeholders, making them less likely to engage. The final timing will be decided by the independent secretariat.

We agree that DFID country offices should play a role in encouraging national governments to submit progress updates. Our country offices are already drawing on the relationships and conversations that started in the lead up to the Global Disability Summit and will continue to support country governments to implement their commitments and to go further. This engagement is now a requirement of all country offices in the new standards set out in our Disability Inclusion Strategy.

### ***DFID's Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development 2018–2023—general themes***

***The IDC requested DFID to provide an interim report on progress by all its business units and country offices towards the target of meeting the minimum standards on disability inclusion by the end of this year, 2019. In addition, we request an equivalent update on the eight country offices invited to work towards the high achievement standards.***

Since the launch of the strategy in December 2018 and the introduction of minimum and high achievement Disability Inclusion standards, significant progress has been made on disability inclusive development across the organisation. We have been regularly monitoring progress against the standards and offering offices support, guidance and training to systematically embed disability inclusion across the organisation.

In January 2019 and subsequently in April 2019, we conducted an assessment of progress and asked all departments and country offices across DFID to assess themselves against these standards. The stocktake showed that whilst we were starting from a low base across the organisation, there was some promising progress, particularly at country level. We identified the need for further guidance, training, templates and best practice to build levels of expertise on disability inclusion across the organisation. Following this, we set up a repository of guidance, including: support in developing action plans; technical guidance on disability inclusion; and the evidence we have so far. It is designed to be interactive, for DFID staff to share evidence and best practice with each other. We set up a Community of Practice to support teams to routinely collect, use and analyse disability disaggregated data in their programming. We also recognised the need to provide direct support to central DFID teams on the best way to engage with disabled people's organisations.

A recent self-assessment was undertaken in August 2019 by 28 DFID country offices and 22 central departments. Analysis shows that the Disability Inclusion standards appear to have made a profound and discernible impact to the mainstreaming of disability inclusion across the organisation. When comparing recent reporting from August 2019 with previous assessments from January and May 2019, it is evident that the Standards have

accelerated and stimulated action for both Country Offices and Central Departments.<sup>1</sup> See [Annex A](#) for further analysis, including on country offices working towards 'high achievement'.

Due to resource constraints, other cross-government priorities, and a desire to get this right, we have decided to allow more time for the delivery of the minimum standards. We have therefore extended the deadline for achieving the standards by six months to June 2020. This will ensure all business units have sufficient time, support and resources to keep progressing their disability inclusion work and meet the standards in a considered and effective way.

***Recommendation 3: DFID should ensure that it scales up its spending on disability-specific projects over time, as well as provide support for effective and imaginative mainstreaming with specific funding.***

Government position: **Agree**

As part of mainstreaming disability inclusion we have seen a significant increase in the number of programmes that are disability inclusive since we introduced our policy marker. As of August 2019, 97 per cent of active programmes in DFID have completed the policy marker. We know that 31 per cent of these are marked as disability-inclusive (this is 241 programmes out of 780), up from 19 per cent in November 2017. We expect this number to continue to increase—particularly through dedicated support from the Disability Inclusion team and through our Disability Helpdesk. We also plan to double the proportion of programmes that are disability-inclusive across the four strategic pillars by 2023, a commitment which is set out in our strategy.

As of August 2019 over £180m of funding has been approved for programmes exclusively dedicated to supporting people with disabilities. There are currently a further seven programmes at pre-pipeline and design stages which will, if approved, be exclusively dedicated to disability inclusion. Further details on our approach to spend can be found in the [additional information](#) provided to the IDC in April 2019.

***Recommendation 4: DFID should also ensure that disability is a key consideration in broader strategic and budgetary decisions, such as the long-awaited Comprehensive Spending Review, as well as internal allocations to DFID's programmes. It could be helpful to set an overall target for increasing disability-focused programming and spending over the next five years.***

Government position: **Agree**

As part of DFID's Disability Inclusion Strategy, we committed to doubling the proportion of programmes that are disability inclusive across the four strategic pillars by 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Overall, 90% of the offices that responded (45/50) in the most recent assessment indicated they have either achieved or are 'on track' to meet Standard 1 (Office Approach and Culture); 82% of offices (41/50) indicated they have either achieved or are 'on track' to meet Standard 2 (Engagement and Empowerment of People with Disabilities); 78% of offices (39/50) indicated they have either achieved or are 'on track' to meet Standard 3 (Influencing); 86% of offices (43/50) indicated they have either achieved or are 'on track' to meet Standard 4 (Programming); and 78% of offices (39/50) indicated they have either achieved or are 'on track' to meet Standard 5 (Data and Evidence).

We will ensure that disability inclusion is taken into consideration at all relevant spending decision points, and the team is closely involved in discussions as part of the ongoing business planning process. This is also on the agenda to be discussed at the upcoming disability inclusion delivery board in September 2019.

***Recommendation 5: DFID should also ensure that the initial commitment to disability inclusion in business cases is followed on in projects' log frames and other planning and reporting documents.***

Government position: **Agree**

We have committed, as part of the Disability Inclusion standards, that all new business cases, terms of reference and annual reviews will consider disability inclusion and that new programmes will collect and use disability disaggregated data in their logframes.

We regularly review business cases through the technical review process managed by the DFID's quality assurance unit (QAU). Through the Disability Inclusion team and the Helpdesk, we will also continue to provide guidance and resources to support programme managers and advisors to build this into all relevant programme management processes—including dedicated advice on building this into log frames, results as well as monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

***Recommendation 6: DFID should ensure specialist experts are appointed to different areas of the Strategy, and that staff across DFID receive specific technical training on using relevant tools like the extended set of the Washington Group Questions.***

Government position: **Agree**

We have a strong central offer in place to support our departments and country offices. This includes new technical guidance and training, an expert-led Disability Helpdesk, and an informal network or Community of Practice of 67 disability champions for sharing lessons and best practice.

We are recruiting more targeted disability expertise into the organisation and exploring new dedicated disability-focussed secondment posts. For instance, DFID Syria has had two secondees from Humanity and Inclusion to support mainstreaming, and the Disability Inclusive Development programme will fund a number of secondments to DFID central departments and country offices.

We have provided in-house training on the Washington Group Questions and have a Community of Practice for sharing best practice and advice. We are planning a workshop in the autumn to share lessons learnt from using the Washington Group Questions in 27 projects from the Girls' Education Challenge. This will be a valuable session for anyone using the Washington Group Questions in DFID.

Our Disability Helpdesk is also delivering a set of training sessions on disability inclusion to cadres and teams across DFID. At the end of July, DFID's Africa Regional Department had a half-day session delivered by disability experts and from a representative from a Disabled People's Organisation. Further technical training sessions are planned with the Asia, Caribbean and Overseas Territories (ASCOT) Department as are tailored sessions for DFID's private sector, education, climate and humanitarian advisory cadres.

***Recommendation 7: DFID should also increase the numbers of people with disabilities amongst its cadres at all levels. DFID should also consider building disability inclusion into the competencies of its advisers, along the same lines of gender mainstreaming.***

Government position: **Agree**

We know that to meet our ambition to be a global leader on this issue we must practise what we preach and recognise the skills and talents of our own staff with disabilities.

The Disability Inclusion Strategy commits DFID to improve the recruitment, retention and recognition of people with disabilities. The latest HR figures as of June 2019 are:

- Recruitment of people with disabilities with the aim of matching the working age population (19%) (baseline Sept 2018–14%. June 19–15%).
- Retention and career development of staff with disabilities, with a target of 11.9% staff with a disability in Senior Civil Service positions (baseline: Sept 2018–9%. June 19–8%)
- Recognition of skills through improved organisational culture and staff confidence, to impact on reporting of disability data (target 70%. Baseline Sept 2018–60%. June 19–60%).

We acknowledge that we need to do more, and we will be refocussing our efforts as part of the implementation of DFID's People Plan. We will continue to prioritise the attraction and development of staff with disabilities as part of our wider resourcing strategy—which includes being a member of Leonard Cheshire's Change 100 disability internship scheme.

DFID is building disability inclusion and mental health into the competencies of advisers and we are in the process of revising our technical competency frameworks. This has provided Heads of Profession with opportunities to include cross-cutting issues such as disability inclusion within the various technical competency frameworks. For social development advisors, it will be a specific requirement under one of the core competencies of social analysis and inclusion.

We are also communicating the importance of disability inclusion to civil society, academia and other external partners from where we recruit our candidates and press for improved capacity and levels of expertise in the development and humanitarian sector as a whole.

***Recommendation 8: DFID should make sure disabled people are consulted more widely on disability inclusion planning and delivery.***

Government position: **Agree**

People with disabilities are at the heart of our approach to disability inclusion: we are committed to realising 'nothing about us, without us'. This is a fundamental building block set out in our strategy. The requirement to consult with and engage DPOs is a key part of the Disability Inclusion standards and our most recent assessment (see Annex A) has shown good improvement across the organisation in this area. We will continue to hold Ministerial and official level roundtable meetings with people with disabilities, their representative organisations and wider civil society.

Our progress to date has only been possible thanks to the help, advice and support of people with disabilities, and their relevant advocacy groups. We know continued engagement is critical to success in delivery, and we know we need to do this in a meaningful way.

***Recommendation 9: Country offices should develop their own contextual theories of change and action plans that guide their delivery of disability-inclusive development depending on each country's situation, and enable direct assessment and adaptation.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

We agree that change is contextual, and that approaches must be country-specific. We also believe that we should prioritise action. That is why we have made it a requirement that each country office develop their own country specific action plan—to set out the action each office will take.

However, we provide an overarching theory of change that can be adapted, if necessary, to local circumstances and that provides guidance on what individuals and teams should consider when drafting their country plans. This includes where potential obstacles might lie, where opportunities might arise, and what interventions might work.

Country offices are already drawing on this resource to develop their own approach. For example, DFID Ghana adapted the theory of change to inform their new flagship 'Leave No One Behind' programme, by using context-specific evidence and DPOs consultation.

Over time, we will also work with the Disability Helpdesk to develop a further four theories of change, on each of our priority areas.

***Recommendation 10: To lead by example, DFID should make all its offices—in the UK and its operating countries—physically accessible to people with disabilities.***

Government position: **Agree**

We are working with the FCO to audit the accessibility of the overseas estate, identify where improvements are needed, and ensuring that new government buildings built overseas are accessible.

We have ensured that we take consideration of accessibility requirements for disabled people in the now completed refurbishment of Abercrombie House, and the ongoing refit of 22 Whitehall. Working alongside the Disability and Empowerment Network in DFID, we are committed to a full-scale accessibility assessment of 22 Whitehall. For example, this includes ensuring appropriately accessible seating in communal areas and in the new furniture arrangements, more accessible booths and meeting rooms, 20% more sit/stand desks and a variety of communal tables of varying heights in the 22 Whitehall Exchange area to facilitate access for all.

***Recommendation 11: DFID should also update its Strategy to include neglected issues like the link between universal health coverage and the needs of disabled people, and the linkages between ageing populations and disabilities related to old age. We also urge DFID to publish its global health position paper as soon as possible, and address these issues within it.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

We selected the four priority areas in the strategy through extensive external consultation, to focus on areas where we can have greatest impact. We are now focused on delivering against that strategy and will not be updating it at this stage. However, like every business unit in DFID, our Human Development Department, which leads on our health policy, will be expected to meet the standards we have set.

We know we cannot do everything on our own, and that is why we are encouraging others to act too. For example, leaving no-one behind, including people with disabilities, was one of the UK's top priorities for the Political Declaration for this year's UNGA High Level Meeting for Universal Health Coverage. We recognise the close link between ageing populations and disability, and we will continue to take a 'life cycle' approach as set out in our strategy and ensure that our work reaches people of all ages.

We expect to publish a health systems strengthening position paper at the end of this year outlining our approach to the provision of quality, accessible and inclusive services.

***Recommendation 12: DFID committed to republish its delivery plan to make it more specific and measurable by the end of 2019. As we recommend above, we request a consultative update on progress with this revision in the Government's reply to this Report. The re-published delivery plan should include a clear allocation of resources attached to deliverables, and a clear evaluation mechanism with a clear timeline.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

We are working closely with the BOND Disability and Development Group to revise the delivery plan and ensure it is more specific, with a clear evaluation mechanism and timeline. We will also consult others in the disability inclusive development sector, including Disabled People's Organisations, in the revision of this plan.

Due to resource constraints, other cross-government priorities, and a desire to get this right, we have decided to allow more time for the delivery of the minimum standards. We have therefore extended the deadline for achieving the standards by six months to June 2020. This will ensure all business units have sufficient time, support and resources to keep progressing their disability inclusion work and meet the standards in a considered and effective way.

***Recommendation 13: DFID should ensure it is addressing the specific needs of children at each stage of education, taking into account the obvious, as well as the less obvious (intersecting and contextual), barriers to access to education. The hidden costs of disability, relevant to access to education, need to be exposed and budgeted for in DFID's projects and programmes.***

Government position: **Agree**

The specific needs of children with disabilities are taken into account across DFID's education programmes. Our DFID Education Policy 2018 and Disability Inclusion Strategy 2018 included specific commitments to ensure that programmes are fully inclusive, and where appropriate, they provide targeted support to children with disabilities.

For instance, in Ethiopia one of the main factors hindering the educational participation of children with disabilities is the absence of support facilities and assistive devices. To

address this, we have committed to support the establishment of more than 600 Inclusive Education Resource Centres across the country. These resource centres will ensure the children have the necessary support to enable them to thrive in the classroom.

***Recommendation 14: DFID should develop specific guidelines and technical guidance notes to implementers across all its education projects, to ensure its initiatives are implemented effectively, incurring no harm to disabled children.***

Government position: **Agree**

DFID Education Advisers are well trained on disability inclusion and share technical guidance and expertise with implementers as appropriate. We are working with the Head of Profession for Education to develop this expertise further, and to provide dedicated training which will be open source for the wider sector.

In 2014 we published guidance to ensure that any education projects involving construction that are funded directly by DFID address the needs of people with disabilities. The Inclusive Education Initiative will also produce technical guidance and this will be disseminated widely.

***Recommendation 15: DFID's support to national governments, for the delivery of disability-inclusive education policies, should be targeted and specific and take into account that each country starts from a different base and operates different systems. Technical support must focus on capacity within government to budget for inclusion rather than the building of special schools that will prolong segregation.***

Government position: **Agree**

DFID's [Education Policy](#) supports and promotes inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education systems. However, we recognise that many countries have a legacy of special schools and we may need to support these schools as a country moves progressively towards an inclusive system. Our priority will be to avoid further exclusion from education.

Inclusive education interventions that can be effectively scaled will be tested across a range of contexts through the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) programme and the Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI). The IEI will provide technical support to governments in three focus countries to improve the implementation of inclusive education.

***Recommendation 16: Data collection should specifically focus on ways to identify out of school children who are vulnerable to compounded marginalisation.***

Government position: **Agree**

DFID collects disaggregated data on programme beneficiaries to ensure equity in our reach and effectiveness.

Through our work with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and our Inclusive Education Initiative we are building the capacity of our government partners to strengthen equity in education. We are also committed to using the Washington Group Disability Questions to identify people with disabilities. An increasing number of our education programmes,

including the Girls' Education Challenge, are using the Child Functioning Module to identify children with disabilities and we will be conducting further training on this later this year.

***Recommendation 17: DFID should consult on the case for special schools vs integration within the main education system, and the use of 'Equity Based Stepping Stone Targets methodology' and promote effective adapted tools for each country DFID operates in.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

We will explore the relative merits of using a stepping stone approach in our country programmes.

We will not be consulting further on the case for special schools vs integration within the main education system. DFID supports inclusive, mainstream education for children with disabilities and we are working with countries to progressively realise inclusive education. We recognise this is a process and it may be necessary to support special schools in the interim, especially where a country has a strong legacy of special schools. Our priority is to avoid further exclusion.

***Recommendation 18: Specific actions for involving families in achieving DFID's inclusive education initiatives should be identified and published in the new delivery plan.***

Government position: **Agree**

The inclusion of families of children with disabilities in education processes is important and can be critical in ensuring children get the necessary support. Where possible we will encourage a more tripartite structure between the school, the children and their caregivers/community to ensure children with disabilities are able to thrive.

Through our Disability Catalyst Programme, we provide funding to the Disability Rights Fund and the International Disability Alliance, who support the capacity of education focused Disabled People's Organisations—including children with disabilities and their families.

***Recommendation 19: DFID should gather more evidence on the implementation of its social protection programmes. DFID should particularly consider whether the focus of social protection programmes on poverty reduction, may obscure the interlinkages between social protection and access to services, like education and employment. DFID should leverage existing research to understand the different components of the social protection system, to assess how the additional costs of disability can be met, and to ensure projects are not inadvertently causing discrimination in other areas of inclusive-development like access to employment.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

Social protection can support people with disabilities to meet their basic needs and live independently, take advantage of education and economic opportunities. This is why we have made it one of the four thematic pillars of our Disability Inclusion Strategy. We are seeing progress, for instance:

- A new £39m programme on social protection in Ghana will provide 250,000 people access to social protection cash transfers, including linkages to complementary livelihoods interventions and support. These efforts will include people with disabilities.
- We are also working with others to develop disability-specific social protection tools and guidance. A new ILO and UNICEF project launched in April, is part funded by DFID through the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The project will strengthen the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment tools to ensure they are disability inclusive.

***Recommendation 20: DFID should work to strengthen the appetite and capacity of national governments, and other stakeholders, to engage with DPOs to consult on barriers and opportunities for persons with disabilities relating to their active and full participation in economic and social life. DFID should work with governments and stakeholders, including DPOs, to fund and support the inclusion of people with disabilities in existing social protection schemes—or develop appropriate new schemes—including to facilitate the provision and training on use of enabling devices and technologies.***

Government position: **Agree**

Our Disability Inclusion standards cover both engagement with people with disabilities and their representative organisations (standard 2) and influencing (standard 3). In practice, this requires country offices to engage with national governments and other stakeholders, as well as to consult people with disabilities and their representative organisations. Recent assessment has shown improvement across the organisation in both areas.

In our strategy, we have made clear that we need to engage with others, including people with disabilities and their representative organisations, partner governments and development partners in our work on social protection. This will enable all of us to better reach people with disabilities and know the impact on their lives. For example, in Uganda we have partnered with Sightsavers to provide assessment and referral to services for Senior Citizen Grant beneficiaries.

We will also identify innovative approaches to pilot and test, including, where appropriate, the provision of assistive technology (AT). AT is a key enabler for change, and as committed to in our strategy, this will be a key cross-cutting issue playing a vital role in supporting inclusion.

***Recommendation 21: In their work with national governments, DFID should:***

- i) support the establishment of robust and accessible systems for delivering social protection to PWDs that minimise risks of corruption.***
- ii) secure guarantees of [commitments to] the rights of PWDs to equal and fair access to justice. We would like to see specific deliverables relating to the support of families of PWDs who provide unpaid care, and face stigma and discrimination.***
- iii) DFID should work with international actors to de-stigmatise speaking up against injustices such as abuse and discrimination of disabled people,***

***and to make reporting such instances easier, particularly for those living in the hardest to reach settings. Those speaking up against injustices must also be protected from further discrimination.***

Government position: **Agree**

DFID social protection programmes already incorporate a range of controls to mitigate risks, particularly fraud and leakage risks. Key controls and risk mitigation currently being used in our programmes include clear and transparent targeting, regular monitoring and evaluation, managing data effectively e.g. registries, and grievance mechanisms that provide citizens with formal channels to appeal and complain.

We will also develop guidance on improving the disability-inclusion of social information systems. This will help to improve data management including determining eligibility and inclusion of people with disabilities.

Please see further information related to stigma and discrimination at recommendation 30.

***Recommendation 22: DFID should ensure that disability inclusion is mainstreamed throughout its economic development programming and is taken into consideration in investment decisions specifically through the CDC. DFID should ensure that its support of any expansion of the formal employment sector be on an inclusive basis.***

Government position: **Agree**

Our Disability Inclusion standards require a stocktake of all programmes to assess whether they are disability inclusive. They also require all new business cases, terms of references and annual reviews to consider the needs of people with disabilities.

We will continue to work with CDC to ensure that disability inclusion is prioritised and people with disabilities are taken into account by the companies they fund and across the investment lifecycle. We will also work with CDC to raise the issue of disability inclusion amongst other Development Finance Institutions.

***Recommendation 23: DFID should ensure diversity at all levels amongst their staff and through their supply chain.***

Government position: **Agree**

See answer to recommendation 7.

We have put in place mechanisms to ensure that DFID's procurement processes are disability inclusive. This has included revising our standard terms and conditions of contract and supply partner code of conduct and incorporating non-discrimination requirements. In September, alongside the International Disability Alliance, we are presenting to UK Aid suppliers on disability inclusion at a Supplier Conference to raise awareness, explain DFID's expectations and provide learning on the issue.

***Recommendation 24: DFID should also address the skills gaps to enable disabled people to access the job market, consider options for those who cannot access the formal job market, factor in support for unpaid family carers, and address the hidden costs of disability that may hamper progress on economic development.***

Government position: **Agree**

We have committed to enhance the economic and social inclusion of people with disabilities and to ensure that people with disabilities are supported as both employers and as employees, expanding their access to skills, and quality jobs. We will continue to support businesses to target people with disabilities as consumers of goods and services.

Our funding to Leonard Cheshire and Sightsavers through UK Aid Connect is specifically looking at addressing the skills gaps to enable people with disabilities to access the job market in four countries: Kenya, Bangladesh, Uganda and Nigeria.

Furthermore, our work on women's economic empowerment will strengthen the involvement of women with disabilities in value chains. Our flagship £37m disability inclusive development programme will support people with disabilities to access jobs and livelihoods across six countries enabling up to 45,000 people to increase their incomes whilst learning from and disseminating 'what works'.

***Recommendation 25: DFID should incentivise the private sector to be a lead partner in delivering the economic empowerment target, through offering more opportunities to people with disabilities. This should be seen as both part of corporate social responsibility and as a business case.***

Government position: **Agree**

We want to leverage new diverse and innovative partnerships with the private sector to offer more opportunities for people with disabilities. For example, DFID Kenya is working to ensure a scale up of the 'Private Sector Strategic Partnership' bringing together companies from the UK and Kenya to support the economic empowerment of people with disabilities. The office has worked with the Kenya Commercial Bank to ensure that 1,200 young men and women with disabilities are part of their youth entrepreneurship programme.

Through the Responsible, Accountable Transparent Enterprise (RATE) programme we engaged with partners across a range of responsible business approaches, such as voluntary standards, company reporting, and on human rights. This effort includes our collaboration with the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), which led to the publication of Base Code Guidance, to be used by businesses to draw upon when reviewing their own practices.

More recently, we have also sponsored a new disability inclusion category at the prestigious Financial Times/IFC Transformational Business awards. It was won by Amparo who have designed a new below-knee prosthetic for use in developing countries.

***Recommendation 26: DFID should also consider how to work with financial and credit institutions to encourage enterprise development for disabled people.***

Government position: **Agree**

We agree that engagement with the private sector and international financial institutions is key. We will continue to work with CDC and IFC to develop a good practice note on Disability Inclusion linked to the IFC Performance Standards. This will ensure the whole development finance industry raise the bar across the board. We will also work with CDC to ensure that disability inclusion is prioritised and people with disabilities are taken into account by the companies they fund and across the investment lifecycle.

***Recommendation 27: We recommend that DFID gradually makes the application of [the forthcoming good practice guidance note developed in cooperation with the CDC and the World Bank IFC] compulsory to DFID suppliers, to ensure sudden imposition does not cause smaller contractors to struggle.***

Government position: **Disagree**

The guidance note will be aimed at private sector companies and investors in developing markets. We are concerned that making it compulsory, however gradually it is introduced, would risk the exclusion of organisations and suppliers. We propose to make the guidance advisory. We will track what influence it has and how many organisations meet the guidance before considering whether further changes are required.

***Recommendation 28: DFID should commit to building the capacity of DPOs, National Human Rights Institutions, and other actors to support the elimination of disability discrimination in employment.***

Government position: **Agree**

Building the capacity of DPOs, National Human Rights Institutions and other actors is in DFID's Disability Inclusion standards and something DFID departments and country offices should consider as part of their programme portfolios.

More broadly, support to DPOs is fundamental to our approach to disability inclusion. Over the last 10 years we have provided grants to over 300 representative organisations of people with disabilities through the Disability Rights Fund (DRF), with considerable success including additional ratification of the UN CRPD and changes to legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities. The current Disability Catalyst Programme (2017–2020) is also providing training, partnership building and specific support to people with disabilities through the International Disability Alliance (IDA). This programme has also funded the United National Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) to bring together UN entities with DPOs, broader civil society and governments with the aim of triggering systemic change on disability inclusion.

***Recommendation 29: DFID should follow the advice of the 2015–30 Sendai Framework to work with PWDs and grassroot DPOs to assess disaster risk, design and implement plans at all stages of disaster risk planning and management. DFID should develop in-house expertise at CHASE on inclusive emergency and humanitarian response and improve its preparedness for disability-inclusive response. DFID should ensure the interlinkages between all its programmes on disability inclusion are better articulated across the department. DFID should also work closely with other donors to promote inclusive humanitarian action.***

Government position: **Agree**

The inclusion of people with disabilities and their representative organisations is critical to ensuring a people-centred and inclusive humanitarian response, as well as delivering strong outcomes and the highest level of accountability. We are also developing in-house expertise in order to deliver more inclusive responses, including:

- funding the design and delivery of open-access free e-learning to use the Washington Group questions in humanitarian settings (now translated into three languages);
- releasing new technical guidance such as '[Guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans](#)';
- delivering training for all humanitarian advisers on disability inclusive responses (by the end of the year);
- funding two external experts to provide support and training to Middle East and North African countries; and,
- increasing number of inclusion experts on our humanitarian roster Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT).

We will continue to work closely with other donors to promote inclusive humanitarian action, and we have had early success in this so far. For example, the UK championed and was successful in ensuring the inclusion of psychosocial support in the Global Compact on Refugees.

***Recommendation 30: DFID should work with national governments on addressing stigma and discrimination across all policy areas, legislation, and in the justice system. Country offices should work closely with national governments and media outlets to tackle deep-rooted stigma in society. Disabled people and DPOs should be involved in working with DFID programmes on changing the image of people with disabilities as victims in need of help, to one of active agents in society. DFID should also consult widely on how to address alleviating discrimination against people who do not identify as disabled out of fear of stigma, like people with leprosy-related disabilities.***

Government position: **Agree**

In our strategy, we are clear that tackling stigma and discrimination is critical to ensuring all communities respect the rights, dignity, capabilities and contributions of all people with disabilities. We simply will not succeed in achieving inclusive societies without tackling the negative assumptions and discriminatory beliefs that exist at all levels.

The strategy requires departments and country offices to take a context-specific approach to programming and make a judgement of the most appropriate interventions and methods on a case-by-case basis. For instance, the Disability Inclusive Development programme is planning to test how effective interventions using radio programmes can be on addressing stigma in countries such as Nigeria and Tanzania.

***Recommendation 31: DFID should pay more attention in their programming on accessibility of information on women's rights and available support in cases of discrimination. DFID should ensure its adoption of a life-cycle approach is comprehensive and includes older women. DFID should also differentiate between the***

*specific needs and forms of discrimination against adolescent girls. DFID should ensure it specifically works with DPOs led by women on this area, to inform their planning across programmes. DFID needs to ensure their activities focusing on women and girls are clear when republishing the delivery plan at the end of 2019 and use their leadership to encourage other national governments to take specific actions to eliminate intersecting discrimination against women and girls. DFID should ensure its programmes on sexual and reproductive health should pay specific attention to how these issues affect disabled people.*

Government position: **Agree**

This is explicit in DFID's disability inclusion standards and something DFID departments and country offices should consider as part of their programme portfolios. DFID is committed to bring a step change in our approach to understand, include and empower the most excluded and vulnerable girls and women with disabilities, and this is a clear focus in both DFID's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality and DFID's Disability Inclusion Strategy. We know that a total of £2.2bn has been approved for programmes that are both disability and gender inclusive.

DFID's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality commits us and others to work across girls' and women's lifecycles and on multiple areas simultaneously, with particular attention to adolescence, so that the gains in one area create opportunities elsewhere, and results are achieved at scale. Women and girls with disabilities are supported by many DFID programmes. For example, UK Aid invests £39m to end child marriage, and DFID's Amplify Change programme works across 16 countries with 37 grantees focused on the provision of SRHR services to women and girls with disabilities. Through the Girls' Education Challenge, we have helped over 46,000 girls with disabilities receive an education in countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and have committed to ensure that 15% of the new 'leave no girls behind' window focuses on girls with disabilities. We are also generating world-class research and evidence on best practices approaches, including the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence programme; What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls programme; and the Young Lives research programme.

The 'What Works to Prevent Violence' programme has expanded the global evidence base on violence against women and girls with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries, showing that the risk of intimate-partner violence is between 2–4 times higher among women and girls with disabilities than those without. We will continue to use the evidence generated to influence others internationally to take action. Additionally, DFID is contributing £21 million to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UNTF) (2014–2020), which provides grants to women's rights organisations and other small grassroots organisations to support innovative approaches to tackling violence across multiple countries. This includes funding for a special window on violence against women and girls with disabilities. At the Global Disability Summit in 2018, the UNTF announced nine new grants under this special window, which are expected to reach around 8,000 women and girls with disabilities.

***Recommendation 32: DFID should use its leadership role to encourage bigger commitments from national governments, international organisations, and the private sector to the provision of assistive technology.***

Government position: **Agree**

DFID is committed to supporting the provision of assistive technology (AT). As set out in our written evidence in February 2019, we announced two significant initiatives at the Global Disability Summit on AT. Firstly, the AT2030 programme which has recently doubled from £10m to £19.8m and includes 100 per cent match funding from governments, private sector, academia and NGOs. Secondly, ATscale, a wider global partnership, which aims to reach 500 million more people with assistive technology by 2030. ATscale will work closely with the private sector, bringing to assistive technology the market shaping approaches that have already massively improved access to health and family planning products. It will also work towards creating an enabling environment for AT provision, including galvanising investment from national governments, international organisations, and donors.

We will continue to encourage other donors to provide funding to the ATscale global partnership and align investments in order to meet the ambitious targets that have been set. ATscale published its Strategy Overview in February 2019, further details can be found at <https://atscale2030.org/strategy>.

***Recommendation 33: DFID should work closely with national governments on training and building capacity to provide specialist public services for people with disabilities, including accessible buildings and information, and trained staff. DFID should also ensure accessibility of information is considered across all its programmes to enable greater access to the services provided by DFID projects.***

Government position: **Agree**

Equal access to opportunities, information and outcomes for all people with disabilities is a key building block of the disability inclusion strategy. This means our communities, schools and educational institutions, hospitals and health centres, workplaces and environments are fully accessible to, and meet the needs of all. We know this requires going beyond physical barriers, to include attitudinal and institutional barriers, to ensure wider adjustments, provisions and accommodations are made so all people with disabilities can thrive and enjoy their rights and wellbeing.

For example, we have committed to strengthen our focus on disability inclusive infrastructure. Through DFID's Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) programme we have undertaken a number of actions to try and raise both the standard of disability inclusive infrastructure in our own programming, as well as pushing the agenda in discussions with other governments and investors. ICED have produced a document mapping disability inclusive infrastructure in developing countries, disseminated case studies of best practice and guidance on including disability throughout the programme life cycle in addition to the provision of tailored technical assistance.

***Recommendation 34: DFID should also have measures in place ensure that the 'Do No Harm' principle is not breached by (a) the lack of suitable assistive devices provided via its projects; and (b) the provision of unsuitable devices.***

Government position: **Agree**

'Do no harm' is a fundamental principle of both the AT2030 programme and ATscale. As with all programmes, DFID encourages the highest standards of care and regularly conducts due diligence and oversight.

Both programmes will work closely with partners and the private sector to improve the quality and standards of assistive technologies at the point of production, reducing the prevalence of poor-quality, unsuitable, or harmful technology in low-income countries.

***Recommendation 35: The mental health position paper should explain how DFID intends to fill data gaps in this area.***

Government position: **Partially Agree**

The mental health position paper and theory of change will set out for the first time how development actors like DFID can maximise its aid portfolio to better integrate, evaluate and scale up its contribution to mental health in some of the world's poorest countries. This will include suggestions on how best to monitor and evaluate change.

This is a new area for the whole international community—and requires ongoing dialogue and sharing of evidence to inform the best way forward. We advocate that the four questions on psychosocial disabilities should be included when the Washington Group Questions are used to disaggregate by disability status. This addresses an important data gap. But we know its only part of the picture—and we will continue to listen and learn from emerging and new practice, including engaging in developments with the Washington Group itself.

***Recommendation 36: DFID should also develop a specific policy marker and spending codes for work on including people with mental health and psychosocial disabilities.***

Government position: **Disagree**

In order to step up our work on mental health we agree it is important to understand progress and spend—which is why we undertook a stocktake of all our work in 2016. This stocktake identified good practice as well as new entry points to better integrate mental health across our wider work.

In addition to this stocktake, we currently monitor our work through DFID's Aid Management Platform (AMP). This enables us to look at which programmes or components include a focus on mental health—and provides management information on spend by sector.

An additional policy marker would only tell us part of the picture. We believe money spent on standalone mental health interventions is only one part of the solution. It would not capture our wider aid programmes that are positively contributing to improved wellbeing or addressing the common risk factors of poor mental health—like exposure to extreme poverty and violence. This is why we have committed to publishing a position paper and theory of change by the end of the year to better guide the integration of mental health across our wider work.

The OECD DAC is the body responsible for maintaining and improving the quality and comparability of Official Development Assistance (ODA) statistics, including introducing new policy markers through consensus decision making by DAC members. The OECD DAC has put a temporary pause on new markers until a review of the use and

usefulness of the existing markers already in the system is completed. We will look at any recommendations from that review, including any considerations that are relevant to mental health.

***Recommendation 37: DFID should work closely with national governments to give high priority to mental health, and on protecting the rights of people with mental health and psychosocial disabilities in areas like employment, health, and the legal system. DPOs have an important role to play in this area. DFID must ensure that support is available to families of people with Mental health and psychosocial disabilities. DFID should also recognise the specific needs of people with intellectual disabilities, and target them accordingly in their programming. In their work on climate change, DFID should include considerations on the link between environmental stressors and mental health.***

Government position: **Agree**

We are committed to taking a comprehensive and rights-based approach to mental health that promotes wellbeing for all, improves access to quality services and support, and realises the full rights and inclusion of people with psychosocial disabilities. We know this requires working closely with national governments. In Ghana, we have announced a new five-year programme that is working with the national government to advance and protect rights and scale up access to quality services.

We agree DPOs and representative groups also play an important role – this is implicit in DFID's disability inclusion standards. As set out in the standard focused on engaging and empowering people with disabilities, 'each business unit in DFID should carry out consultation in a way that builds capacity and involves groups that are sometimes excluded such as people with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities'.

The mental health position paper and theory of change will set out how development actors like DFID can more effectively and deliberately address the underlying social and environmental stressors of mental health.

***Recommendation 38: DFID should invest in staff with its safeguarding unit, who have the capacity, knowledge and expertise to promote the safeguarding, well-being and welfare of people with disabilities particularly children, girls and women (and their families). DFID should ensure it provides adequate resourcing and commitment to monitor and follow-up on cases and referrals, arising from DFID programming. Given recent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) cases in the aid sector, DFID should consider its specific impact on people with disabilities and work closely with international development actors to put in place sector-wide mechanisms to safeguard people with disabilities, particularly those made vulnerable by especially fragile, conflicted or disempowering environments. DFID should work closely with national governments to strengthen safe access of disabled people to public services, including the justice system.***

Government position: **Agree**

We know that people with disabilities are disproportionately at risk of harm and the Safeguarding Unit has identified disability as one of its priority areas for action. Disability inclusion was a consideration in the development of the safeguarding enhanced due diligence introduced in 2018. It was included in the commitments made by donors at the Safeguarding Summit and the OECD DAC recommendation on sexual exploitation

and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). We consulted with networks that represent people with disabilities in the early stages of development of the Resource and Support Hub and building the evidence-base around safeguarding people with disabilities will be an important element of this programme.

DFID's Safeguarding Unit has assigned staff to ensure our work to tackle SEAH is inclusive and responds to the specific risks faced by people with disabilities. These staff members draw on expertise from within DFID (including the Disability Inclusion team and our networks of advisers) and independent experts.

We are addressing significant gaps in the evidence base around prevalence and what works to prevent and respond to SEAH. For example, we have committed to spending up to £20 million on research that is relevant to safeguarding over the next five years under a range of programmes, many of which will be relevant to people with disabilities. We have also convened an independent reference group to give challenge and critique to DFID on our safeguarding policy work, composed of multi-disciplinary practitioners and academics including people with disabilities and disability inclusion experts.

DFID's Safeguarding Investigations team was established in January 2019 to handle the increased number of safeguarding concerns and allegations being reported. We recruited staff who are qualified and experience in conducting safeguarding investigations and providing support as required to partner organisations' investigations.

***Recommendation 39: DFID should develop a systematic way of informing and evaluating disability inclusion in projects overseen by other ODA-spending departments, to ensure the UK is meeting its commitment under the CRPD. All ODA-spending departments should use the OECD DAC disability policy marker to measure and monitor progress towards inclusion. ODA spent outside DFID must be to the same standards for disability inclusion as applied to DFID's projects and programmes. In particular, ODA spent outside DFID should be designed to strictly avoid creating or exacerbating barriers and segregation of persons with disabilities. DFID as the department responsible for reporting on all ODA-spending should develop a mechanism to ensure all ODA-spending is compliant with the DAC disability policy marker.***

Government position: **Agree**

We are working with other governments departments to ensure all ODA-spending departments include the disability inclusion policy marker within their programme data. A small number of departments have included this information for the first time this year. We expect compliance to increase over time as other departments make the required changes to their ODA-recording systems. We will continue to work with and support all ODA-spending departments to become compliant as quickly as possible.

We are sharing best practices and, where possible, resources with other ODA-spending departments. For instance, the Disability Helpdesk is a resource available to all parts of the HMG and we are proactively encouraging other departments to use it.

## Annex A—IDC Inquiry

### Update of progress Against Disability Inclusion standards August 2019

#### **Standard 1: Office Approach and Culture**

The majority of business units are making very good progress to achieve this minimum standard with continued signalling of leadership and good progress in developing and finalising office-wide Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

##### **Good Practice Case Study: DFID Pakistan**

The Head of Office is the disability champion, with the Senior Management Team (SMT) also supporting. A robust Disability Inclusion Action Plan is in place following an office-wide mapping, being led by a group of advisors and programme staff. An audit of language and accessibility for recruitment has been completed and statements to encourage persons with disabilities to apply will be more prominent. New ramps have been built ensuring physical access for persons with disabilities. A check of communications and IT for accessibility is underway.

#### **Standard 2: Engagement and Empowerment of People with Disabilities**

The majority of business units have either undertaken, or planning to undertake, consultation of people with disabilities and their representative organisations. However, feedback from the recent stocktake has indicated this has been one of the more difficult standards for business units to engage with due to lack of existing networks, logistical difficulties and/or lack of capacity from DPOs. Notably more country offices have either met or are on track to meet this standard in comparison with Central Departments.

##### **Good Practice Case Study: DFID Afghanistan**

The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan impacts the ability of all donors to travel around the country. Nevertheless, DFID Afghanistan has coordinated two Kabul based DPO roundtables and one in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2019. The regional workshop included organisations such as Women with Disabilities Social Association; Afghanistan Blind Association and Afghanistan Deaf Association to ensure a wide a range of views from local DPOs were gathered. DFID Afghanistan is also in the final exploratory stages of funding to the government's new Ministry of Martyrs and Disability to provide capacity building support (through HI) which will include the running of regional consultation workshops with DPOs.

#### **Standard 3: Influencing**

The majority of business units are making good progress to meet this standard with strong consistent signalling that disability inclusion and gender equality are important to DFID, good progress engaging on disability inclusion with stakeholders including the private sector, and robust support to Governments/other stakeholders to implement their commitments.

**Good Practice Case Study: Safeguarding Unit**

Disability was included in the commitments made by 22 donors at DFID's Safeguarding Summit in October 2018. SU are working closely with donors on implementation of these commitments through our regular working group meetings. The Safeguarding Unit successfully advocated for the inclusion of disability in the DAC Recommendation on safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment which was adopted on 12 July.

**Standard 4: Programming**

The majority of country offices are making progress in achieving this standard and in completing stock takes of programmes; ensuring consideration for disability in business cases, supplier terms of references, annual reviews; designing new flagship programmes; and ensuring all programmes are marked against the disability inclusion marker. Progress is more mixed in central departments—particularly with delays in completing basic stock takes.

**Good Practice Case Study: DFID Mozambique**

As part of the PSED process earlier this year, DFID Mozambique did a thorough review of programmes to assess level of commitment to people with disabilities. They have acted on this analysis, integrating disability inclusion across their portfolio including the UN Joint Programme on Social Protection, which is addressing disability by assessing the needs of PWDs and supporting them to access better social services.

**Standard 5: Data and Evidence**

The majority of business units are making good progress towards the aim for all new programmes to collect and use disability disaggregated data. There was encouraging increased inclusion of disability disaggregated data using the Washington Group Questions, though some business units recorded difficulties in that no programmes had relevant indicators.

**Good Practice Case study: DFID Somalia**

DFID Somalia are building the data and evidence on disability and disability inclusion in Somalia. This includes: encouraging all new programmes to collect and use disability disaggregated data for relevant indicators; sharing lessons from pilot programmes; supporting quantitative data-production (Somalia Health and Demographic Survey and digital reporting from internal monitoring programmes); supporting qualitative research on stigma and lived experiences through the East Africa Research Hub and K4D portal; re-examining disability-related data from our humanitarian monitoring; promoting and reviewing implementing partners' policies and practices.

**Update of Progress by High Achievement Countries**

Whilst no Country Office has yet to reach all five High Achievement Standards, we have seen examples of excellence in all areas, and are making good progress against our commitment for four offices to reach the 'high achievement' standards. For example:

- DFID Burma fund technical assistance and provide support so government and civil society can implement the seven commitments seven commitments from the Global Disability Summit, the UN CRPD and the ASEAN Enabling Master Plan.
- DFID Kenya's Disability Action Plan includes measurable actions embracing each of the five disability inclusion strands that will be measured through an annual tracker indicating progress of implementation and a report on activities at the end of each quarter.

All potential '*High Achievement*' Country Offices have been invited to join the DFID's 'Leave No One Behind' Trailblazers Group—a forum to exchange best practice on social inclusion more broadly. For example, the most recent meeting including training for all country offices on data disaggregation and the Washington Group Questions (Disability Inclusion Standard 5).