

# **2023**

# **GLOBAL SURVEY REPORT**

# **ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

# **AND DISASTERS**



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## Author's note

The authors of this report were not involved in the design of data-collection tools, survey administration, or the collection of data informing this report. The role of the authors was limited to interpretation of the data provided and reporting key findings.

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# List of acronyms and abbreviations

<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>MTR</b>	Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OPD</b>	Organization of persons with disabilities
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UNDRR</b>	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



Credit to Pacific Disability Forum



# Foreword

Disasters impact everyone, but have a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities who continue to experience barriers to participation and societal exclusion. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 commits to increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction, and champions inclusive decision-making in which persons with disabilities are key stakeholders in determining the disaster risk reduction plans and programmes that impact all our lives.

To support advocacy for disability inclusion within the Sendai Framework, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) collaborated with disability stakeholders to conduct the 2023 Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters. This builds on the first survey undertaken in 2013, and reviews progress a decade on.

This report captures the main findings and recommendations that emerged from the 2023 survey, and we could not be more grateful to all the partners who helped in its preparation and are named in the acknowledgements.

The timing of its publication aims to build on the outcomes of the recently concluded High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Midterm Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework (18–19 May 2023). This report is also relevant to other global midterm processes, including the 2023 Sustainable Development Goal Summit and the Global Stocktake of the Paris Climate Agreement.

We aim to integrate the findings and recommendations of the report into UNDRR's work and we call on national and local governments to incorporate them into their policymaking. We must put people at the heart of disaster prevention. Success will not be possible without an all-of-society approach that leaves no one behind.

We hope this report will serve as a spark for changes in the world of disaster risk reduction and beyond. We must not rest in demanding these changes until we achieve resilience for all.

**Mami Mizutori**

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction  
Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

# Executive summary

Persons with disabilities constitute 16 per cent of the world's population, with 80 per cent living in the Global South.<sup>1</sup> Persons with disabilities are frequently the most affected by natural hazards, climate-induced disasters and global health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 recognizes persons with disabilities as contributing stakeholders, emphasizing the need for inclusion in all disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and practices. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1) commits to leaving no one behind and to ending poverty in all its forms for all people. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be reliant on reducing and preventing disaster risk and ensuring inclusion for all.

The Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework (MTR) shows that countries are not on track to achieve its objectives by 2030.<sup>3</sup> Disability inclusion continues to be underresourced and underprioritized, with limited initiatives to increase inclusion. Despite some improvement in supportive policies and legislation for disability-inclusive DRR, implementation remains slow and uneven, often driven by non-state actors with short-term funding. Participation of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in

DRR is frequently hindered by limited resources and support from other stakeholders.<sup>4</sup>

To understand the progress made in disability inclusion in DRR, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) conducted the 2023 Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters, a follow-up to the 2013 Global Survey. The survey aimed to identify if persons with disabilities are prepared for potential disasters, whether early warning and risk information is available and accessible, if persons with disabilities are aware of DRR plans at national and local levels, and if persons with disabilities are participating in DRR decision-making and planning.

Findings from the survey are intended to provide insights and direction on the remaining seven years of the Sendai Framework implementation.

The survey was conducted between January and March 2023, and resulted in a total of 6,342 responses from 132 countries. For comparison, the 2013 survey resulted in 5,717 responses from 137 countries.

The results show **limited progress** in disability inclusion over the past 10 years, with **no significant differences** across the regions.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, *Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities* (Geneva, 2022). Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600>.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, "Disability", 7 March 2023. Available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Guidelines: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action* (New York, 2019). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/iasc-guidelines-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action-july-2019>. See also, for example, Ciara Siobhan Brennan, *Disability Rights During the Pandemic: A Global Report on Findings of the COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor* (Budapest: COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor, 2020). Available at <https://covid-drm.org/assets/documents/Disability-Rights-During-the-Pandemic-report-web.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> UNDRR, *The Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework* (Geneva, 2023). Available at <https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/media/86858>.

<sup>4</sup> Nino Gvetadze and Pradytia Pertiwi, *Including Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction: A Research Study from Eight Countries of Africa, Asia and South/Central America* (Cologne, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Centre for Disability in Development, CBM International, International Disability Alliance, and Malteser International, 2022). Available at [https://www.malteser-international.org/fileadmin/Files\\_sites/malteser-international/A-About\\_us/E-Service/C-Publications/Specialized\\_Publications/DiDRR\\_Study\\_in\\_English.pdf](https://www.malteser-international.org/fileadmin/Files_sites/malteser-international/A-About_us/E-Service/C-Publications/Specialized_Publications/DiDRR_Study_in_English.pdf).



The key findings of the survey are as follows:

- **84 per cent** (5,322) of persons with disabilities reported **not having a personal preparedness plan** for disasters. This was less than in the 2013 survey.
- **Adequate early warning enables persons with disabilities to evacuate** with fewer difficulties. However, even with sufficient advance warning, **17 per cent** (1,098) would still face **a lot of difficulties** evacuating, and **6 per cent** (357) would be **unable to evacuate** independently at all.
- **56 per cent** (3,549) reported **not being aware of** or **not having access to disaster risk information** in accessible formats in their communities.
- **Awareness of DRR plans** remains low among persons with disabilities, with only **11 per cent** (708) reporting being aware of DRR plans at national level and **14 per cent** (897) at subnational level.
- Only **8 per cent** (488) reported that local DRR plans **addressed the specific needs** of persons with disabilities.
- **86 per cent** (5,484) of persons with disabilities reported **no participation in community-level DRR decision-making** and planning. A total of **57 per cent** (3,634) indicated they would be willing to participate.
- **75 per cent** (4,727) reported not having, or not being aware of, any **mechanism to ensure the participation** of persons with disabilities in **community DRR decision-making**. Accessibility issues, attitudinal and other **barriers continue to limit participation**.
- **16 per cent** (1,040) reported there are now dedicated **leadership roles** for disability inclusion in governance structures. However, personnel with disability expertise are **often not assigned to these roles**.

The report provides recommendations for expediting the implementation of the Sendai Framework by 2030, urging governments to promptly convert policy commitments into tangible actions for disability-inclusive DRR, while recognizing their legal obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and their commitments to the Sendai Framework and Agenda 2030, in order to ensure the full inclusion and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all DRR initiatives. The report also emphasizes the importance of ensuring appropriate preparedness measures, improving access to risk information, and investing in disability-inclusive

DRR, including direct resourcing of OPDs in recognition of their leadership and contributions to achieving the Sendai Framework outcomes. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need to implement disability-inclusive policies and legislation to ensure that DRR efforts effectively include all persons with disabilities in their full diversity. The findings and recommendations of this report supplement the MTR and contribute to reflections on progress at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

# Introduction

Persons with disabilities comprise 16 per cent of the world's population, with 80 per cent of persons with disabilities living in the Global South.<sup>5</sup> Women, children, and men with disabilities are frequently those most impacted by natural hazards, climate-induced disasters and global health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup> Disability is a risk multiplier that cuts across identity characteristics and social determinants such as gender, age and socioeconomic status, and amplifies pre-existing social inequalities and power imbalances. Disability is diverse, and how exclusion is experienced varies, with many persons with disabilities, including persons with cognitive and psychosocial disabilities, further marginalized and underrepresented in decision-making.<sup>7</sup>

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 was the first of the major 2015 development frameworks, and is notable in explicitly including persons with disabilities as contributing stakeholders. The Sendai Framework establishes inclusion as a guiding principle, and emphasizes the need for a people-centred approach that considers disability, gender, age and cultural perspectives in all disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and practices.<sup>8</sup> Relatedly, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

are underpinned by the commitment to “leave no one behind”. While all the SDGs are interconnected, 7 of the 17 SDGs directly relate to DRR, and their achievement requires the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.<sup>9</sup> Poverty and disability are interconnected, as individuals living in poverty are more likely to have a disability, while individuals with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty. This intersectionality also increases their vulnerability to disasters as both poverty and disability increase disaster risk. Therefore, to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms for all people, it is crucial to ensure that no person with a disability is left behind.

Commitments to disability inclusion in the Sendai Framework and 2030 Agenda are underpinned by the UNCRPD, including Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.<sup>10</sup> Ratification of the CRPD requires Member States to ensure that disability inclusion is a requirement under law. This extends to the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the prevention of disasters and the reduction of disaster risk.

The recently released Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework (MTR) shows some progress in terms of the development

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization, *Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities*. World Health Organization, “Disability”.

<sup>6</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Guidelines: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*. See also, for example, Brennan, *Disability Rights During the Pandemic*.

<sup>7</sup> Underrepresented groups among persons with disabilities have less visibility in decision-making processes. This includes persons who are deafblind, and who have intellectual, psychosocial or physical disabilities. It can also encompass women, children, older people, Indigenous persons and individuals from diverse backgrounds. Differences in culture and context affect this understanding and increase vulnerability to discrimination.

<sup>8</sup> *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030* (United Nations publication, 2015). III. Guiding principles, 19(d), p. 13. Available at [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Specifically, the following:

SDG 1: No poverty – DRR can reduce poverty and increase resilience to disasters. SDG 2: Zero hunger – DRR can protect food security and prevent hunger and malnutrition.

SDG 3: Good health and well-being – DRR can safeguard public health by reducing disaster risks, including those caused by climate change.

SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure – Investing in disaster-resilient infrastructure can reduce the impacts of disasters and promote sustainable development.

SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities – Building resilient cities and communities is essential for reducing disaster risk and ensuring sustainable development.

SDG 13: Climate action – Mitigating and adapting to climate change is a crucial aspect of DRR.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals – Collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders is essential for achieving the SDGs, including those related to DRR.

<sup>10</sup> *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* (United Nations publication, 2006). Available at <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>.

of national DRR strategies, efforts towards disability-inclusive disaster recovery, collection and utilization of data, and advances in risk information and management to better understand disaster risk. However, countries are not on track to realize the Sendai Framework objectives by 2030.<sup>11</sup> The MTR notes some initiatives to increase disability inclusion in DRR, but these are limited; disability inclusion continues to be underresourced and underprioritized.<sup>12</sup> Despite some increase in supportive policies and legislation for disability-inclusive DRR, implementation remains slow and uneven, and is often driven by non-state actors with

short-term funding.<sup>13</sup> The participation of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in DRR is frequently curtailed by limited resources and support from other DRR stakeholders, and the perception of persons with disabilities as “vulnerable”, rather than as contributing stakeholders, persists.<sup>14</sup> These issues and barriers are similarly reflected in national climate policies and plans which make limited reference to disability.<sup>15</sup> The 2023 UNDRR Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters contributes further evidence from the perspective of persons with disabilities.



**Credit to Tobin Jones for UNDRR**

<sup>11</sup> UNDRR, *The Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework*.

<sup>12</sup> Pacific Disability Forum, “Submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Disability inclusion in DRR in the Pacific”, Suva, February 2023. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/crpd/cfi-dgd-art11/Pacific-Disability-Forum.docx>.

<sup>13</sup> Gvetadze and Pertiwi, *Including Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction*.

<sup>14</sup> European Disability Forum, *Review of Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice Across Europe and Central Asia* (Brussels, 2021). Available at <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2021/12/DiDRR-Review-Europe-and-Central-Asia.pdf>. Gvetadze and Pertiwi, *Including Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction*.

<sup>15</sup> Sébastien Jodoin and others, *Disability Rights in National Climate Policies: Status Report* (Montreal and Geneva and New York, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism and International Disability Alliance, 2022). Available at [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/drcc\\_status\\_report\\_english\\_nov\\_2022\\_formatted.pdf](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/drcc_status_report_english_nov_2022_formatted.pdf).

# Aims and approach

## Study aims

In 2013, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) launched the Global Disability and Disasters Survey. Findings from this survey contributed to negotiations leading up to the World Conference on DRR in Sendai, 2015. Findings confirmed what disability advocates had argued: that exclusion from DRR processes, interventions and decision-making was placing persons with disabilities at disproportionate risk.

Ten years on, the UNDRR 2023 Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters examines whether progress on disability inclusion in DRR has been made at the midpoint of the Sendai Framework. Importantly, the survey sought to understand experiences from persons with disabilities themselves.

The aims of the 2023 survey were as follows:

- To identify if persons with disabilities are prepared for potential disasters, including preparedness, evacuation, and assistance planning.
- To identify if early warning and risk information is available and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- To understand if persons with disabilities are aware of DRR plans at national and local levels, and whether plans address their access and functioning needs.<sup>16</sup>

To understand if persons with disabilities are participating in DRR decision-making and planning, including at the community level.

This survey report highlights progress and gaps in disability inclusion in DRR over the past 10 years. Findings are presented at the global level, with supplementary findings from UNDRR regions. Based on these findings, recommendations are presented for the accelerated implementation of the Sendai Framework by 2030. Findings are intended to positively influence the remaining seven years of the Sendai Framework's implementation. This report supplements the MTR and contributes to reflections on progress at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

## Study approach

The 2023 survey drew on the 2013 survey to capture change over time. The survey questions were designed by UNDRR in consultation with OPDs and disability-focused partners.<sup>17</sup> Some questions were revised, and additional questions were included in the 2023 survey. The survey was translated from English into all the other official United Nations languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish. Partners also supported translating the survey into Bahasa Indonesia, Bangla and Hungarian. Additionally, the survey was administered online with recruitment via UNDRR and partner networks. Respondents self-selected to participate in the survey.

The survey comprised a total of 28 questions, including closed and open-ended questions. Question topics related to individual preparedness, governance, and participation in DRR decision-making and planning. Information on gender, location and functioning difficulty<sup>18</sup> using the Washington Group Short Set of

<sup>16</sup> "Access and functional needs" are specific support requirements for persons with disabilities to access society's resources and participate fully. These needs can vary from physical access to communication support. Addressing them in disaster management is crucial to ensure full inclusion and participation, including emergency planning and response.

<sup>17</sup> The survey was designed with inputs from CBM Global, Disability-inclusive DRR Network for Asia and the Pacific (DiDRRN), European Disability Forum (EDF), International Disability Alliance (IDA), Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS), National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN), ONG Inclusiva, Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), The Partnership for Inclusive Strategies, World Federation of the Deaf, the World Institute for Disability (WID), and its United Nations partner agencies United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

<sup>18</sup> Functioning is an umbrella term that includes activity limitations and participation restrictions. Approaching disability from a functioning perspective is directly relevant to DRR, as it enables the disproportionate risk that persons with disabilities face to be readily identified and directly acted upon. Alex Robinson and Sae Kani, "Disability-inclusive DRR: Information, risk, and practical action", in *Civil Society Organization and Disaster Risk Reduction*, Rajib Shaw and Takako Izumi, eds. (Tokyo, Springer Tokyo, 2014). Available at <http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/52630/1/181.pdf>.



questions was included.<sup>19</sup> The survey was open between January and March 2023 and resulted in a total of 6,342 responses from 132 countries. For comparison, the 2013 survey resulted in 5,717 responses from 137 countries.

Findings are presented in comparison to the 2013 findings where possible. This is supplemented by qualitative information from open-ended survey responses.

## Limitations and assumptions

The following limitations and assumptions inform the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

- The 2013 survey was the foundation for the 2023 survey and predated the Sendai Framework, and had an emphasis on preparedness for response. As such, the 2023 findings do not comprehensively reflect all Sendai Framework items or priorities.
- Regional comparisons are based on responses to a question on nationality. No question was included on the actual place of residence or location of the respondent. We have taken the assumption that “nationality” equates to where the respondent usually lives.
- The 2023 survey was an online survey shared via disability stakeholder networks engaged in DRR.<sup>20</sup> This suggests respondents had access to technology, limited barriers to completing the survey, a minimum level of literacy, and linkages to disability stakeholders and DRR.
- The 2013 survey was also administered online. In 2013, disability stakeholders actively sought and uploaded responses from persons with disabilities who did not have access to technology and/or could not independently complete the survey. This

was not a widely adopted approach in the 2023 survey, with the exception of Bangladesh.

- The survey is not representative of all persons with disabilities globally or from any region or community. Individual respondents for the 2013 and 2023 surveys are not necessarily the same, and findings are not directly comparable. No specific measures were taken to ensure participation by underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities.
- The survey provides a snapshot of perspectives from persons with disabilities with direct or indirect linkages to representative organizations concerned with DRR. We assume that many, even most, persons with disabilities do not benefit from these linkages. As such, findings are best considered as an overestimation of progress and an underestimation of gaps.
- The survey was designed to be completed by persons with disabilities; however, it was distributed for completion by persons with disabilities and/or carers. Specific or revised questions for carers were not included. Responses from persons with disabilities and carers are not distinguished.
- Responses from 490 people, or 7.7 per cent of total responses, indicated no difficulty in any Washington Group question domain. It is possible these responses included self-reporting by carers with no functioning difficulty. UNDRR colleagues observed that some known persons with disabilities reported no difficulty across functioning domains. It was agreed that no responses would be excluded on the basis of Washington Group question responses. In future surveys, we recommend a question on whether a respondent identifies as being a person with disabilities is included after the Washington Group questions have been asked.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> For collecting disability data in DRR, the widely accepted methodology of the Washington Group Short Set of questions can be used, which assess whether people have difficulty performing basic, universal activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, cognition, self-care and communication. These are called “domains”. Disability is measured when at least one domain is coded as “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do it at all”. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that while tools like the Washington Group questions help collect disaggregated data at the individual level, they do not provide a comprehensive understanding of disability. Disability data in DRR must include information on barriers, improved accessibility, and documented efforts to remove barriers. The active removal of barriers should occur regardless of the availability of prevalence data. For more information on the Washington Group Short Set, please visit <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>.

<sup>20</sup> Disability stakeholders include persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs), disability advocates, and other organizations working on disability issues. Additionally, governments, international/non-governmental organizations, and other agencies responsible for disaster risk management and humanitarian response are also recognized as stakeholders in disability-inclusive DRR.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Alex Robinson, Liem Nguyen and Fleur Smith, “Use of the Washington Group questions in non-government programming”, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 18, No. 21 (2021). Available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111143>.

- In some instances, there were duplicate answers to individual open-ended questions. It is assumed these were from responses inputted from data collected and uploaded by third parties. It was not evident that there were duplicates of complete survey responses.
- Open-ended responses were in different languages and in some instances were incomplete or used colloquialisms. Automated translation software was used with verification by native speakers from UNDRR partners as available. No piloting of the survey prior to distribution was conducted.
- Analysis of data was limited by resource availability. No complex statistical analysis of quantitative data was conducted.



Credit to Loey Felipe for the United Nations



# Findings

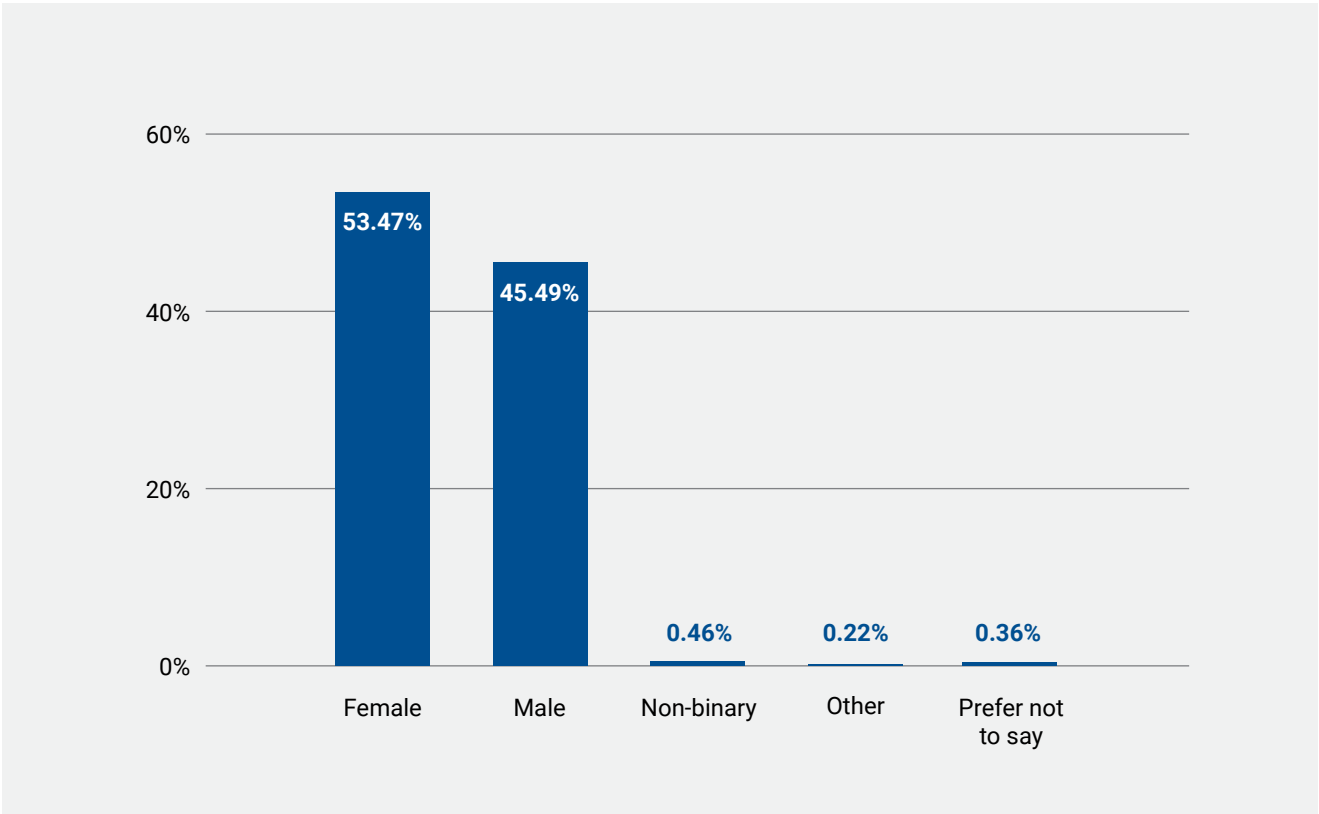
## Global overview

This section of the report provides an overview of global findings from the 2023 survey based on 6,342 responses. Comparisons with the 2013 survey, which had 5,717 respondents, are made. Findings are presented in terms of individual preparedness and risk information, governance and participation.

## Respondent profile

The 2023 survey gathered data on respondents’ gender, age and functioning difficulties. These are summarized below.

**Figure 1. 2023 survey respondent profile by gender**

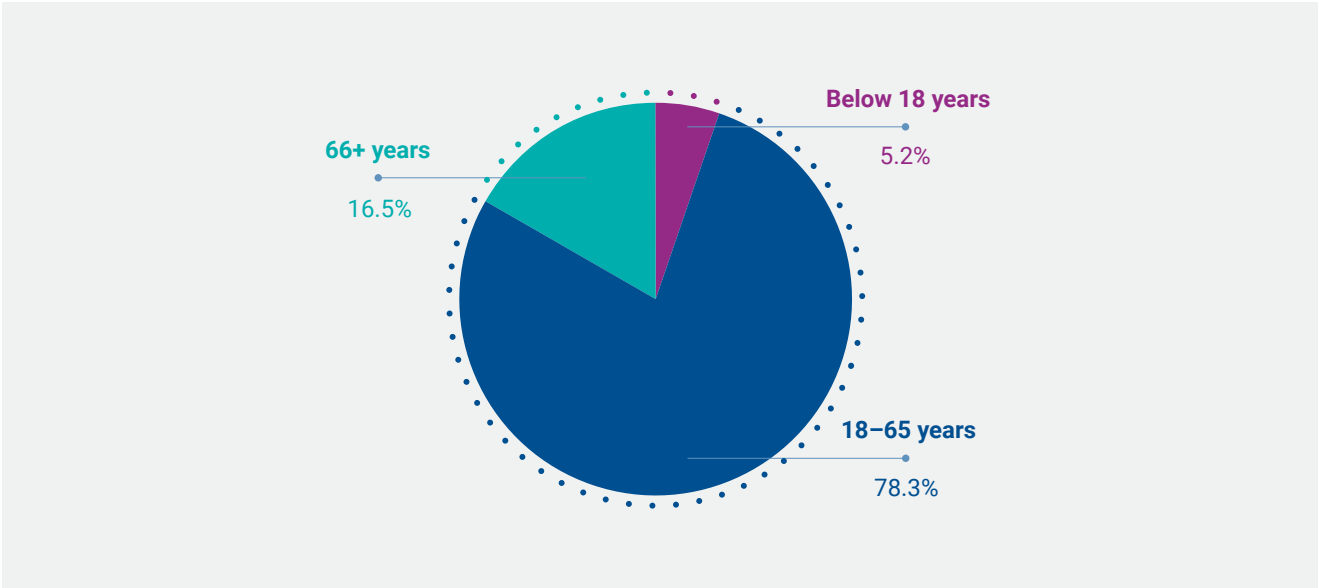


A slightly higher proportion (53 per cent; 3391) of women responded to the survey compared to men (45 per cent; 2885). A total of 0.46 per cent (29) of respondents identified as non-binary and 0.22 per cent (14) as other, while 0.36 per cent (23) preferred not to answer.



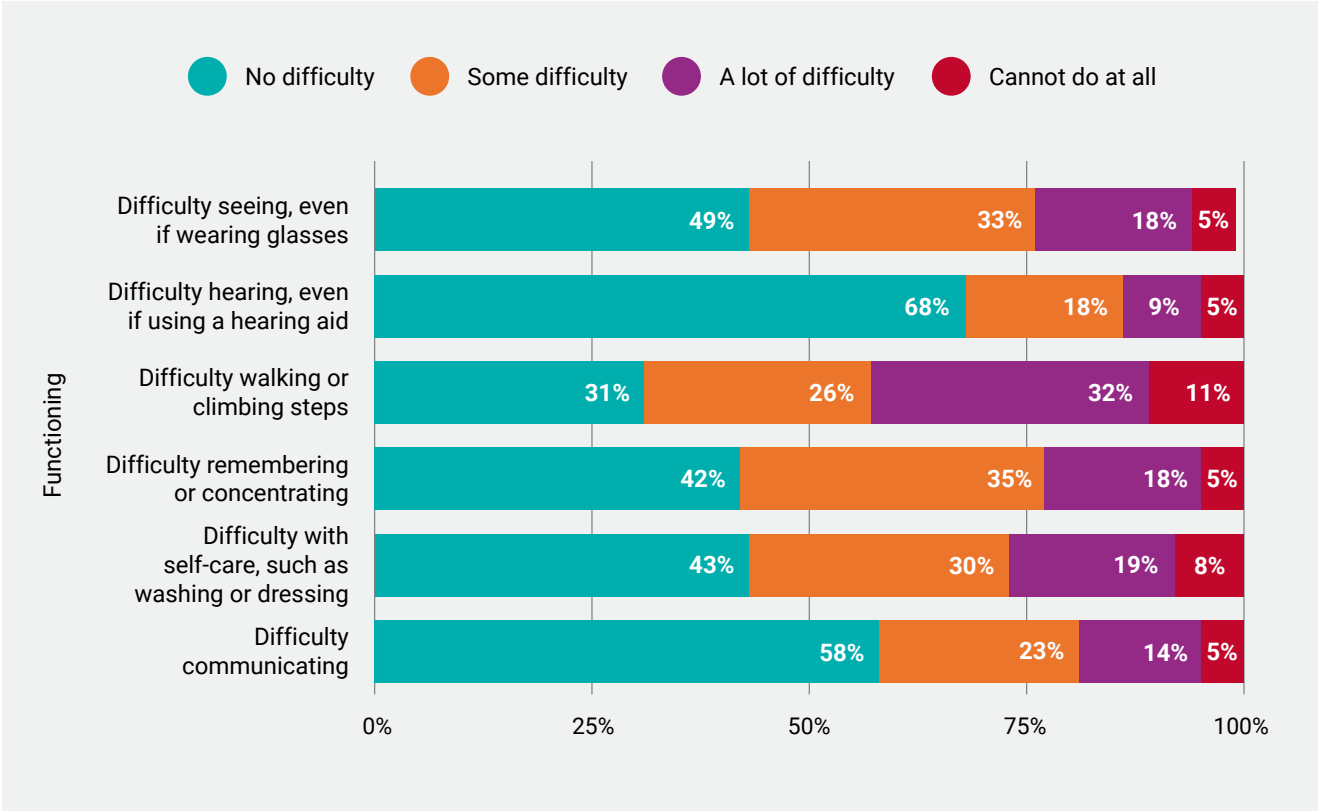
Credit to UNDRR

Figure 2. 2023 survey respondent profile by age



A total of 78 per cent (4,628) of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 65, 17 per cent (978) were older persons aged 66 and over, and 5 per cent (309) reported being under 18.

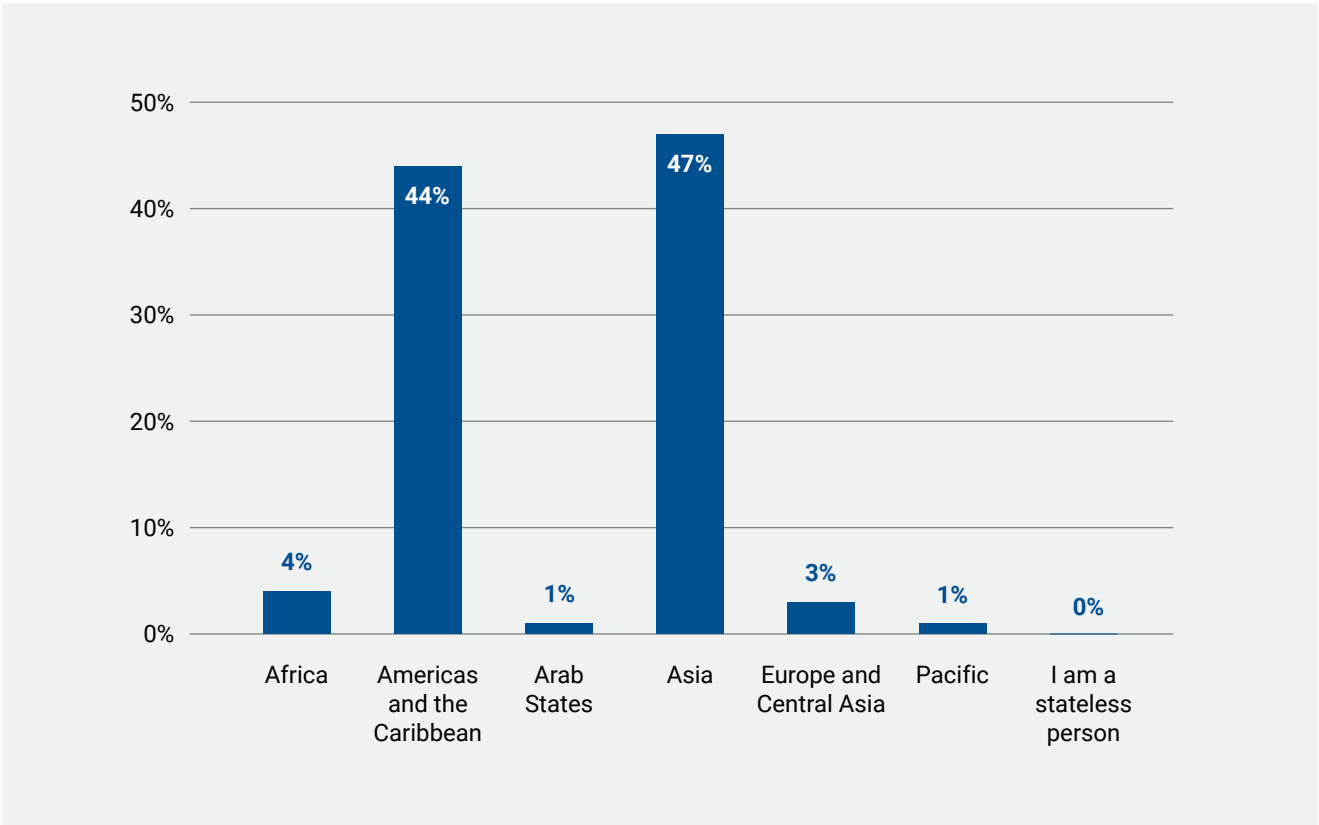
Figure 3. 2023 survey respondent profile by functioning capacity



Based on self-reported responses to the Washington Group Short Set of questions on functioning:

- 23 per cent (1,516) of respondents reported a lot of difficulty seeing or could not see at all.
- 14 per cent (889) of respondents reported a lot of difficulty hearing or could not hear at all.
- 43 per cent (2,706) reported a lot of difficulty walking or climbing steps or were unable to do so.
- 23 per cent (1,423) of respondents reported a lot of difficulty with remembering or concentrating or could not do so at all.
- In terms of self-care, such as washing or dressing, 27 per cent (1,722) reported a lot of difficulty or were unable to do so.
- 19 per cent (1,220) reported a lot of difficulty communicating or being understood in their own language or could not do so at all.

**Figure 4. 2023 survey regional participant data**



The majority of respondents were from the Asia region at 47 per cent, and the Americas and the Caribbean at 44 per cent respectively. There were particularly high numbers of respondents from Bangladesh (2,322) and Colombia (1,941). A total of 4 per cent of respondents were from Africa and 3 per cent from Europe and Central Asia. Approximately 1 per cent of respondents were from the Arab States and approximately 1 per cent from the Pacific. Less than 1 per cent reported being stateless (see also the regional overview section).

1

## ***Preparedness and risk information***

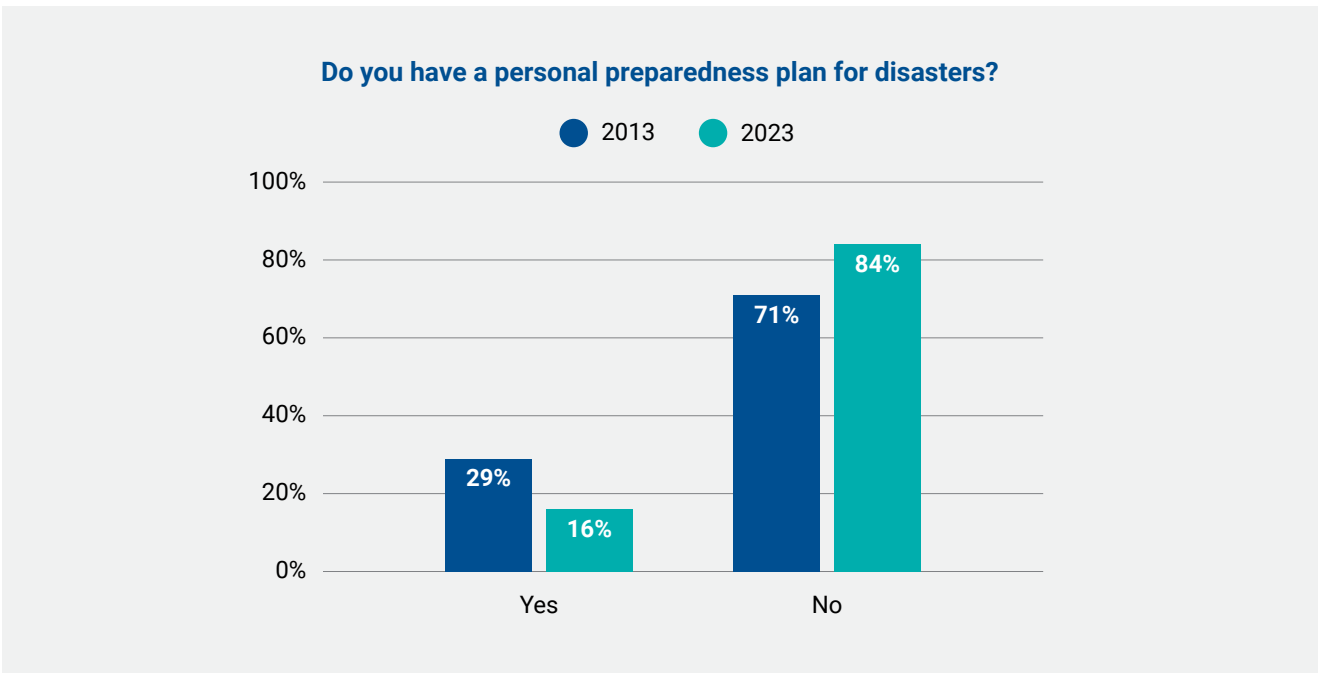


## Overview of key findings

- Most persons with disabilities (84 per cent) **do not have a personal preparedness plan**.
- 2023 survey findings show a decrease in the number of persons with disabilities who have **personal preparedness plans** compared to 2013.
- For persons with disabilities who reported having preparedness plans, priorities included **evacuation planning** and having a **preparedness kit**, such as a grab bag. Others reported the need to **enhance their knowledge and skills** related to preparedness planning.
- More persons with disabilities (10 per cent) reported not being **able to evacuate immediately** without assistance in 2023 compared to 2013 (6 per cent).
- 2023 findings show that if sufficient early warning is provided, 39 per cent of respondents reported **no difficulty evacuating**, similarly to 2013. However, 23 per cent would still face a **lot of difficulty** or would be **unable to evacuate** without assistance.
- In 2023, over half of respondents (56 per cent) reported not being **aware of or not having access to disaster risk information** in accessible formats.

### 1.1. Personal preparedness plans

Figure 5. Personal preparedness plans



A total of 84 per cent (5,322 people) of respondents reported not having a personal preparedness plan. This is compared to 71 per cent (3,957 people) not having a personal preparedness plan in 2013. The number of respondents reporting having personal preparedness plans decreased to 16 per cent (1,020 people) in 2023 compared to 29 per cent (1,635 people) in 2013.

In open-ended responses, respondents who reported having individual preparedness plans emphasized evacuation planning, including ensuring access to shelters, understanding evacuation routes, having an emergency kit or grab bag, and emergency supplies. A smaller number reported attending DRR trainings, participating in evacuation drills, accessing disaster

information from the news and mobile apps, and receiving information from authorities. The importance of building social connectedness and networks

within communities was noted, as was ensuring access to assistive devices and making sure carers were aware of the specific preparedness needs.

**“As a person with a disability, I pay [...] attention to disasters or epidemics. [...] I have set up emergency contacts, including with community carers, the Government, my closest classmates, neighbours and family members, who could support me in evacuation [...] I adjusted my work and travel plans during the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the risk of infection.”**

– A male respondent from East Asia (41 years old)

**“[I take] preventive measures to avoid military [aggression], such as relocating to basements and maintaining necessary needs, such as batteries for lighting, dry food and other items.”**

– A male respondent from the Syrian Arab Republic (53 years old)

## Box 1.

### **Integrating person-centred and community-based approaches to enhance preparedness for persons with disabilities: An example from New South Wales, Australia**

Effective disaster preparedness requires a comprehensive approach that considers the needs of individuals, including their physical, material, psychological and financial well-being. However, it is also imperative to prioritize the inclusion of persons with disabilities in community-based

initiatives, particularly given the difficulties that many persons with disabilities face when evacuating independently during disasters. Therefore, to improve individual preparedness plans, it is essential to promote an interlink between individual and community preparedness, leveraging existing best practices on disability-inclusive DRR. For example, Person-Centered Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) in New South Wales allows systematic identification of individual capabilities and requirements facilitated by disability service providers that feeds into community emergency preparedness plans.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Michelle Villeneuve, “Building a roadmap for inclusive disaster risk reduction in Australian communities”, *Progress in Disaster Science*, vol. 10 (2021). Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2021.100166>.



## 1.2. Ability to evacuate without assistance

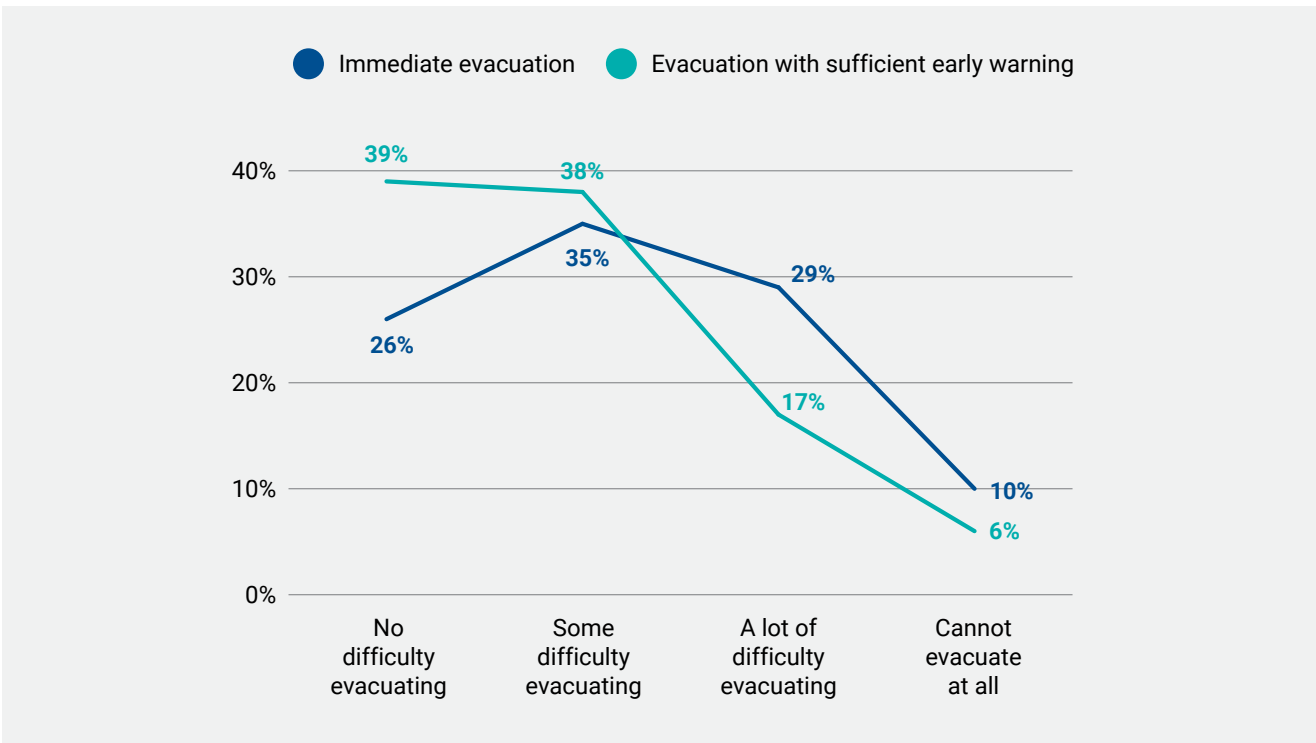
In the event of an emergency, 35 per cent (2,242) of respondents reported having some difficulty evacuating immediately and without assistance. This was similar to 2013 with 38 per cent (2,130) reporting some difficulty. Fewer respondents reported a lot of difficulty evacuating in 2023 (29 per cent or 1,860 people) compared to 2013 (35 per cent, 1,952 people). In 2023, 26 per cent (1,634) of respondents reported having no difficulty evacuating immediately and without assistance, compared to 21 per cent (1,153) in 2013. In 2023, 10 per cent (606) reported being unable to evacuate immediately and without assistance, whereas in 2013, 6 per cent (354) reported being unable to evacuate immediately.

Respondents were asked if they could evacuate with sufficient early warning. A total of 39 per cent (2,461) reported they would have no difficulty evacuating, with similar figures in 2013; 38 per cent (2,426) reported they would have some difficulty evacuating; 17 per cent (1,098) reported they would have a lot of difficulty evacuating; and 6 per cent (357) reported they would not be able to evacuate independently even if advanced warning was provided. Similar figures were reported in 2013, with 4 per cent (227) reporting not being able to evacuate with advance warning.

“The emergency response [system] in my area is often unclear, which makes it difficult for me to evacuate, especially as I need some assistance.”

– A male respondent from Asia (44 years old)

Figure 6. Comparison between ability to evacuate independently immediately and with sufficient early warning (2023 data only)

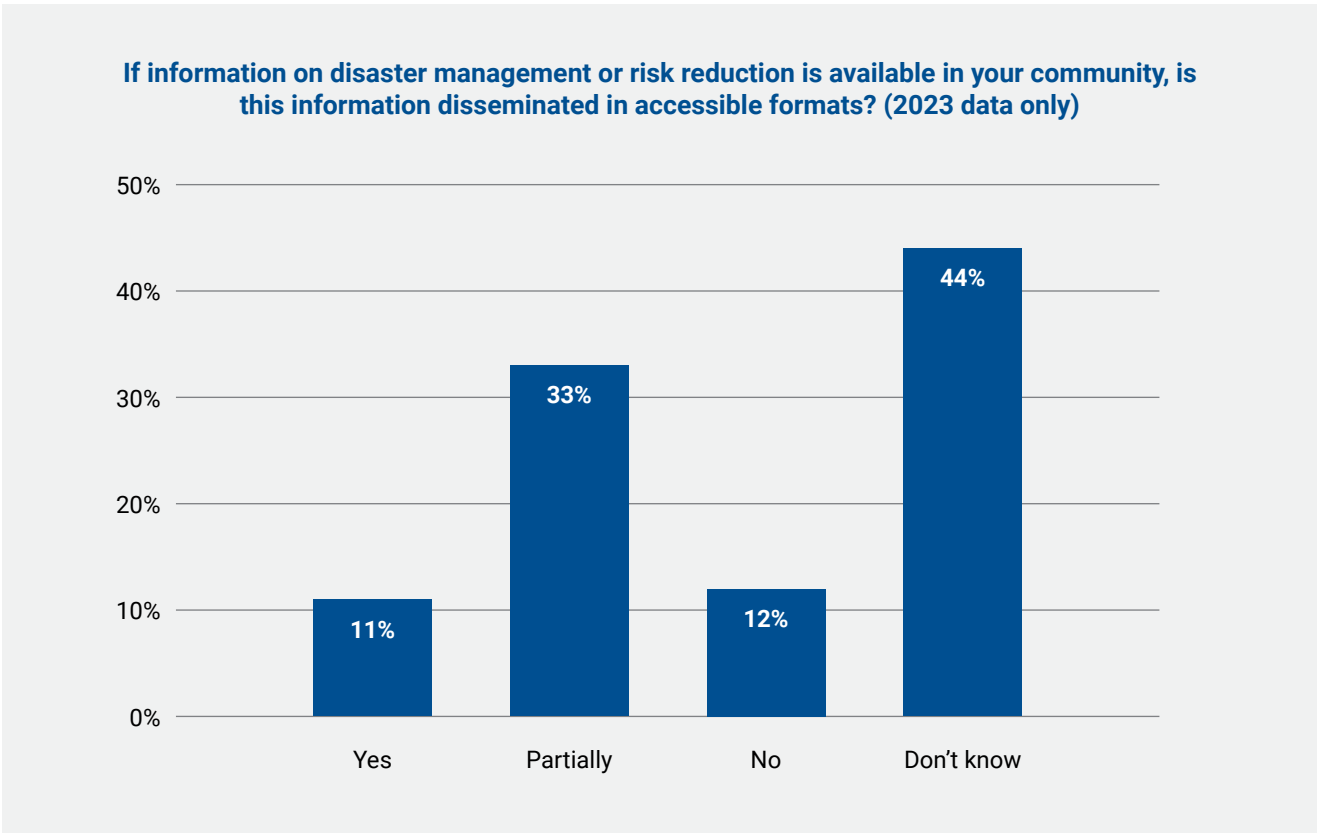


Findings suggest that sufficient early warning can allow persons with disabilities to evacuate independently with fewer difficulties. However, responses indicate the majority of persons with disabilities will still experience

difficulties, with, again, 6 per cent of respondents reporting they would be unable to evacuate. Further, 28 per cent (1,776) reported never having someone to assist them with evacuation, if required.

### 1.3. Availability and accessibility of risk information

Figure 7. Availability of risk information in accessible formats at community level

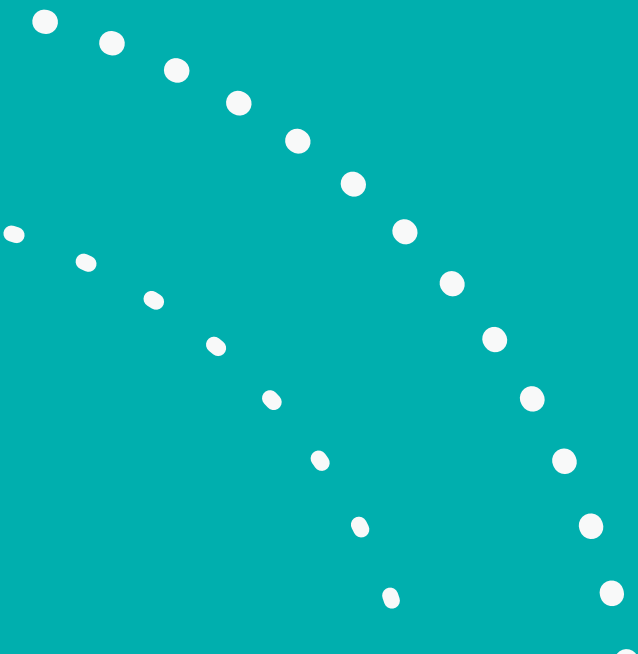


An additional question on accessible DRR information was included in the 2023 survey. A total of 44 per cent (2,785) were unaware of the availability of accessible disaster risk information in their community; 33 per cent (2,064) reported that accessible disaster risk information

was partially available; 11 per cent (729) reported that risk information was available in accessible formats; and a further 12 per cent (764) stated that disaster risk information was not available in accessible formats.

2

## ***Governance***



## Overview of key findings

- **Awareness of national and local-level DRR plans** is **low** among persons with disabilities.
- In 2023, only 11 per cent of respondents were aware of **DRR plans at the national level**, compared to 14 per cent in 2013. Similarly, only 14 per cent were aware of **DRR plans at the subnational level** in 2023, compared to 17 per cent in 2013.
- Only 8 per cent of respondents reported that local **DRR plans addressed the specific needs** of persons with disabilities.
- The majority of respondents were not directly **affiliated with an OPD** or other organizations working on disability issues.
- 16 per cent of respondents reported **dedicated roles for disability** inclusion in governance structures; however, these roles were reported to be **not always staffed** by personnel **with disability-inclusive emergency management expertise**.

### 2.1. Awareness and accessibility of DRR plans at national and subnational levels

In 2023, only 11 per cent (708) of respondents were aware of national DRR plans in their countries, compared to 14 per cent (800) in 2013.



There is an article in the national DRR plan referring to the human rights approach, including [mention of] people with disabilities, but no other specific considerations. In recent years, however, the National Disaster Management Office has invited OPDs to take part in the emergency operations centre during disasters. This is great, but whether critical decisions and/or behavioural change have been made beyond the OPDs' participation in the emergency operations centre is not known.



– A female respondent from the Pacific (26 years old)



**We have a national plan for risk and disaster prevention, but we do not have enough sign language interpreters for deaf people. There is a lack of preparedness for the management of people with disabilities during disasters [...] We still need more accessibility in the environment, communication and information.**



—A female respondent from Central America (67 years old)

Slightly more respondents were aware of local-level DRR plans compared to national-level plans, with 14 per cent (897) reporting they were aware of local DRR plans in 2023 compared to 17 per cent (964) in 2013. However, 44 per cent (2,780) of respondents in 2023 were not aware of local DRR plans, with 15 per cent (948) uncertain.

Only a small number of respondents (488) who were aware of local DRR plans stated that the plans addressed the access and functioning needs of persons with disabilities.

Those who reported that local-level DRR plans addressed the specific needs of persons with disabilities said that these needs were only partially addressed in the plans. Furthermore, references to specific needs were often general in nature. Despite some references to disability, respondents emphasized that further efforts were necessary to ensure proper implementation of these plans.

Respondents also reported low levels of local government commitment to disability inclusion. A lack of government capacity concerning disability inclusion was also noted.



**There is only superficial coverage of the access and functional needs [of persons with disabilities] in my county's emergency response plan.**



—A female respondent from North America (64 years old)



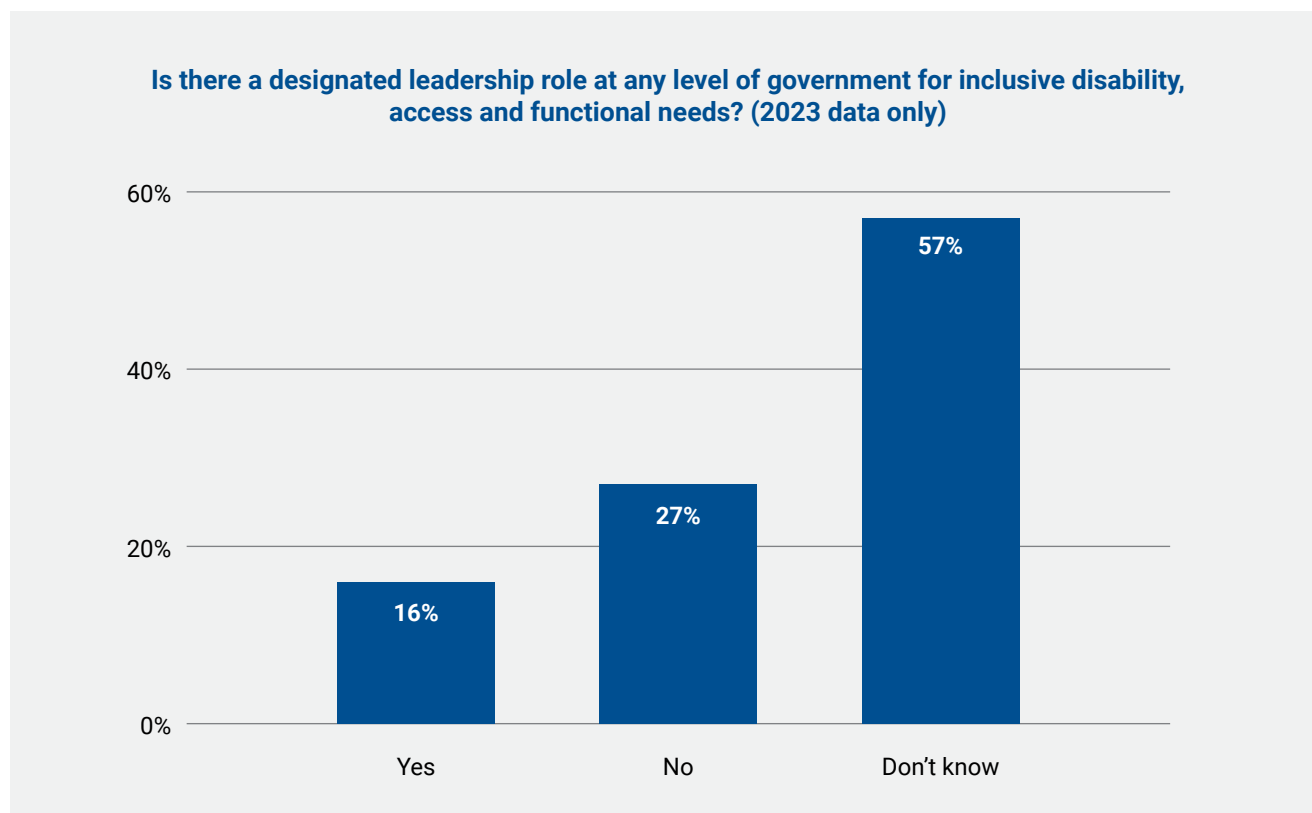
**People with disabilities like myself have not been involved and consulted in the development of any risk or disaster management plan or strategy, so [we can] assume that our needs have not been taken into account.**



—A female respondent from Africa (age not given)

## 2.2. Leadership roles for disability inclusion, access and functioning needs

**Figure 8. Availability of a designated leadership role on disability inclusion in governance structures**



The 2023 survey included a new question on whether there are designated leadership roles for disability inclusion in governance structures. The question was not specific to DRR. The majority, 57 per cent (3,596), did not know whether such a leadership role existed. A total of 16 per cent (1,040) reported there was such a dedicated role, and 27 per cent (1,706) reported that there was no role.

Half the respondents (513) who were aware of a leadership position reported that it was filled by a disability-inclusive emergency management expert. However, most respondents either did not know or reported the unavailability of such expertise in leadership positions.



Credit to UNDRR



## Box 2.

### Creating opportunities for inclusion: Promoting disability rights in Jordan's DRR<sup>23</sup>

Jordan's 2017 national disability law is reflected in its National DRR Strategy 2019–2022, which emphasizes inclusive and non-discriminatory participation of persons with disabilities and other groups disproportionately affected by disasters.<sup>24</sup> This provides a mechanism for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, through the Higher Council for the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities (a government body), to contribute to DRR policies and practices in Jordan.

The Council has promoted disability inclusion in DRR through a variety of initiatives. These include simulation training with the national disaster management office, a pandemic situation analysis on persons with disabilities, and a specialized emergency line for deaf individuals to report emergencies via sign language video calls in collaboration with Jordan's Public Security Directorate. This initiative was recognized with the Zero Project 2016 best practice award for inclusive education and accessible information and communication technology.

## 2.3. Affiliation with disability-focused organizations

The 2013 survey included a question on whether respondents were a member of an "organization for persons living with disabilities"; 63 per cent (3,489) said they were a member of such an organization.

The question was updated in the 2023 survey to whether respondents are a "member of a self-help group or organization for persons with disabilities". An additional question in the 2023 survey asked whether respondents are a "member of a disability-led organization, where persons with disabilities are required to be in the majority of staff and board leadership". While this question is in line with accepted definitions of OPDs, it is complex and assumes a knowledge of governance arrangements.

This criticism was confirmed by responses that included organizations that are not OPDs.

In 2023, the number of respondents reporting being a member of a self-help group or organization "for" persons with disabilities was considerably lower than the 35 per cent (2,213) in 2013. Only 24 per cent (1,517) reported being a member of a disability-led organization or an OPD in the 2023 survey.

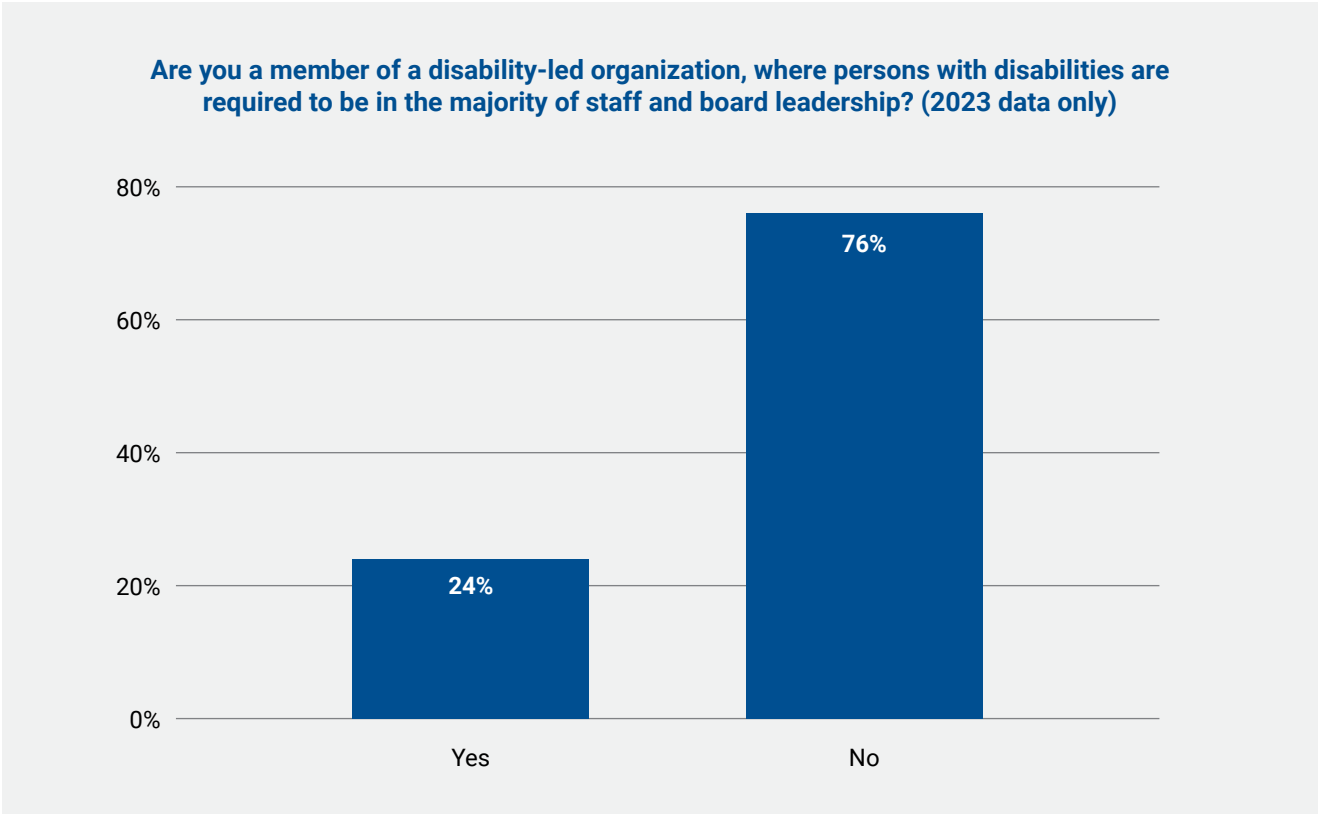
Despite issues with the questions, the findings suggest that the majority of respondents in 2023 were not directly affiliated with either an OPD or other disability-focused organization.

<sup>23</sup> Developed based on the *Regional Report on Disability Mainstreaming in DRR Planning in the Arab Region*, prepared by Mostafa Attia for the UNDRR Regional Office for Arab States.

<sup>24</sup> Jordan, "Law No. 20 of 2017 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", 1 June 2017. Available at [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=108108](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=108108).

United Nations Development Programme and Jordan, National Center for Security and Crisis Management, *Jordan National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2019–2022)* (New York and Amman, 2019). Available at [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/68511\\_nationalnatrualdisasterriskreduciot.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/68511_nationalnatrualdisasterriskreduciot.pdf).

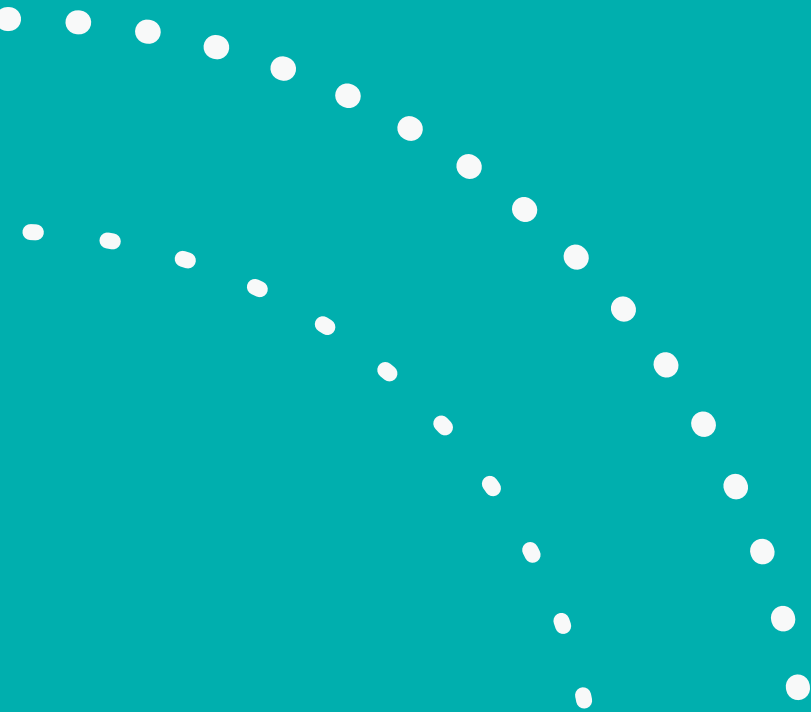
Figure 9. Membership of a disability-led organization



Credit to Antoine Tardy for UNDRR

3

## ***Participation***



## Overview of key findings

- There was no indication of an increase in **participation** by persons with disabilities in DRR **decision-making at the community level**. 86 per cent of respondents reported not participating in community-based DRR decision-making in both 2013 and 2023.
- More persons with disabilities expressed **willingness to participate** in community-based DRR in 2023 (57 per cent) compared to 2013 (51 per cent).
- **Mechanisms for participation**, such as dedicated forums, direct representation, community-based information dissemination and online platforms, were reported. However, 75 per cent reported the absence of **such mechanisms**.
- **Accessibility issues** and **attitudinal barriers** continue to limit the participation of persons with disabilities in DRR processes

### 3.1. Participation in decision-making and planning

Participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making related to community-based disaster management and risk reduction was consistently low, with 86 per cent reporting no participation in 2013 and 2023 (5,484 and 4,607 respectively).

Reasons for not participating included low awareness and a lack of community-level DRR governance mechanisms. Mobility barriers, inaccessible information, not being invited, and limited resources at individual and community levels, were all cited as barriers to participation.



**I was not invited to participate in the preparation of a plan. I was not trained on any procedures to confront disasters, and the municipality did not announce its intention, initiation or success in preparing a plan to confront emergencies.**



—A male respondent from the Arab States (53 years old)



**Persons with disabilities, including me as a woman with a physical impairment, are not made aware of what we can expect. We are not included in discussions to shape conversation for ourselves so the Government would know better to understand and help us. Supposing we are engaged and involved, we would be in a better position to plan, prepare and make our families and communities aware of how best the Government can help us and we can help ourselves in zones of disaster. We are not involved so we don't know. We are vulnerable to any disaster that will strike.**



—A female respondent from the Pacific (45 years old)



**I participated in designing a contingency plan and training as a first aid volunteer.**



—A female respondent from the African region (63 years old)

### **Box 3.**

#### **Promoting disability rights in Uganda's DRR: OPD participation and advocacy in action**

Uganda has established policies to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in DRR decision-making and planning.<sup>25</sup> This has led to increasing participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations (OPDs) in the National DRR Platform and Disaster Management committees. OPDs are also jointly implementing disability-inclusive DRR projects with non-governmental organizations.

The National Union of Disabled Persons Uganda (NUPIDU) is an illustrative example of meaningful OPD participation in DRR decision-making, planning and implementation. NUPIDU actively participates in the National DRR Platform, advocates for inclusive planning, and has contributed to the development of Uganda's legal framework on disaster management and climate change adaptation. At the local level, NUPIDU mobilizes persons with disabilities for awareness-raising and advocacy, and builds the capacities of District Disaster Management Committee members on disability inclusion at the local level.

<sup>25</sup> Gvetadze and Pertiwi, *Including Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction*.

### 3.2. Mechanisms for participation in community-based DRR

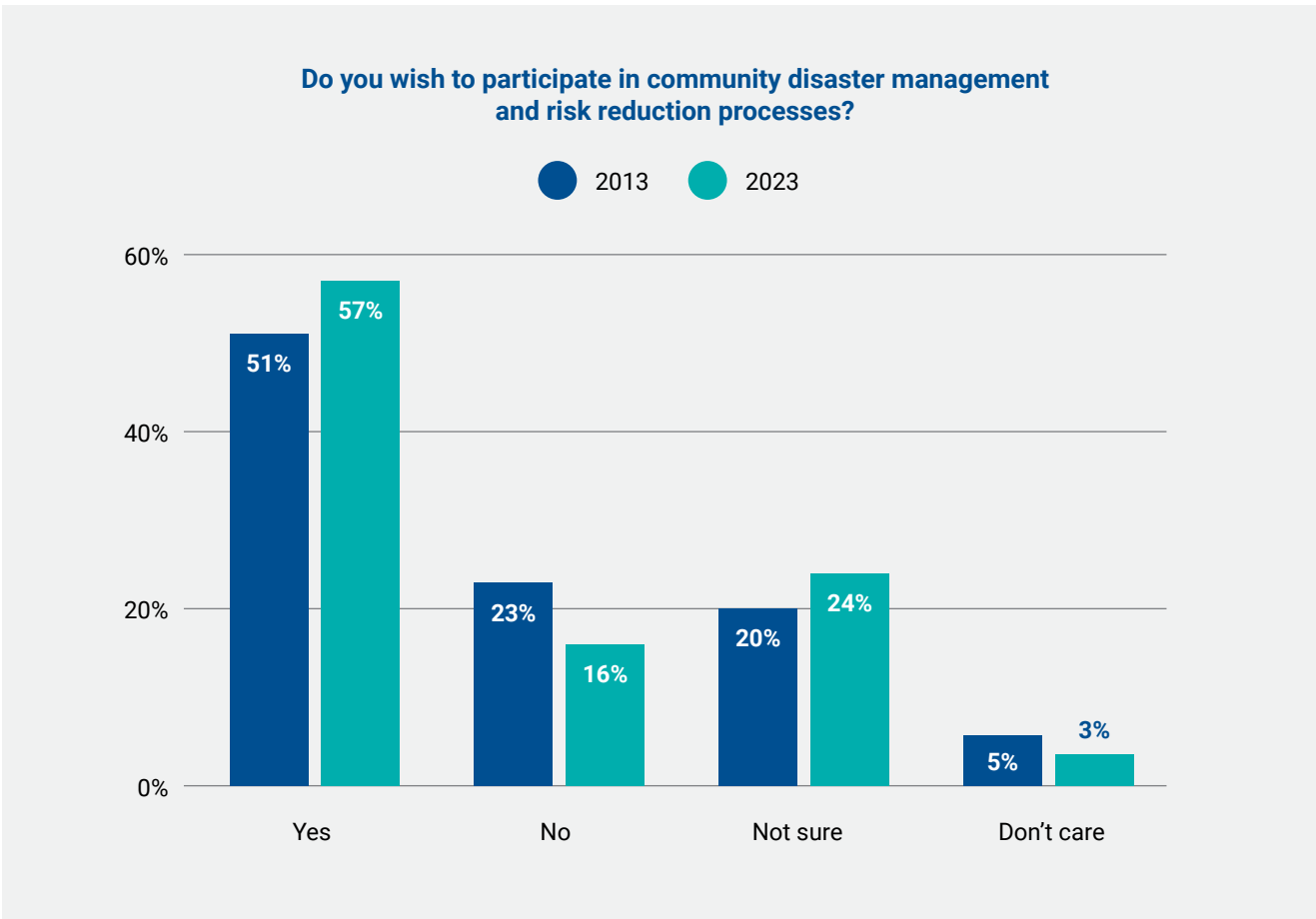
A total of 25 per cent (1,615) of respondents reported the availability of a mechanism for participation by persons with disabilities in community-based risk management and reduction processes. There was no equivalent question in 2013. Examples included dedicated forums or roles, such as persons with disabilities as DRR focal points; dissemination of accessible DRR information; and online platforms such as WhatsApp groups for disaster volunteers. DRR activities that respondents reported participating in included drills, training

sessions, awareness campaigns and events, and forums and meetings, including those facilitated by national and international non-governmental organizations.

Respondents reported a lack of physical accessibility, no provision for reasonable accommodation, limited awareness and negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities hindered the participation of persons with disabilities in community-based DRR mechanisms and processes.

### 3.3. Willingness to participate in community-based DRR

Figure 10. Willingness to participate in community disaster management and risk reduction processes





In 2023, 57 per cent (3,634) expressed interest in participating in community-based disaster management and risk reduction processes. This was compared to 51 per cent (2,834) in 2013. A total of 24 per cent (1,529) were uncertain about their willingness to participate, 16 per cent (984) indicated that they did not wish to participate, and 3 per cent (195) were indifferent.

Respondents expressed interest in contributing to community disaster management and risk reduction processes through volunteering, direct participation in DRR activities, forming groups or committees,

networking and collaborating, providing input for quality improvement of disability-inclusive DRR, and improving disability-related data. Motivating factors included a desire to learn, increasing awareness, advocacy, ensuring safety, and ensuring accountability.

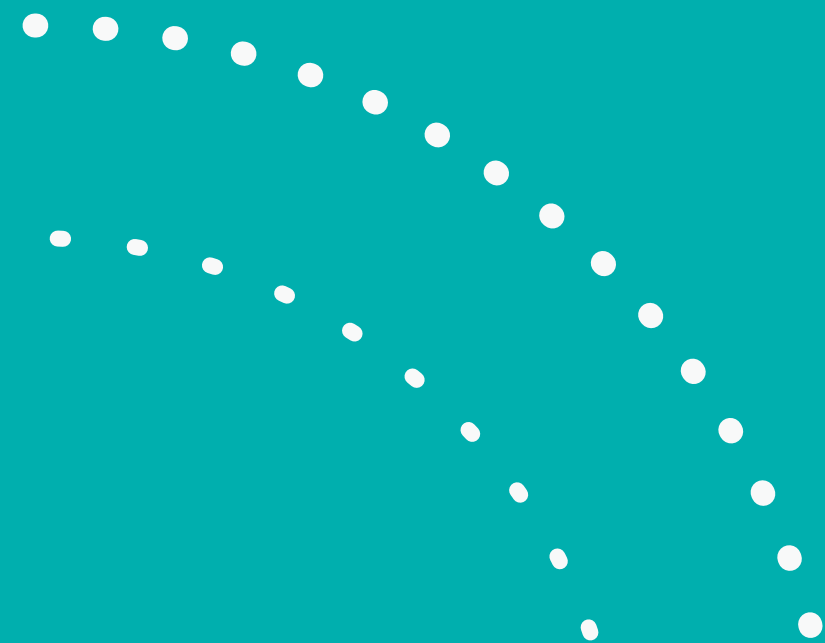
Explanations reported by respondents who did not wish to participate included a lack of experience and awareness of DRR, lack of confidence, limited resources at individual and community levels, and an absence of mechanisms for engagement.



Credit to UNDRR, Pacific

4

## ***Disasters and displacement***



Overview of key findings

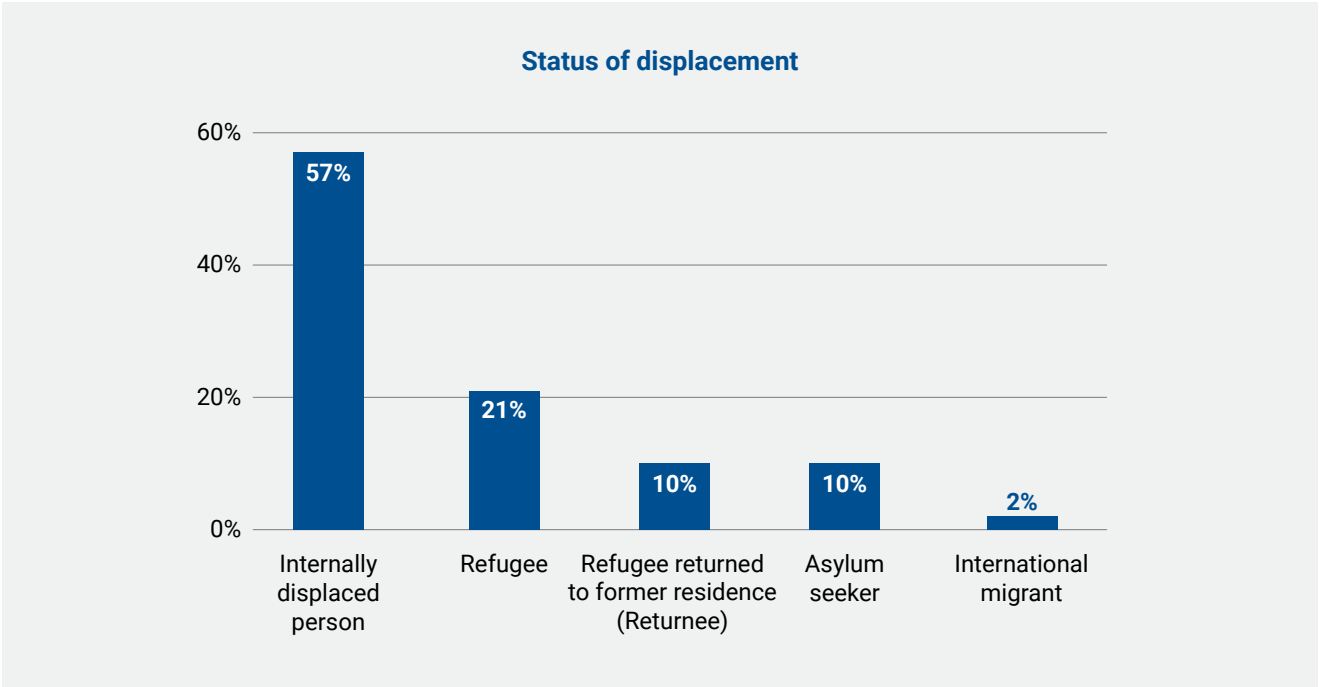
- 24 per cent of respondents reported being **displaced** due to crises or disasters.
- The leading cause of displacement reported (50 per cent) was **armed conflict** or widespread violence.

Additional questions on displacement were included in the 2023 survey. A total of 24 per cent (1,528) of survey respondents reported being displaced due to crisis or disaster. Most respondents reporting displacement were located in the Americas and Caribbean (15 per cent) and Asia (7 per cent). However, most of the overall survey respondents were located in these two regions. Of respondents in other regions reporting displacement, there were 1 per cent in Africa, and less than 1 per cent in Arab States (0.64 per cent), Europe (0.33 per cent)

and the Pacific (0.20 per cent). A small percentage of respondents reported being stateless (0.04 per cent).

The leading cause of displacement reported by 50 per cent of displaced respondents was armed conflict or widespread violence. While not clearly defined, “disaster” was reported as the second leading cause at 30 per cent, “humanitarian emergencies” at 10 per cent, and other causes of displacement at 11 per cent. Examples provided included environmental disruption, fuel spills, social conflict and accidents.

Figure 11. Status of displacement



A total of 57 per cent (756 respondents) reported being internally displaced; 21 per cent (276 respondents) reported being refugees, and 10 per cent (132) returnees. A further 10 per cent (130) reported they are seeking asylum and 2 per cent (30) reported being international migrants. Slightly more female (41 per cent) than male

(34 per cent) respondents reported displacement. However, this may reflect the higher overall number of female respondents. Four respondents identifying as non-binary and five respondents identifying as other gender reported displacement.



# Regional overview

Asia (46.9 per cent; 2,976) and the Americas and the Caribbean (43.9 per cent; 2,782) accounted for almost 91 per cent of total survey responses. Africa and Europe and Central Asia accounted for 3.9 per cent (246) and 2.9 per cent (187) respectively. The Arab States (71) and Pacific (70) regions had the lowest number of respondents at 1.1 per cent. Due to the response bias towards Asia and the Americas and the Caribbean, it is important to interpret the following findings by region with caution, particularly for those regions with a smaller number of respondents.

## Preparedness and risk information

The majority of participants from all regions, reflecting the global average of 84 per cent (5,322), do not have personal preparedness plans for disasters. The highest percentage of respondents reporting not having a personal preparedness plan were in Europe and Central Asia (92 per cent; 171), and the lowest reporting not having a plan were in the Pacific (60 per cent; 41).

Significant numbers of respondents from all regions reported facing a lot of difficulties or being unable to evacuate immediately without assistance. The highest percentage was in Europe and Central Asia (44 per cent; 81) and the lowest in the Arab States (30 per cent; 22). This is compared to the global average of 39 per cent (2,466). A total of 23 per cent (1,455) of respondents at the global level reported they would still have a lot of difficulties or be unable to evacuate with sufficient early warning. The highest percentage of respondents reporting a lot of difficulties or being unable to evacuate were in the Americas and the Caribbean (28 per cent; 777) and the lowest in the Arab States (15.5 per cent; 11).

A total of 56 per cent (3,549) of overall respondents reported that they were not aware of or did not have access to risk information in accessible formats. This was reported lowest in Africa at 33 per cent (82) and highest in Asia at 64 per cent (1,903).

## Governance

There is low awareness of DRR plans at both national and subnational levels globally, with only 11 per cent (708) of respondents reporting awareness of national-level DRR plans and 14 per cent (897) reporting awareness of subnational-level plans. Reported awareness of national-level plans was highest in the Pacific at 32 per cent (22), with awareness of local-level DRR plans highest in Africa at 21 per cent (52). However, the number of respondents in both cases was low.

A total of 16 per cent (1,040) reported dedicated leadership roles for disability inclusion in governance structures at the global level. The highest reported percentage was in Africa at 39 per cent (95) and lowest in the Arab States at 10 per cent (7), again with a lower number of overall respondents.

## Participation

At the global level, 86 per cent (5,484) of respondents reported limited participation in decision-making and planning related to DRR in their communities. The highest rate of participation was reported in the Americas and the Caribbean at 91 per cent (2,523). Globally, 75 per cent (4,727) of respondents reported no mechanisms to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in DRR processes. For the Pacific, the figure was 66 per cent (45), suggesting more mechanisms may be available.

Globally, 57 per cent (3,634) of respondents reported a willingness to participate in community disaster management and risk reduction processes. The highest reported willingness was from respondents in Africa at 91 per cent (224). Just over half of Pacific respondents reported a willingness at 51 per cent (35).

## Box 4.

### **Fiji's National Council for Persons with Disabilities: Strengthening inclusive emergency response and disaster management<sup>26</sup>**

Fiji's National Council for Persons with Disabilities includes representatives from key ministries and OPDs. The National Council established the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to coordinate efforts and communicate information between persons with disabilities in affected areas and humanitarian actors. By 2022, the EOC was activated and had provided support to persons with

disabilities through five tropical cyclones. The EOC is staffed by volunteers with disabilities, including from the Fiji Disabled People's Federation.

The EOC has been filling a gap in the overall response mechanism by ensuring persons with disabilities and their needs are accounted for. This is a notable stakeholder contribution to the Sendai Framework. EOC volunteers reported they were limited by a lack of core funding and, in terms of preparedness, the absence of trainings provided by the Government. Looking ahead, the National Council noted the need to strengthen linkages between the EOC and the National Disaster Management Office and ministries.

## Box 5.

### **Intersectionality in action: Women leading the way in climate action and COVID-19 response in the Pacific islands**

In the Pacific region, the Shifting the Power Coalition, including the Pacific Disability Forum, leads in tackling the dual challenges of climate change and COVID-19. Their approach combines traditional knowledge, challenges to existing power structures, and advocacy for inclusive and transformative action.

Guided by gender and disability experts, their intersectional approach informs national policies on climate resilience, pandemic recovery and DRR. It prioritizes community needs such as economic and food security. Women with disabilities actively contribute to disaster preparedness, while young women engage in funding and decision-making.

The coalition values traditional knowledge and links women-led innovation to early warning systems.

They employ flexible and feminist funding models for rapid response and protection. However, funding remains insufficient for comprehensive inclusivity and transformation.

A notable initiative is the Pacific Owned, Women-Led Early Warning & Resilience (POWER) Systems project. Coordinated by Woman Wetem Weta (WWW) in Vanuatu, it provides local information on early warning and preparedness. The project allows local women leaders to define solutions and communicate them to decision makers. Community-based data collection and hazard monitoring are also facilitated, enabling women leaders to present their findings to government committees.

To achieve equality, coherent action is necessary. National systems and humanitarian actors should establish dedicated spaces for women's networks and feminist movements. Well-funded national gender action plans, aligned with international conventions, play a pivotal role. Simplified access to financing and dedicated resources for local women-led action are vital for DRR and effective climate action.

<sup>26</sup> Pacific Disability Forum, "Submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

# Global and regional priorities according to respondents

The 2023 survey asked respondents to list five priorities for action to accelerate disability inclusion in DRR. The overall top five priorities were as follows:

1. Address underlying risk factors, such as poverty and inequity, that are exacerbated by limited access to livelihoods and education, and the ability of individuals or communities to effectively mitigate and respond to disaster risks (2,724 respondents).
2. Ensure universal design principles are applied in DRR, including to ensure accessible and resilient infrastructure, facilities and transportation (1,525 respondents).

3. Improve the preparedness and resilience of persons with disabilities through awareness-raising, education and opportunities for capacity development (1,045 respondents).
4. Collaborate across stakeholders to deliver disability-inclusive disaster management and risk reduction (744 respondents).

Ensure the specific needs of persons with disabilities are met to allow equitable participation in DRR processes and decision-making (679 respondents).

Other priorities listed by respondents included the importance of policy change and need for actionable plans (640 respondents), raising awareness and building capacity on disability inclusion for DRR stakeholders (514), increasing resourcing and funding and resources for disability inclusion in DRR (437), and the improved provision of accessible information and early warning (431). Attitudinal change to ensure an enabling environment for the inclusion of persons with disabilities (337) and improving disability data (261) were also prioritized.

## Regional priorities

The main priorities for disability-inclusive DRR suggested by persons with disabilities across regions are summarized in the table below. Again, the number of respondents from each region should be considered when interpreting the below.

**Table 1. DRR-related priorities for persons with disabilities across regions (with number of respondents)**

Priorities	Africa	Americas and the Caribbean	Arab States	Asia	Europe and Central Asia	Pacific	Stateless
Policy changes and actionable planning	4 (83)		4 (13)		2 (36)	2 (12)	5 (1)
Improvement of preparedness and resilience through awareness-raising, education and capacity development	3 (84)	3 (358)		3 (535)	1 (42)	1 (12)	
Provision of universal design/ accessible infrastructure, facilities and transportation relevant to DRR	5 (61)	2 (360)	3 (13)	2 (1,047)	5 (31)	3 (12)	4 (1)
Addressing needs with regards to disability and functioning		5 (179)	2 (18)	5 (406)			1 (4)
Promoting attitudinal change to create a welcoming environment for persons with disabilities			5 (11)			4 (12)	
Effective dissemination of information and early warning		4 (186)			4 (33)		2 (3)
Addressing underlying risk factors such as livelihoods, education and capacity	1 (130)	1 (1,013)	1 (40)	1 (1,502)	3 (35)		
Collaboration across stakeholders	2 (86)			4 (484)		5 (11)	3 (3)



# Conclusions

Despite the commitments to ensure disability inclusion made in Sendai in 2015, the 2023 survey findings show limited progress in disability inclusion across all regions since 2013. In some cases, the 2023 findings suggest a decline in, or deprioritization of, disability inclusion in DRR practice.

The overall increase in the number of persons with disabilities responding to the 2023 survey is encouraging, particularly as the majority of respondents were women with disabilities. Yet despite indications of increasing engagement in DRR by persons with disabilities, fewer respondents in 2023 (16 per cent) reported having a personal disaster preparedness plan compared to 2013 (29 per cent). The 2023 findings also indicate no notable increase in the number of respondents able to immediately evacuate without assistance. The majority of respondents continued to report difficulty or being unable to evacuate during a disaster event.

Findings show that adequate early warning can allow persons with disabilities to evacuate with less difficulties. In and of itself, this should not be surprising – it is the function of early warning systems. What is concerning is that even with sufficient warning, 17 per cent of respondents would still face a lot of difficulties and 6 per cent would be unable to evacuate independently at all. The example of early warning systems reminds us that all DRR services need to meet both the general needs of a population (persons with and without disabilities) and the specific needs of citizens and community members with disabilities. An early warning system that is fit for purpose will be end-to-end and anticipate the additional preparation time some persons with disabilities will need to ready themselves, facilitate the provision of individualized support and interrupted use of assistive devices, and ensure barrier-free evacuation routes and centres. The system will also provide accessible information in multiple formats. Despite Sendai commitments to providing information in easy-to-understand and accessible formats, over 50 per cent of respondents reported DRR information as being inaccessible, or not being aware if information was accessible.

The importance of personal preparedness planning for persons with disabilities, including preparing for safe evacuation where needed, has been emphasized by advocates of disability-inclusive DRR since before

Sendai. The findings support concerns about the ongoing and systemic lack of prioritization and allocation of resources to ensure persons with disabilities are suitably prepared for disasters. This is compounded by limited mechanisms to ensure persons with disabilities can effectively contribute to DRR planning and decision-making. Contributing factors to low participation in decision-making included persisting physical and attitudinal barriers, coupled with low awareness of opportunities for participation. This is not new, and guidance on removing barriers and ensuring equitable participation in DRR is now widely available, including online and directly from OPDs. Low awareness of policies relating to disability-inclusive DRR among persons with disabilities also suggests that a more proactive approach is needed to raise awareness and foster engagement.

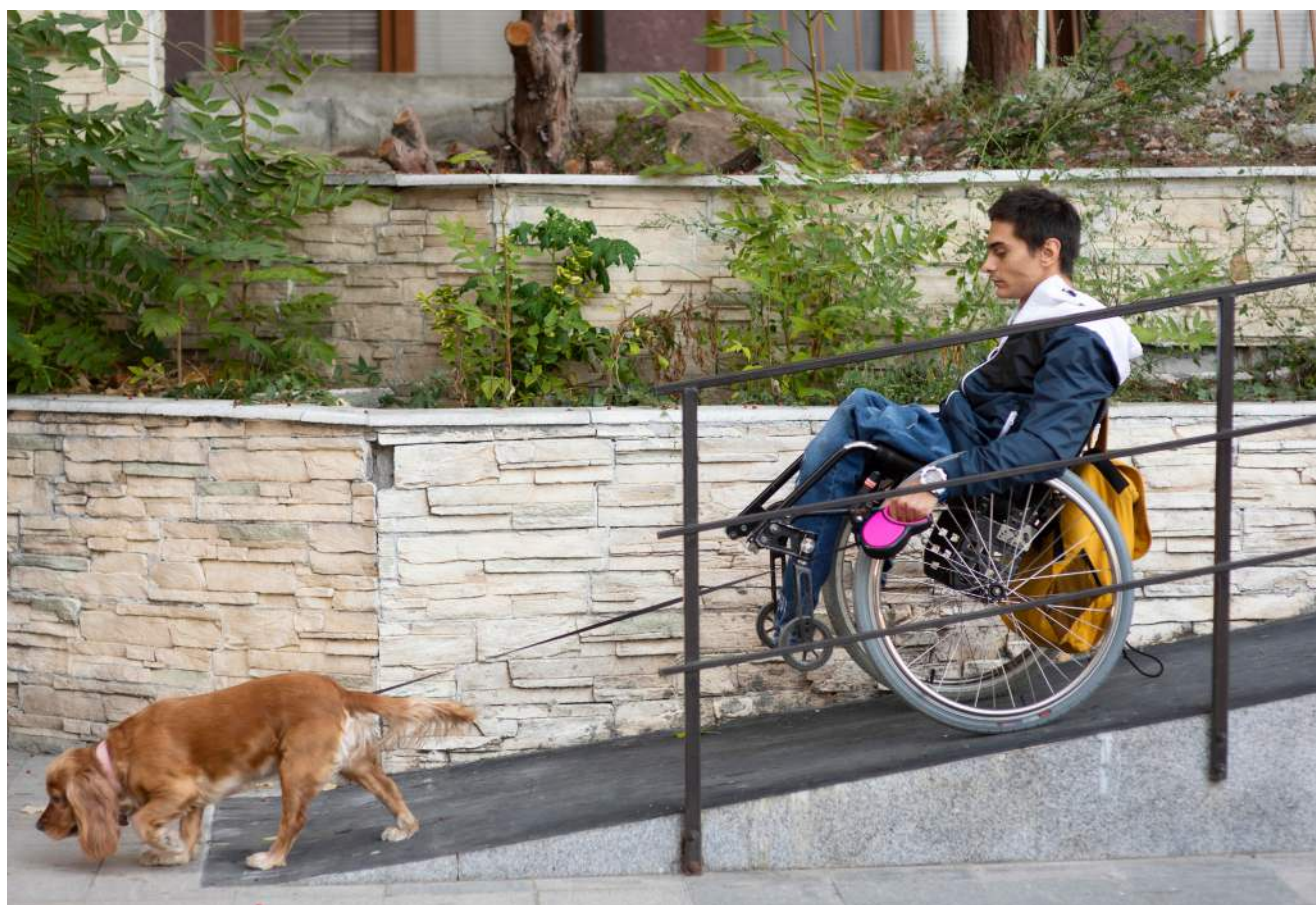
The findings raise important issues concerning representation. The majority of respondents were not directly affiliated with either an OPD or other disability-focused organization. Notably fewer respondents in 2023 indicated they were a member of an OPD than respondents did in 2013. Equally, there is no requirement for any individual with disabilities to be a member of an OPD. Engagement with OPDs by DRR actors is essential. At the same time, the findings suggest engagement with OPDs is not a direct substitute for directly engaging with individuals with disabilities. Engagement with both OPDs and individuals with disabilities is needed to ensure equitable opportunities for participation and engagement by a diverse range of persons with disabilities. It is also important to note that many OPDs are not sufficiently resourced and have multiple competing priorities. OPD engagement in DRR activities and processes must be budgeted, and the professional contributions of OPDs appropriately remunerated.

As noted, more women (53 per cent) than men (45 per cent) with disabilities responded to the 2023 survey. However, there were no notable differences to responses by gender. This supports the understanding that disability status is the major determinant of exclusion and risk, and that this holds across genders. At the same time, this should not detract from how identity characteristics and intersectionalities impact exclusion and disaster risk. While overall numbers were low, there is some suggestion that non-binary individuals with disabilities experienced lower participation rates

and may experience higher disaster risk than women and men with disabilities. To properly understand disaster risk, and to deliver appropriate risk reduction and prevention measures, greater attention needs to be paid to intersectionalities by both DRR and disability stakeholders.

It is notable that almost a quarter of respondents reported experiencing displacement. This challenges any blanket misconceptions that persons with disabilities do not, or cannot, geographically relocate. Greater attention needs to be paid to disability inclusion in policies and processes concerning displacement and migration, including anticipating increasing climate-induced migration. For example, there is evidence that discriminatory visa requirements are limiting opportunities for migration by persons with disabilities affected by climate change in small island states. This includes persons with disabilities being left behind and separated from family members.<sup>27</sup>

Despite persistent and emerging challenges, there are indications of progress. This includes signs of an increasing number of leadership roles in government responsible for disability inclusion, and that accessible DRR information is more widely available in some communities. Again, higher rates of engagement in the survey by women with disabilities may suggest untapped leadership potential. There is also a willingness to participate in DRR by persons with disabilities of all genders and from all regions. While these are promising, the ongoing extent of disability exclusion in DRR remains a cause for concern. As noted earlier, the findings from this survey should be interpreted as an underestimation of gaps and an overestimation of progress. Much remains to be done to achieve commitments made in Sendai to reducing and preventing disaster risk for all, and to realizing 2030 Agenda commitments to leaving no person, with or without disabilities, behind.



Credit to UNDRR

<sup>27</sup> Pacific Disability Forum, *Disability and Climate Change in the Pacific: Findings from Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu*. Pacific Disability Forum (Suva, 2022). Available at <https://pacificdisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/PDF-Final-Report-on-Climate-Change-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf>.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided in order to accelerate progress to achieving Sendai Framework commitments to disability inclusion and building resilience for all. The recommendations also relate to 2030 Agenda and Paris Climate Agreement commitments and goals, as well as the States' legal obligation under the UNCRPD. The following recommendations combine the priorities listed by respondents with disabilities and analysis of broader survey findings.

- **Governments must comply with international law, address the needs and include persons with disabilities in disaster planning, including accessible disaster risk information, effective early warning systems and evacuation plans, ensuring they reach communities on the ground. This includes the compliance and implementation of the UNCRPD and/or national disability laws,** across administrative levels and ministries and departments.
- Full recognition by decision makers that disability inclusion, and ensuring the equitable participation of persons with disabilities, as legal obligations are required. **Dedicated leadership roles for disability experts in decision-making is essential – persons with disabilities should be included in all policymaking and implementation for disaster resilience.**
- **Governments and DRR stakeholders must take urgent measures to ensure equity between persons with and without disabilities in all measures to reduce and prevent disaster risk.** This includes addressing factors that underpin and perpetuate exclusion, including the discriminatory design of communications, information, early warning systems and infrastructure that favour persons without disabilities at the expense of persons with disabilities.
- **Governments and DRR stakeholders must take actions to better address intersectionalities and diversity in all aspects of DRR policy and practice.** This is integral to better understanding, and responding to, disaster risk. Actions include ensuring diversity in representation and decision-making, including by impairment type; fostering leadership by women and gender minorities with disabilities; and ensuring community-based and individual preparedness initiatives are responsive to diverse needs.
- **Governments and DRR stakeholders must prioritize disability inclusion as a key policy concern and objective for DRR.** They should build internal institutional capacities and expertise on disability inclusion and foster diversity in leadership. Where there is limited internal capacity, partnerships should be made with OPDs and external organizations and experts. Prioritizing disability inclusion includes ensuring adequate resources and budgets are available. At the midpoint of the Sendai Framework, we are playing catch-up, and increased resourcing is urgently required.
- **Governments and DRR stakeholders must support rigorous applied and action-oriented research and learning to identify actions that can reduce disaster risk for persons with disabilities** and with complex support needs, and from minorities with increased intersectional risk profiles. These inclusion considerations have not been adequately addressed under the first half of the Sendai Framework.

## ***ANNEXES***

