

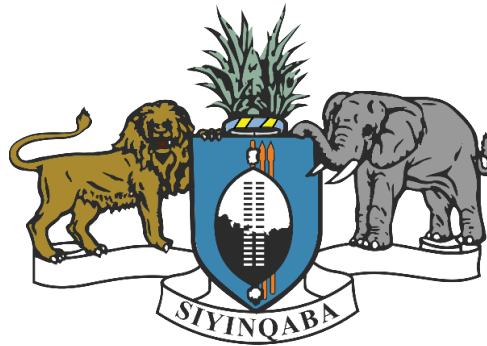
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

ESWATINI NATIONAL DISABILITY PLAN OF ACTION

2024-2028







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Foreword

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has recognised the need for developing a National Disability Plan of Action (NDPA) 2024–2028, pursuant to the adoption of the National Disability Policy of 2013. The purpose of developing the plan of action is to ensure that national policies and development programmes mainstream disability rights in all stages of planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting. It also aims at promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of all Persons with Disabilities, as well as ensuring that they are empowered to exercise those rights and enjoy equal participation in the life of the community in which they live, without discrimination of any kind based on their disability status. The development of the National Disability Plan of Action also demonstrates the Government of Eswatini's full commitment towards improving the livelihoods of Persons with Disabilities.

The NDPA will complement the implementation of the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018 provisions and related guidelines to ensure full compliance with the human rights provisions outlined in the Local Instruments that embrace issues of disabilities such as the Constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Regional and International Instruments. It is this conviction that, with all these instruments in place will be accorded their rightful place in society. Furthermore, they shall be empowered to contribute towards promoting inclusive the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030.

Furthermore, this plan has a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that will be utilized to track progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to achieve our goals effectively.

In conclusion, the successful development of the National Disability Plan of Action of 2024–2028 for the Kingdom of Eswatini through the adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, Persons with Disabilities and the organizations that represent them and the United Nations, thus exemplifying our government's assurance to accelerating the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We firmly believe that by working together as a nation, we can build a society that upholds the rights and dignity of all its citizens, regardless of their abilities. Let us therefore embark on this journey, 'Leaving No One Behind' as stated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Thulisiwe Dladla (Senator)
Deputy Prime Minister

Acknowledgements

The next five-year National Disability Plan of Action (NDPA) and its supporting Monitoring and Evaluation Framework were developed by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) with technical and funding support received from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Office for Southern Africa and the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Round 4 Project on 'Strengthening the Inclusion and Coordination of Disability Issues in Eswatini'.

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini extends gratitude to the UN Resident Coordinators Office, the UNPRPD project implementing partners, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) team lead, and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) as well as the UNPRPD project coordinator, Ms. Sindisiwe Dube, and the UNESCO consultant, Mr. Sibusiso Sibandze, who played a role in the development of this national framework.

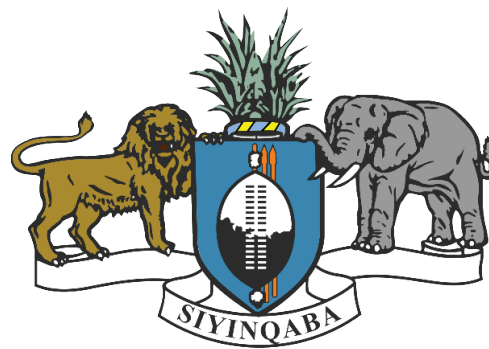
In addition, Government further extends their gratitude to the it's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion for invaluable contributions made during the development of this strategic document. Finally, special thanks goes to the Federation Organization of the Disabled People in Swaziland (FODSWA), and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) who participated actively in providing invaluable insights.

Gratitude is extended to other key stakeholders who proved that the adoption of a multi stakeholder approach between Government, OPDs and the UN is indeed possible and crucial to advance the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Lastly, sincere gratitude goes to the UNESCO ROSA Regional Director and Representative Ms Nisha and her team Ms Amina Hamshari, Ms Memory Zulu Munyaradzi, Ms Yuanfeng Liu, Ms Phumzile Hlophe and Ms Melody Chaitezvi for the technical and coordination support.



Melusi Masuku (AMB)
Principal Secretary



Synopsis

This next 5-year Kingdom of Eswatini National Disability Plan (NDPA) 2024–2028 provides a comprehensive framework on how the country will accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Disability National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018 , over the next 5 years. This national framework builds on the successes and lessons learnt from the implementation of the previous NDPA which was developed by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office with support from m UNDP. The next 5-year NDPA was developed using a multistakeholder approach to advance disability inclusion and involved the Government, the United Nations and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. The next-5-year NDPA provides an overview of the 10 Thematic priority areas to be addressed including contemporary issues faced by Persons With Disabilities post the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the new key themes include strengthening the national coordination mechanisms on disability across all Government Line Ministries, meaningful engagement of all Persons With Disabilities including marginalized and underrepresented disability groups such as women, children, persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities among others. The next-5-year NDPA also provides strategic actions for strengthening disability inclusion in the Education, Health, Sports, Employment Sectors as well as in Humanitarian, Emergency and Food Security responses. The next 5-year NDPA provides the guiding framework to promote the implementation of inclusive Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030.

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Executive Summary

The process to review and develop the NDPA 2024 – 2028 was led by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) with support from UNESCO and UNFPA. The development of the plan was participatory and involved all key stakeholders who contributed to the review of the previous NDPA and proposed interventions to be considered in this plan of action.

A review of the previous NDPA indicated that only 13 per cent of planned activities had been completed with none completed under the Health and Advocacy and Awareness Component. The Education pillar had the most completed activities followed by the National Coordination pillar. Most activities had not been implemented due to inadequate funding and inadequate coordination between key stakeholders. As such, some of the activities were carried over into the next planning phase while others were modified and merged to align with the goal and objectives.

The goal of the NDPA 2024–2028 is to ensure that all Persons with Disabilities in Eswatini are empowered to live independently and with dignity. Achieving this goal would mean catalysing efforts to remove the barriers still faced by including access to health, education, employment, justice and appropriate infrastructure, technology, and transportation systems. The core principles underlying the plan of action are inclusion, participation, mainstreaming, dignity and respect for human rights, independent living, and gender equality.

The NDPA therefore proposes ten thematic areas based on the priorities comprising interventions for systematically and strategically addressing the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The thematic areas are outlined below.

Thematic area 1: National coordination and mainstreaming for disability

Thematic area 2: Advocacy and awareness raising

Thematic area 3: Education and training

Thematic area 4: Health and well-being

Thematic area 5: Skills development and the open labour market

Thematic area 6: Social protection

Thematic area 7: Gender equality and underrepresented groups

Thematic area 8: Inclusive emergency situations, humanitarian action and food security

Thematic area 9: Sports, culture and recreation

Thematic area 10: Infrastructure and the environment

Each thematic area has a set of interventions and activities. To fully operationalise the plan, it would be important to measure performance and to ensure that implementation stays on track. There should also be systematic documentation of

lessons learned during the plan period and assisting implementers to report in a standardised manner.

Additional national resources would need to be allocated and mobilized for fully implementing this national plan of action.

Acronyms

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
CBO	Community-based organizations
CBR	Community-based rehabilitation
CHRPA	Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DPMO	Deputy Prime Minister's Office
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FBO	Faith-based organizations
ECCE	Early childhood care and educationw
MOEPD	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHUD	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
MOLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MOPS	Ministry of Public Service
MOPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
NDPA	National Disability Plan of Action
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
NSF	National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PHC	Primary health care
SDG	Sustainable development goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Introduction

The National Disability Action Plan (NDPA) 2024–2028 seeks to comprehensively address the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in the Kingdom of Eswatini. It builds on the successes and lessons learnt from the previous NDPA, while at the same time closing the gaps in implementation.

The NDPA is aligned with the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and seeks to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all Persons with Disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.” The convention outlines the rights in a more comprehensive manner addressing issues of equality, respect, accessibility and right to life among other important provisions.

Of note, is the recognition of disability as a human rights issue stemming from the social model of disability. Notably the NDPA has, to a considerable extent, complied with this definition of disability including the approach to the delivery of disability services as well as the issues of universal design to enhance participation and inclusion. The alignment also considers the respect for differences and overcoming social, legal, economic, political, technological, and environmental barriers.

The Kingdom of Eswatini signed the CRPD in September 2007 and ratified it on 24 September 2012. This is the second generation of the NDPA since the ratification of the convention. The first NDPA initially covered the period 2015 to 2020. It was revised in 2018 to align with current developments as well as consider a monitoring and evaluation framework and costing. Hence the planning period was extended to 2022.

The purpose of NDPA 2024–2028 is to serve as a blueprint and roadmap for addressing disability issues in the country over the next five years. It specifies the essential and key actions that need to be taken under each priority area and in line with the CRPD.

The plan of action will also ensure that national policies and development programmes mainstream disability in all stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring. It also aims at promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as ensuring that they are empowered to exercise those rights and enjoy equal participation in the life of the community in which they live, without discrimination of any kind based on their disability. The NDPA lays a foundation for the development of annual workplans and performance plans for the next five years.

Background

Population dynamics

As of the end of 2021, Eswatini's population was estimated at 1,172,369 people, with an average growth rate of 0.86 per cent per year since 2010 (Eswatini Social Inquiry and Fiscal Space Analysis Phase 1 Report, 2022). The 2017 Population and Housing Census revealed that approximately 13 per cent of Eswatini's population, or 146,554 individuals, faced difficulties in performing certain functions. The most common disabilities were related to vision (32.6%) and mobility (26.5%) (Kingdom of Eswatini Disability Profile, 2017). Females were more affected than males across almost all types of disabilities. There was a significantly higher number of females compared to males across all types of disabilities. Disability is more prevalent in rural areas. For instance, 87 per cent of those with walking difficulties and 82.6 per cent of those with eyesight difficulties reside in rural areas.

Economic growth and employment

Between 2008 and 2021, Eswatini's economy grew at an average rate of 2.5 per cent per year, with a long-run tendency to decelerate in recent years (Eswatini Social Inquiry and Fiscal Space Analysis Phase 1 Report, 2022). The GDP growth rate varied, peaking at 5.4 per cent in 2012 and experiencing a downturn during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a recovery in 2021. The overall unemployment rate in Eswatini has been high, with variations depending on the source. Youth unemployment is significantly high. Unemployment rates are higher among younger groups, women, and rural residents (Eswatini Social Inquiry and Fiscal Space Analysis Phase 1 Report, 2022). The economic effects of COVID-19 have exacerbated unemployment, particularly among men.

Poverty and inequality

Long-term poverty incidence has been decreasing, but the country faces high levels of inequality, with the Gini coefficient, an index for the degree of inequality in the distribution of income/wealth, increasing from 51.5 in 2009 to 54.6 in 2016 (Eswatini Social Inquiry and Fiscal Space Analysis Phase 1 Report, 2022). Improvements in several dimensions, such as access to drinking water, have been noted, although challenges remain in areas like sanitation and maternal mortality rates. Approximately 52 per cent of Persons with Disabilities have no education, and only a small percentage have higher qualifications (Kingdom of Eswatini Disability Profile, 2017). Only 28 per cent of the population with disabilities is employed, indicating significant unemployment among this demographic. Around 42.3 per cent of Persons with Disabilities are married according to Swazi law and customs, with 37 per cent never

having been married. Many individuals with disabilities face challenges engaging in education and economic activities. Around 39.5 per cent have difficulty engaging in learning activities.

Disability prevalence

According to the 2017 population and housing census report there were 146,554 Persons with Disabilities in Eswatini representing 13 per cent of the total population. As noted above, there were more Persons with Disabilities living in the rural areas (15.1%) compared to the urban areas (8.1%).

Persons with visual impairments comprised the largest share of the total population of Persons with Disabilities at 32.6 per cent, followed by physical impairments at 26.5 per cent; hearing impairments at 15 per cent; cognitive impairments at 12 per cent, and speech impairment at 4.7 per cent. Notably, the percentage of females with disabilities was higher compared to males with disabilities across all types of disabilities except for speech impairment.

Albinism affects 0.7 per cent of Eswatini's population. It is more common in rural areas (76.4%) and in regions like Manzini and Hhohho (Kingdom of Eswatini Disability Profile, 2017). Albinism is a non-contagious, genetically inherited condition characterized by a significant deficit in melanin production.

Epilepsy affects 0.6 per cent of the population, with a higher prevalence among males (53.6%). It is most prevalent among those aged fifteen to nineteen years and decreases with increasing age. Regional distribution: like other disabilities, epilepsy is more prevalent in rural areas, with the Hhohho region having the highest prevalence.

The data on Persons with Disabilities in Eswatini highlights the need for more inclusive policies and programmes that address inclusive education, employment, healthcare, poverty, and social integration for individuals with disabilities. Given the higher prevalence of disabilities in rural areas, targeted interventions in these regions are crucial. There is also a need for increased awareness and advocacy for the rights and needs of underrepresented groups of Persons with Disabilities.

Eswatini recognizes the importance of social protection in promoting human development, political stability, inclusive growth, and the overall well-being of the population. Social protection programmes provide income security, access to health and education, food security, and empower people to take advantage of economic opportunities. The government's response to challenges like poverty, inequality, and food insecurity includes pro-poor policies and programmes, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups including the elderly, women, and children.

Methodology

The development of the NDPA was a participatory process that involved an estimated eighty participants from government, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), UN Specialized Agencies, civil society organizations (CSO) and representative Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. This was done through a desk review of key national documents, the CRPD, bilateral meetings with key stakeholders and two consultative meetings. The first national workshop that was held on 8 to 10 November 2023 brought together stakeholders from government, UN agencies, civil society, the private sector, and diverse religious affiliations. The workshop focused on reviewing implementation of the previous NDPA and proposing interventions to address gaps and new challenges.

In addition, a one day-to-day validation stakeholder workshop was held on 24 January 2024 to discuss the draft national plan of action that had been shared earlier with participants for review. Prior and after the validation workshop, the UN agencies were also engaged to review the next five-year NDPA for strengthened synergies with the current and future common country assessment (CCA) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) processes.

The analysis of information collected from the desk review and stakeholder consultations focused on generating priorities, thematic areas, interventions, and activities. This was supplemented with secondary data to ensure that the NDPA was aligned with current trends. The analysis also investigated how best to measure performance of programmes targeting and compliance with local and international legal frameworks.

The key actions to address disability in the Kingdom of Eswatini are centred on the CRPD with emphasis on inclusion and observance of human rights. The NDPA considers the entire life stages of a human, from pre-natal to old age. This plan of action considers the fact that disabilities may occur at any point during an individual's lifetime either through accidents, illness, and ageing.

The challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities are varied and complex requiring a multi-pronged approach to addressing them. The NDPA seeks to be more pragmatic in its approach to addressing current challenges taking into consideration existing capacities and resource constraints.

The NDPA will be anchored on six core principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- Inclusion
- Participation
- Mainstreaming
- Dignity and respect for human rights
- Independent living
- Gender equality

As such, the focus over the next five years will be on the following national priorities:

- Strengthening the governance and coordination of disability issues at all levels.
- Ensuring that Persons with Disabilities can live independently in a dignified manner with access to equal opportunities.
- Strengthening measures for inclusive education and training as well as employment opportunities.
- Improving access to health and wellness.
- Strengthening compliance with existing disability laws and access to justice for Persons with Disabilities. There would be particular focus on ensuring compliance with the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018 as well as other relevant pieces of legislation that would guarantee respect of the rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Focusing on creating opportunities and providing support for all age groups, regardless of gender.
- Scaling up efforts to raise awareness on the rights of Persons with Disabilities and advocating for their full participation in all spheres of life. This will include publicizing all activities involving Persons with Disabilities. Messages shall also aim to change negative attitudes of the public towards Persons with Disabilities. Programmes on social mobilization and awareness raising would also be developed to eliminate practices that encourage discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.
- Strengthen access to gainful employment and work for Persons with Disabilities.
- Facilitating the participation of Persons with Disabilities in sports and recreation activities and ensuring that facilities are made available and accessible.

Vision of the National Disability Action Plan

An inclusive society in which Persons with Disabilities can realize their potential as equal citizens and their fundamental rights are respected.

Goal

All Persons with Disabilities in Eswatini empowered to live independently and with dignity.

Specific objectives

- Foster systemic intersectoral and multisectoral collaboration on disability issues.
- Increase by 100 per cent the number of Persons with Disabilities enrolled at primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational institutions.
- Ensure 50 per cent of Persons with Disabilities in the built environment complies with the concept of universal design.
- Provide free and affordable healthcare to all Persons with Disabilities.
- Increased awareness on disability issues and support national and international advocacy for Persons with Disabilities.
- Increase by 30 per cent the number of Persons with Disabilities participating in sports and recreation activities.

The thematic areas for the NDPA, based on the priority areas are presented in the subsequent chapters as follows:

Chapter 2: National coordination and mainstreaming for disability

Chapter 3: Advocacy and awareness raising

Chapter 4: Education and training

Chapter 5: Health and well-being

Chapter 6: Inclusive skills development and the open labour market

Chapter 7: Social protection

Chapter 8: Gender equality and underrepresented groups

Chapter 9: Sports, culture and recreation

Chapter 10: Inclusive emergency situations, humanitarian action and food security

Chapter 11: Infrastructure and the environment

Chapter 12: Implementation arrangements

Chapter 13: Monitoring and evaluation framework

The proposed actions emanate from the multi-stakeholder workshop, bilateral meetings with key stakeholders, as well as from lessons learned from the implementation of the previous NDPA.

Chapter 2: National coordination and mainstreaming for disability

This pillar mainly addresses Articles 12, 13, 31 and 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and focuses on strengthening national structures ensuring that they are adequately capacitated to comprehensively address disability in the country.

To strengthen governance and coordination over the next five years, this plan seeks to establish a strong management information system with a comprehensive disaggregated database to assist with mapping Persons with Disabilities and capturing relevant data to aid decision making; put in place a robust framework for reporting and tracking of policies, programmes and budgets at both national and regional level; strengthen the capacity of national and subnational structures; develop a humanitarian crises response plan for Persons with Disabilities; build partnerships with private sector and other key stakeholders outside the public sector; actualize the operations of various committees as articulated in the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018; establish national controls, standards in the design of assistive devices; mainstream disability issues in all government policies and programmes; reorganize services such that they are available and accessible to service users and enforce compliance with the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 19 of 2018.

Table 1 : Priority interventions for national coordination and mainstreaming for disability

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Information, research and knowledge management for disability	Develop a management information system (MIS) on disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a national survey (disability profile) on Persons with Disabilities bi-annually, ensuring that disaggregated data on Persons with Disabilities reflect their physical or mental conditions, resources/capabilities, and the environment in which they live, work and play • Conduct studies that focus on disability preventive measures • Develop data sharing protocols and put in place mechanisms for accessibility of disability data • Disseminate information on the living conditions of Persons with Disabilities • Develop a disability registry • Integrate indicators on Persons with Disabilities in other sectoral management information systems • Support the integration of disability in all national surveys • Develop a comprehensive service directory for and of Persons with Disabilities

	Establish and develop a research agenda for disability issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place mechanisms for the National Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities to collaborate with the National Research Council to drive the disability research agenda • Mobilize resources for research via, among others, the Secretariat of the National Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities • Liaise with the National Research Council to foster and promote research in disability issues in institutions of higher learning • Promote disability studies that are spearheaded and conducted by OPDs of Eswatini
Coordination	Coordinate government ministries on mainstreaming activities in their respective areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct quarterly meetings of the inter-ministerial task force for reporting on mainstreaming disability, implementing the NDPA and the CRPD
	Coordinate ministries, private sector disability organizations for planning and reporting on the implementation of the NDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct bi-annual meeting involving disability stakeholders to report on the implementation of the NDPA
	Engage development partners to support disability interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the UN Specialized Agencies consider disability inclusion priorities of the NDPA into their programming e.g. common country assessment, UNSCDF, country cooperation strategies and annual work programmes and reporting mechanisms

Institutional strengthening	Fully operationalize the Disability Unit at DPMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of Director, Registrar, and the entire staff • Train OPDs on organization management • Facilitate local and international exchange training programmes for OPDs
	Build the capacity of OPDs and organizations addressing disability on key organizational management capabilities	
	DPMO to lead and coordinate resource mobilization efforts for effective implementation of the NDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train the inter-ministerial committee on disability inclusion, planners and OPDs on gender responsive and CRPD compliant budgeting • Develop a resource mobilization plan • Submit funding proposals to potential funders • Organize donor roundtable sessions to discuss priority areas reflected in the NDPA discussions • Advocate for adoption of CRPD budget compliance approaches in development of the national budget for increased government allocation towards disability inclusion
	Establish a partnership framework with the private sector and other funding agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with selected private entities locally and internationally to support the implementation of the NDPA

<p>Mainstreaming and advocacy</p>	<p>Sensitization, engagements for policymakers and legislators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular assessment and reporting on mainstreaming disability into policies and programmes • Coordinate the establishment of a body corporate or framework, guidelines, systems and processes to persuade compliance enforcement for the National Disability Advisory Council • Establish a collaborative framework of engagement of OPDs with government agencies such as towns, city and municipal councils, parastatals in a framework for engagement on disability mainstreaming encompassing frameworks, regulations, guidelines, and infrastructure to suit the uptake and use by Persons with Disabilities
	<p>Engage grassroots communities and traditional structures on disability mainstreaming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development (MTAD) to train chiefdom development committees (CDCs) that reports to Bandlancane (Chief’s council) on disability mainstreaming) and local government officials • MTAD to advocate and mobilize for the inclusion of at least one person with disabilities in CDCs in over 300 chiefdoms over five years • MTAD to advocate for special consideration for Persons with Disabilities in Eswatini – organized groups that are formal entities; vehicles for development in communities for the most part financed through RDF

<p>Legal environment</p>	<p>Monitor compliance with the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mechanism to report on implementation of the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018 • Develop guidelines, regulations, standard operating procedures (SOPs), social partnerships, and voluntary mechanisms to adopt and internalize transformation towards disability inclusion • Establish relationships with regulatory agencies to give effect to the dictates of the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018 on built environment, transportation, etc. to engender compliance • Carry out periodic audits for purposes of compliance and publishing of non-complying structures • Set clear SOPs for civil claims for repeat and delinquent agencies and any other parties • Establish a legal enforcement mechanism as set out in the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 of 2018
<p>6. Humanitarian crises response</p>	<p>Mainstream disability in national and sectoral risk and emergency response plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with OPDs in identifying risks, develop plans and understanding their needs (criteria to targeting those in need) • Develop a communication strategy for crises emergencies • Map interventions for Persons with Disabilities during humanitarian crises intervention • Build capacity of OPDs and humanitarian actors • Review the Disaster Management Act of 2006 to cater for Persons with Disabilities

Chapter 3: Advocacy and awareness raising

This thematic area addresses Article 8 of the CRPD, which among other objectives aims to 'raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding Persons with Disabilities and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of Persons with Disabilities'.

During the national stakeholder workshop for developing the NDPA, it was noted that there was lack of awareness programmes and understanding of persons with disability rights and issues among the public, which contributes to the perpetuation of stigma and discrimination.

Persons with disabilities are often excluded from decision-making processes that affect their lives. Their voices and perspectives are not adequately represented in policy and planning processes. Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive legislation protecting the rights of Persons with Disabilities. This hinders their ability to seek justice and redress for discrimination and human rights violations. A majority or almost all Persons with Disabilities lack access to assistive devices that are essential for their mobility, communication, and independence.

The NDPA outlines several practical solutions that could be implemented to address the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in terms of advocacy and awareness raising. These solutions involve a combination of relevant, effective, innovative ideas, and require participation from all sectors, both private and public.

Focus over the next five years will therefore include:

- Establishing programmes aimed at conscientizing communities on disability rights
- Training healthcare practitioners on disability rights with specific reference to health care rights
- Building capacity on interpretation of policy, legislation and a plan of action for persons with disability inclusive of mental neurological and development disabilities
- Engagement of relevant partners and stakeholders, government ministries and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to sensitize them on disability rights
- Providing financial support and resources to OPDs, since these organizations play a crucial role advocating for their rights, and raising awareness about their needs and challenges
- Sustaining and having continual awareness raising campaigns such as commemorations of international days of Persons with Disabilities in all the four regions and also to have sensitization programmes before the main day in civil

- society, workplace for both private and public sector
- Prioritizing availability of sufficient funds for the needs of Persons with Disabilities during budgeting, especially funds for advocacy and awareness raising programs
- Using media platforms to reach all Persons with Disabilities
- Making sign language a third language.

Table 2: Priority interventions: Advocacy and awareness raising

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Sensitization of the public on disability rights using different communication platforms including social media	Raise awareness on disability inclusion as a human rights and development issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate the disability policy, legislation, and NDPA in accessible formats to public entities, NGOs, CSOs, private sector and FBOs, health centres, and other public facilities • Translate all key documents in the public domain into accessible formats • Activate media campaigns on disability rights • Support OPDs to advocate for the rights of Persons with Disabilities • Commemorate international days in all the four regions of the country especially the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December • Lobby and advocate for sign language to be considered as a third official language in Eswatini, and provision of assistive devices for Persons with Disabilities • Educate communities (including community health workers, traditional structures) and inform families about different types of disabilities at all developmental stages

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Partnerships for advocacy and awareness raising	Promote and sustain partnerships with the media houses and influential entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop joint disability rights programmes with the media and civil society for social mobilization and awareness generation • Ensure regular reporting of disability issues in the print and electronic media
Capacity building	Impart appropriate knowledge to key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revive Sign Language Proficiency Trainings for Civil Servants, as part of in service training programs • Design and deliver training/awareness programmes on disability rights, self-advocacy, and legal frameworks (legislation and policy), together with training materials in suitable communication/language formats • Training for service providers on disability (government, business sector and civil society) • Disability mainstreaming training programmes in all sectors, e.g. government, business sector, civil society, etc.

Chapter 4: Inclusive education and training

Education

Article 24 of the CRPD obligates state parties to ensure that Persons with Disabilities can exercise their rights to inclusive education and lifelong learning. Efforts to drive the inclusive education agenda are driven by the Special Education Needs (SEN) Department under the Ministry of Education and Training. The SEN mandate is to facilitate access to inclusive quality education for children and youth with special needs and mainstream disability at all levels of the education system.

From a human rights and development perspective, learners with disabilities should be part of the main education system meaning that, ideally, they should not be placed in special schools due to their disabilities no matter how severe they appear to be. This would ensure that they grow up being part of society and not feel excluded.

However, the lack of resources and inadequate numbers of trained teachers has influenced the way in which education is being provided to children with disabilities. At most times, the environment in regular schools does not facilitate integration leading to a significant number of children with disabilities being excluded from learning. Hence, the low skills and literacy amongst person with disabilities. In Eswatini, it is estimated that 52 per cent of children with disabilities are out of school. This situation inadvertently contributes to high levels of unemployment among Persons with Disabilities.

In pursuit of an inclusive education, the NDPA will focus on putting in place effective strategies for the early identification of children with special needs; establishing an monitoring and evaluation system (MES) to measure and review the educational progress children with special needs; increase the pool of teachers with skills on special needs including sign language interpretation and work with other sectors to remove institutional, attitudinal, societal, financial barriers and environmental barriers to inclusive education.

Training

Normally, a skills development system aims at supporting economic growth and contributing to the development of the broader society. This also includes ensuring access to Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and skills development opportunities for marginalized groups, such as Persons with Disabilities.

Ideally, vocational training and rehabilitation should be aimed at Persons with Disabilities whose prospects of securing and retaining employment are substantially

reduced because of their disabilities but who have reasonable prospect of securing and retaining suitable employment. Efforts should also be made to establish inclusive community-based vocational training that involves vocational skills training at the community level.

In Eswatini, the achievement of objectives related to skills development and employment are hindered by the lingering national fiscal challenges, poorly resourced training institutions, (inadequate experts, tools, and training materials), lack of sufficient re-training opportunities (in-service training / industry placement for trainers), negative attitudes towards and training programmes that are not in line with current developments.

After the launch, implication of the National Disability Plan of Action 2015 – 2022, pursuant to the adoption of the National Disability Policy of 2013, the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS) reported lack of resources and a need to urgently review curricula to better reflect the needs of the labour market. Most of the issues that were in line with this thematic area did not take place thus there is a need for networking with other organizations and institutions for sharing resources and accessing their services and developing human resources and training.

The NDPA over the next five years will therefore seek to effectively promote the inclusion of mainstreaming TVET and skills development programmes. This would include, implementation of the certification enhancement project, upgrading TVET equipment, tools, and specialist software programs, upgrading the quality of products from TVET sector, upgrading lectures and instructors through industry placemen, integrating entrepreneurial training into a whole school system, and developing a system of on-going support to inclusion, including reasonable accommodation. Decentralization of all services to all the regions should also be considered.

Table 3: Priority interventions for inclusive education and training

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Strengthen early childhood care and development (ECCD)	Facilitate early access to education for all learners with special education needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing Early Identification and Intervention (EII) Strategy for children with disabilities • Introduce Grade Zero in all primary schools • Train caregivers, health care and motivators on ECCD as part of strengthening the community-based education component • Implement the revised EII Strategy • Orient health workers and mothers on brain stimulation activities during antenatal care, postnatal care, etc.
Build capacity of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit	Ensure that Persons with Disabilities enjoy full rights to education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a diagnostic wing of the SEN Unit in education • Develop disability support teams in schools • Develop screening and assessment tools for the diagnosis
	Streamline SEN nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equip educators with various inclusive education approaches • Strengthen and rehabilitate special schools for Persons with Disabilities • Inclusive education curriculum for tertiary education training • Promote inclusion including reverse inclusion

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Access to inclusive equitable, quality education	Implement the Eswatini Standards for Inclusive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of the pilot report on standards • Revise the standards to capture findings from the pilot exercise • Roll out the standards to all pre-primary schools, high schools, and tertiary institutions • Increase enrollment in all levels of the education system • Provide digital access and standard guidelines at an early age • Protection of children with disabilities in schools (violation, corporal punishment)
Review the Free Primary Education (FPE) Act	Fully incorporate disability issues in education law and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a needs analysis for individual needs • Revise the FPE Act to capture individual needs of children with disabilities • Advocate for targeted free education at all levels for children
Access to physical infrastructure	Ensure children with disabilities have physical access to schools and institutions of higher learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct physical access audits of all education institutions and draw modification plans • Make reasonable alterations and provisions in the premises of schools and institutions required to ensure that they are accessible and safe for children with disabilities • Develop strategies for provision of transport for children who have mobility challenges • Capacity building for providers of transport

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Communication formats	Design educational materials in accessible formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce learning materials in multiple communication formats e.g. sign language formal means of communication, braille, CAT/PECS, AAC, Makaton
Strengthen capacity building	Pre-service and in-service training for teachers in all education sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training modules on disability issues targeting institutions that do not have such modules • Strengthen training and equipping teachers on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disability issues • Facilitate introduction of Disability Rights Studies in training institutions • Establish online (websites) and social media platforms for dissemination of information, advocacy, and sensitization on disability issues
Integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning (emerging technologies)	Ensure availability of assistive devices for learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online backup and integration of assistive technology for teaching and learning in compliance with the Computer Crime and Cybercrime Act of 2022 • Assess ICT needs in learning facilities • Train teachers and children with disabilities on prevention of cybercrime

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Integration of disability into TVET and tertiary system	Adaptation and integration of disability in existing tertiary and TVET institutions to ensure programmes are suitable and relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate through multisectoral collaboration, the revision of curricula and facilities to make them disability friendly
Strengthening capacity of training institutions to provide disability-oriented programmes / ensure inclusion / mainstreaming of disability issues	Ensure training institutions have the relevant materials and faculty to offer disability-oriented programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sufficient instructors with all types of communication skills and the use of communications technology • Re-train lecturers and instructors on offering disability-oriented programmes and teaching • Provide adequate funds and materials/resources for institutions responsible for training of Persons with Disabilities • Introduce disability courses in tertiary institutions
Cultivate entrepreneurial mindset among learners with disabilities	Strengthen the creation and integration of disability in entrepreneurial programmes in schools and training institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a needs assessment on possible entrepreneurial programmes that could be introduced at primary, secondary and tertiary level • Pilot the programmes in two regions

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Produce marketable graduates	Mainstream disability in all vocational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the vocational training curriculum, training methods and assessment procedures and remove or modify any structural barriers that discriminate against people based on disability • Benchmark the curriculum with international vocational institutions • Build capacity of staff on reviewed curriculum • Develop a vibrant and robust curriculum in line with current developments to ensure that the range of choices at vocational training for Persons with Disabilities is adapted to new developments in the labour market

Chapter 5: Health and well-being

The aspirations to realize the highest standards of health, which is non-discriminative for Persons with Disabilities, are captured under Article 25 of the CRPD. Article 26 also refers to the health-related component of rehabilitation.

One of the key issues under health is that of prevention, which is also a key principle in primary health care. This is also amplified in the mission statement of the Ministry of Health Policy (2006), which commits to providing preventative services that are of high quality, relevant, accessible, affordable, equitable and socially acceptable. The policy further states that Persons with Disabilities must receive free healthcare services and that designers of health facilities must ensure accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

During the implementation period of the previous NDPA, there was development of a National Early Detection Strategy 2016–2020 that aimed to prevent or minimize disabilities by detecting them in children at an early stage. This is a very important area as it would contribute to the reduction of disabilities in the country. It had also been noted during the national workshop that Persons with Disabilities continued to be discriminated when accessing services in health facilities, a situation that was worsened by the inadequate number of health workers trained in sign language interpretation. At most times, Persons with Disabilities face challenges in accessing appropriate healthcare services, including lack of accessible healthcare facilities, limited availability of specialized services in all the four regions, and inadequate training of healthcare professionals on disability-inclusive care.

There is progression globally from infectious to non-communicable diseases due to rapid urbanization; injuries from rapid motorization, and conflicts around the world; improved healthcare services resulting in increasing population of elderly people living with chronic diseases and disability. Health systems especially in low- and middle-income countries are however ill equipped to cope with increasing need for rehabilitation services.

As a result, many individuals continue to have no access to much needed rehabilitation services (The Health Policy and Systems Research Framework for Strengthening Rehabilitation 9 December 2020). Eswatini is no exception. Since their establishment in the Ministry of Health (MOH) in the early 1990's rehabilitation services have been plagued by systemic challenges that have hindered growth and development, hence access to this service continues to be very limited.

Rehabilitation is defined as a set of processes that assist individuals who experience or are likely to experience disability to achieve and maintain optimal functioning in

interaction with their environment (World Disability Report 2020). It is a third public health indicator along with mortality and morbidity that has a unique contribution to optimizing functioning and as such it is a priority health strategy in the 21st century (Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR) 2020).

The Eswatini Ministry of Health (MOH) aims to provide inclusive health that ensures that all individuals can access health care services irrespective of impairment, gender, age, colour, race, religion, or socioeconomic status. This implies radical change in the health care environment including change in attitudes, improved communication skills and access to medical and rehabilitative services to ensure that nobody is actively or passively discriminated against.

Several key actions will be implemented over the next planning period to meet the obligations stated in the CRPD and to improve access to health care services including the well-being of Persons with Disabilities.

These will include:

- Improving accessibility to the broad range of primary health care services
- Fully integrating disabilities in sexual and reproductive health programmes including HIV and AIDS programmes
- Design appropriate, accessible and affordable health service at primary, secondary and tertiary levels for Persons with Disabilities
- Develop measures to identify and reduce discrimination on the basis of disability in the health sector
- Ensuring the availability of sign-language interpreters in health facilities
- Undertake structured ongoing capacity building for health practitioners
- Deploying community mental health nurses to community clinics
- Sensitization programmes to inform and educate health care providers and workers on the rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Putting up appropriate signage for Persons with Disabilities in all health facilities
- Use of picture exchange communication that will be beneficial to people with intellectual disabilities in health care centres
- Training health care workers on delivering adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) with dignity to Persons with Disabilities
- Educating health care workers to uphold the sexual and reproductive sex rights for all Persons with Disabilities.

Table 4: Priority interventions for health and well-being

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Prevention, identification, and intervention	Develop and strengthen early identification and intervention programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent provision of antenatal supplementation and immunizations • Develop and implement the early identification and intervention strategy • Deployment of the appropriate cadre of health workers • Advocacy for midwives to identify and monitor • Provide services in all health facilities to manage impairments to prevent disabilities that may be secondary to delayed treatment • Enactment of legislation that protects the unborn child e.g. prohibiting expectant mothers from exposing themselves to risky behaviours • Strengthen and expand the school health programme
Health promotion	Strengthen health promotion strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and disseminate health information in formats that are user friendly to Persons with Disabilities • Creating awareness among families caring for, and communities to access health services • Develop appropriate signages in all health facilities • Develop and disseminate information on common disabilities, their prevention and management (targeting the overall population) on all media platforms

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Capacity building	Ensure that health workers receive the necessary pre-service and in-service skills required to provide care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train traditional structures on appropriate health information on disabilities • Training and deployment of health professionals with special skills (including sign language) to care for Persons with Disabilities • Training of health care workers on issues pertaining to disabilities • Introduce pre-service curriculum issues of disability • Training of health workers on disabling conditions, disability prevention and management
Access to care	Facilitate ease of access to healthcare services at all levels in the public and private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve sign language in health facilities • Hiring of sign language interpreters • Ensure free health services for all in line with the National Health Policy • Provide services for Persons with Disabilities in national referral hospitals • Revive community-based health outreaches

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Rehabilitation	Strengthen the rehabilitation programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish the community rehabilitation programme • Establish and equip rehabilitation departments • Promote partner collaboration • Ensure acquisition of consumables • Build rehabilitation centres, benchmark with other countries e.g. Malaysia • Ensure representation of rehabilitation services at policy and planning/strategic levels of the ministry • Implement actions to improve access to rehabilitation and treatment services for persons with disabilities exposed to substance abuse • Strengthen human resource capacity for rehabilitation services • Ensure professional growth and development for rehabilitation professionals to curb high levels of attrition • Strengthen support for semi-private rehabilitation centres e.g. Cheshire Homes, St Joseph's Rehabilitation Centre
Funding	Allocate financial resources to implement the NDPA health component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate budget to cater for Persons with Disabilities

Chapter 6: Inclusive skills development and the open labour market

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27, expresses 'the right of Persons with Disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others'. In essence, they must also have equal opportunities for employment, be remunerated equally and enjoy labour rights.

However, current trends show that there are lesser numbers of Persons with Disabilities participating in the labour force and at times when they secure employment, they are remunerated less compared to people without disabilities. The Integrated Labour Force Survey (2021) estimated that there were 15,529 Persons with Disabilities of working age who were unemployed (5667 males and 9862 females).

More effort must be made to ensure that Persons with Disabilities are afforded opportunities to secure jobs in the formal sector as opposed to the informal sector. Evidence gathered by the International Labour Organization (ILO) points out that globally, Persons with Disabilities are three times more likely to be engaged in informal economy than persons with no disabilities, which means that they have no access to decent jobs, predictable and stable earnings, and social security. Since informal workers are not covered by labour legislation or social security, Persons with Disabilities in informal jobs are in an even more disadvantaged situation. The Government of Eswatini is considering steps to support transition from informal to formal economy and Persons with Disabilities should not be left behind in attaining this vision.

Furthermore, there must be mechanisms established to promote the participation of Persons with Disabilities in the labour market. Employers must put in place positive discrimination measures that afford opportunities to Persons with Disabilities to secure jobs such as quota systems. However, it should be noted that sometimes quota systems have both advantages and limitations that should be examined in country context before they are implemented. Quota systems may be a good starting measure if implemented simultaneously with measures that support employers to adopt reasonable accommodation and build their own confidence for disability employment. In countries with a large informal economy, quotas benefit only some Persons with Disabilities.

One of the main challenges that was observed as contributing to this trend both locally and globally is the significant lack of investment in education and skills development for Persons with Disabilities from a young age. Many have been excluded from education at a basic education level and hardly get an opportunity to make it into college education. As a result, many people with disabilities are

unemployed, even when their disability does not affect their ability to work and perform a job successfully. The NDPA will therefore seek to increase participation in the labour market and contribute towards the elimination of barriers to employment.

Table 5: Gainful employment and self-employment

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Participation in the labour market	Promote employment in formal sectors for all Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop programme to assist entrepreneurs that have disabilities • Consider measures to build employers' confidence to retain and employ workers with disabilities and reward employers who implement affirmative action policies • Design, provide and fund SME and SMME opportunities that are suitable for Persons with Disabilities • Assist OPDs to facilitate establishment of cooperatives to ensure that the skills and talents of Persons with Disabilities are commercialized • Facilitate and create trade finance opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

<p>Elimination of barriers to employment</p>	<p>Support towards Persons with Disabilities to access gainful employment and perform in their jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical aids and assistive devices for performance of their jobs • Ensure workplaces have reasonable accommodation to address the needs of Persons with Disabilities • Review the Labour Act to ensure that it adequately addresses the needs of Persons with Disabilities • Develop specific measures to support non-discrimination and equality of treatment in the employment policy, vocational policy and terms and conditions of employment • Advocate for the dissemination of employment opportunities to be in accessible formats • Periodically screen vacancy announcements to ensure they do not directly and indirectly exclude Persons with Disabilities • Explore mechanisms to ensure that a percentage of employment opportunities are reserved for qualified Persons with Disabilities in both the public and private sector
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Chapter 7: Social protection

Social protection plays a major role for Persons with Disabilities, who face multiple barriers such as discrimination in the labour market. These barriers increase vulnerabilities, exposure to risk and the impact of economic or other shocks, thus preventing individuals from enjoying more favorable conditions. This thematic area also addresses Article 28 of the CRPD, which expresses the right of Persons with Disabilities to acceptable standards of living and social protection as well as Article 19 on living independently and being included in the community.

Persons with disabilities need to be cushioned from economic and social shocks through the provision of social assistance. As such, the DPMO provides social assistance grants to eligible Persons with Disabilities. However, there is a need to ensure that the social assistance programme is covered by legal provisions. It is important that the country transitions from the charity/social model to a human rights-based approach in compliance to the CRPD. There must be measures put in place to ensure that independent living for Persons with Disabilities is prioritized.

The Eswatini National Development Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 proposes:

- Several interventions to strengthen social security programmes
- Finalizing the national social assistance legislation to establish a framework to consolidate the various grant schemes into a comprehensive system provided to vulnerable groups
- Finalizing and operationalizing the National Social Assistance Policy
- Developing and implementing a single integrated social registry, along with an integrated management information system (MIS) to implement and monitor these programmes
- Improving targeting methods for beneficiaries of social assistance schemes
- Introducing a disability fund
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation of social programmes

As such, the NDPA will also focus on implementing the interventions as outlined in this national development plan.

Table 6: Priority interventions: Social protection

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Social assistance	Establish an equitable system for meeting basic needs of Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalize and operationalize the National Social Assistance Policy• Expand coverage of social assistance programmes through an improved inclusive targeting method• Enhance coordination and integration of social protection interventions

<p>Independent living</p>	<p>Build capacity for independent living, self-sufficiency, and integration of Persons with Disabilities into mainstream society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide income support and social security protection to individuals who provide unpaid or paid care work for Persons with Disabilities • Enact laws to accommodate Persons with Disabilities in employment • Provide incentives to secure employment or establish income-generating activities of their own • Facilitate access to social services and establish mechanisms for accessing the support (e.g. involvement of community leaders, community health workers, decentralizing and merging services) • Re-introduce community-based rehabilitation programmes • Strengthen programmes that focus on abuse and neglect to cater for Persons with Disabilities
<p>Assistive devices and supplies</p>	<p>Ensure availability of needed assistive devices and supplies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a mechanism for identifying Persons with Disabilities who need assistive devices • Develop guidelines on the distribution of assistive devices to Persons with Disabilities • Provide free assistive devices to Persons with Disabilities who need them • Conduct research on modern and cost-effective assistive devices • Develop local capacity for manufacturing assistive devices

Implementation and enforcing the existing laws	Improve the legal environment on social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement mechanisms to create access to justice for Persons with Disabilities who are victims of gender based violence• Finalize, implement, and socialize the national social assistance legislation
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Chapter 8: Gender equality and underrepresented groups

According to the Population and Housing Census Report (Volume 6), women are more affected by disabilities compared to men. On average, 56 per cent of women suffer from all forms of disability except speech impairment, which affects mostly men (53.2 per cent).

Women and girls with disabilities therefore tend to experience double discrimination i.e. based on their gender and disability. Global literature also shows that there are more women with disabilities who are unemployed estimated at about 75 per cent. The Population and Housing Census Report estimated that 85 per cent of Persons with Disabilities were unemployed and given the global statistics, it could be assumed that more than half the number of unemployed are women. The inequalities also extend to issues of access to education, access to healthcare (especially reproductive care services) neglect, exploitation, and gender-based violence.

(Source : <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/women-disabilities>).

Other under-represented groups of Persons with Disabilities, in as far as access to services and independent living is concerned, are youth, children, and elderly with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual, mental/psychosocial disabilities, hearing and visual impairment, or multiple impairments. The challenges faced by the general population including poverty, access to social services and social security are exacerbated in these groups. Hence there is a need to implement mechanism to address the inequalities and social injustice present within children, women, youth, and the elderly.

The NDPA would therefore seek to address the challenges by progressively eliminating the inequalities that currently exist. There will be a deliberate effort to design and provide programmes that target the underrepresented and marginalized disability population groups.

Table 7: Gender equality and underrepresented groups

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Access to inclusive education and skills development	Deliberately target women and girls with disabilities to grant them access to education and skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with traditional structures and community workers to identify women and girls with disabilities in communities and extend educational support • Increase number of women with disabilities in vocational training to prepare them for careers and gainful employment
Promote non-discrimination and social security for women with disabilities and underrepresented groups in economic empowerment	Access to inclusive economic empowerment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement livelihood training programmes targeting women and youth with disabilities
Rehabilitation	Available rehabilitation and adaptive technology for women with disabilities, youth, and elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure and distribute assistive devices and technologies to targeted women, youth, elderly and underrepresented Persons with Disabilities

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Information, data and usage	Create a database for women, youth, elderly and underrepresented Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a needs assessment on women, youth, and girls, elderly and underrepresented Persons with Disabilities • Utilize findings to inform policy and programming of interventions targeting women, youth, and elderly with disabilities • Generate gender and disability inclusive disaggregated data
Humanitarian action	Mainstream gender-disability in the national disaster programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate gender and disability inclusion in planning and programming to ensure that disaster responses are gender responsive and disability inclusive • Gender and disability disaggregated assessments for humanitarian initiatives or humanitarian interventions

Chapter 9: Sports, culture and recreation

In line with Article 30 of the CRPD, Persons with Disabilities experience the same need for sports and recreation. Sports play a crucial role towards integrating persons with disability in society as they also boost self-esteem and contribute towards rehabilitation, especially when participation is encouraged at school level.

The previous NDPA did not address sports and culture for Persons with Disabilities, hence it is important that this component is made part of the NDPA. The Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs drives the sports agenda in Eswatini and one of its policy directives is to 'promote the integration of the marginalized people in society to all sports and recreation activities and opportunities'.

Source : <https://www.gov.sz/index.php/departments-sp-1417226331/department-of-sports>

The NDPA will therefore focus on improving the participation over the five-year period. Interventions will include developing and extending sporting activities for Persons with Disabilities in both mainstream and special facilities, ensuring that sports and cultural activities are made accessible to them, and facilitating the participation in sports for both recreational and competitive purposes.

Table 8: Priority interventions for sports and recreation

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Participation of Persons with Disabilities in sporting activities	Integration of sports for Persons with Disabilities in national programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate and support the development and integration of sports for Persons with Disabilities within the national sports development frameworks and programmes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with OPDs to develop a sports and recreation programme for Persons with Disabilities
Modernization of sports and recreation infrastructure	Ensure that all sporting facilities are accessible to Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish/modify sports and recreation centres to be disability inclusive

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Participation in cultural activities	Enhance participation of Persons with Disabilities in all cultural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish mechanisms to support the participation of Persons with Disabilities in cultural activities
Economic empowerment for youth with disabilities	4.1 Improve participation of youth with disabilities in economic activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the inclusion of the Skills for Youth Employability, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Programme in Eswatini with particular focus on youth with disabilities

Chapter 10: Inclusive emergency situations, humanitarian action and food security

During the multi-stakeholders' consultative workshop, participants noted that Persons with Disabilities faced multiple and complex layers of environmental, societal, and structural barriers that were usually exacerbated by humanitarian and other emergency crisis. This usually exposes to harm, neglect, and potentially life-threatening situations. In the context of Eswatini, emergency and humanitarian crisis usually results from weather related phenomena (e.g. droughts, storms, floods), poverty, hunger, and civil unrest. Notably, disaster and emergency planning are hardly disability inclusive, and the situation is worsened by the limited awareness of the needs of Persons with Disabilities. Persons with disabilities also face challenges in accessing resources that would improve their food security and nutrition situation.

Chand et al (2023)¹ also note that the approach adopted in designing and delivering humanitarian assistance programmes may worsen already existing inequalities, vulnerabilities and risks experienced by Persons with Disabilities. For instance, the response teams may not be aware of the needs of Persons with Disabilities and may also not possess the capacities necessary to respond adequately; some critical emergency services may not be accessible to Persons with Disabilities e.g. health, sanitation, hygiene, shelter, food, water, safety and security; and the regular disability inclusive specific services may not be accessible during emergency and humanitarian crisis including rehabilitation services, access to assistive devices and treatment of chronic conditions.

Also, one of the key areas of weakness is the absence of data and information necessary for designing and delivering relevant assistance to Persons with Disabilities. Over the planning period, focus will be on ensuring disability inclusion across emergency and humanitarian interventions; continued access to regular services during humanitarian and emergency crises; Ensure Persons with Disabilities benefit equally from mainstream food programmes and food security efforts; tailoring communication to the needs of Persons with Disabilities so that they may protect themselves and access support during emergency crises and providing protection from physical, emotional and sexual abuse; and strengthening data collection and reporting with focus on disaggregated quantitative data (by disability-type, sex and age) and context-specific qualitative data (e.g. diverse needs, capacities and priorities of Persons with Disabilities).

¹ Chand, O.; Moore, K. and Thompson, T. (2023) Key Considerations: Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian and Emergency Response in South and Southeast Asia and Beyond. Social Science in Humanitarian Action (SSHAP) DOI:10.19088/SSHAP.2023.019

Table 9: Emergency situations and humanitarian action

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Disability inclusive emergency and humanitarian action plans	Mainstream disability in all stages of disaster risk management into sector plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to lead the process of including disability focused interventions into national disaster plans with the involvement of Persons with Disabilities • Review and develop a legal framework to include identifying risks and developing plans to respond to those risks • Conduct a needs assessment on the effect of disasters on Persons with Disabilities • Design strategies to assist and protect Persons with Disabilities during humanitarian and emergency crises • Orientation of Persons with Disabilities on the processes of NDMA assistance • Train humanitarian actors on responding and assisting during disaster and humanitarian crisis. • Design and implement strategies to improve food security and nutrition amongst Persons with Disabilities
Awareness raising	Disseminate accessible information in accessible formats on assistance of Persons with Disabilities during emergency and humanitarian crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize response teams / service providers including security forces on the needs of Persons with Disabilities • Develop and disseminate materials in accessible formats using the available platforms to frontline workers and relevant groups/organizations on assisting during humanitarian and emergency crises

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Data availability	Develop and regularly update databases on Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect disability disaggregated data on Persons with Disabilities and potentials risks, vulnerabilities they may face during emergencies and humanitarian crises • Incorporate quantitative and qualitative data into existing national databases

Chapter 11: Infrastructure and the environment

Article 9 of the CRPD details the measures that must be taken to ensure that Persons with Disabilities are not hampered by the physical environment they live in, including access to transport as well as information in accessible formats and communication systems.

The NDPA will thus ensure that this provision is complied with by implementing strategies aimed at removing structural barriers in the built environment that could prevent Persons with Disabilities from enjoying facilities made available to the public. This includes buildings, roads, transport, and green spaces.

In as much as there had been efforts to modernize infrastructure in the country to comply with universal design, there are still many structures that remain inaccessible to Persons with Disabilities, resulting in quite a significant number of Persons with Disabilities who are not able to access some of the essential services they require. The Kingdom of Eswatini is also yet to modernize its transport system to comply with universal design. Most Persons with Disabilities face difficulties in as far as mobility is concerned.

Regarding information and technology, the lack of collaboration between the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MOICT), Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MOPWT) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MOHU) hindered efforts towards providing accessible and inclusive technology to Persons with Disabilities. The collaborations are mostly within schools.

Further, the plan will seek to mitigate the effects of climate change through the implementation of several strategies in order to ensure the protection of Persons with Disabilities. Climate change negatively affects Persons with Disabilities, worsening their health and compromising access to clean water, health, infrastructure and other essential services. Persons with disabilities, especially those with albinism and psychosocial disabilities suffer the more the brunt of climate change most likely through heatwaves.

During the plan period, efforts will therefore be directed at strengthening collaborations between relevant entities to take advantage of emerging technologies to curb the digital divide and achieve inclusivity. The DPMO working with the MOPWT and OPDs, shall lead efforts to benchmark the transport systems with those that exist in other countries catering for Persons with Disabilities (universal designs). Furthermore, a programme of action will be put in place to make the physical environment accessible to all and awareness will be created among the construction industry players and municipalities regarding the design and construction of the physical environment, which must be accessible to all Persons with Disabilities, as per the existing laws.

Table 10: Priority interventions for the built environment

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
<p>Modernization of infrastructure to adhere to universal design principles</p>	<p>All public and private facilities comply with accessibility standards for the built environment and meet the accessibility needs of Persons with Disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure development of official standards for accessible infrastructure • Monitor and report on the enforcement of all the laws governing the building of structures • Engage municipal councils and the Ministry of Tinkhundla in the planning of, as well as the rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and community centres in rural and urban areas • Engage the private sector in the planning and building of structures like shopping complexes to enforce laws that include Persons with Disabilities' considerations • Conduct nationwide audit of infrastructure and establish a mechanism for reporting and standardizing compliance • Establish a national merit system for compliance with regulations/policies
	<p>Regular engagement with Persons with Disabilities to discuss and agree on accessibility standards and/or universal design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy by inclusion of OPDs in the inception stages of infrastructure planning to be of universal design and standards • Conduct advocacy and awareness campaigns for staff from all the ministries within government as well as the public about the awareness of Persons with Disabilities in public and private spaces

Priority areas	Interventions	Activities
Modernization of the transport system to adhere to universal design principles	Ensure that the national transport system complies with accessibility standards and universal design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a benchmarking exercise to learn about modern transport systems that are aligned to universal design • Adopt or adapt universal design transport systems that are suitable for the local environment • Develop a public transport system that is flexible and accessible to the needs of Persons with Disabilities • Design or modify the traffic infrastructure to meet the needs of Persons with Disabilities • Provide training for road safety personnel to assist Persons with Disabilities
Accessible and inclusive information and communication technology for Persons with Disabilities	Ensure that emerging technologies are available and accessible in schools and for home-based care and independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standards and guidelines for accessibility to information and communication technologies (ICT) facilities • Ensure information and notices in public and private facilities are made available and accessible in media for all Persons with Disabilities

Chapter 12: Implementation and coordination of disability inclusion and arrangements

This chapter describes the institutional arrangements for implementation of the NDPA. It is imperative that each of the key institutions have clear roles and responsibilities to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Plan of Action are met.

Implementation arrangements

Organization of disability structures

The organization of disability structures in Eswatini involves comprehensive coordination by the Disability Unit of the DPMO along with significant contributions from civil society and OPDs. The DPMO plays a vital role in providing care and support for the most vulnerable sections of the population, including Persons with Disabilities.

The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) is dedicated to offering human rights-based integrated, comprehensive, and equitable social welfare services. Its aim is to address vulnerability and poverty that exists in Eswatini and to improve the lives of Eswatini communities. The department also works in partnership with key stakeholders, including civil society organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs). It is responsible for the provision of social welfare services in the country and provides policy guidance. This includes bettering the well-being of individuals, groups, and communities through practical and high-quality social welfare and developmental services and programmes.

The DSW is specifically responsible for policy guidance in disability programming and the protection of Persons with Disabilities. This responsibility calls for ensuring the provision of adequate quality services to all in the country. It sets the framework for providing services, including support and care to children and families in need, along with social assistance and emergency assistance, contributing towards their social development.

Key aspects of these disability structures include:

- Evolution of disability programmes: Eswatini has a long history of addressing disability issues, beginning with the Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programme in 1989. This evolved into a Disability Unit within the DPMO in 2009, whose representatives are tasked with promoting and protecting the rights of

Persons with Disabilities by developing policies, regulations, and strategies.

- Capacity building and stakeholder engagement: The DPMO conducts workshops and collaborates with various stakeholders, including ministries, municipalities, civil society organizations, OPDs, and the Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration (CHRPCA), to empower government officials in mainstreaming disability issues.
- Awareness and advocacy: The DPMO hosts disability awareness weeks to celebrate progress and mainstream disability policies, programmes, and services. This includes platforms for Persons with Disabilities to showcase their talents and for the media to highlight their stories. Additionally, various commemorative days and public awareness campaigns are conducted to advocate for issues related to Persons with Disabilities. One such key commemoration is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Gender and disability: The Department of Gender and Family Issues under the DPMO works to mainstream gender and disability perspectives into all government policies and activities. This includes initiatives to raise awareness about the rights of Persons with Disabilities, address gender-based violence (GBV), and promote women with disabilities in entrepreneurship and politics.
- Children with disabilities: The National Children Services Department under the DPMO coordinates issues related to children with disabilities, including implementing a national plan of action for children with disability and ensuring their access to healthcare, education, and social services.

This comprehensive approach demonstrates Eswatini's commitment to improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities through coordinated efforts across various departments and with the involvement of diverse stakeholders.

Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders expected to contribute to the implementation of this plan are presented in the table below:

Table 11: Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

S/N	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
1.	Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversees the overall coordination and the implementation of the NDPA. This includes development and implementation of appropriate operational plans and guidelines for relevant stakeholders• Ensures compliance with existing laws necessary for the implementation of the NDPA• Serves as the secretariat for the Inter-ministerial Committee and Disability Partners Forum including any other coordinating committees• Initiates, organizes, and implements programmes and projects for effective implementation of the NDPA• Ensures adequate resources are available for the effective implementation of the NDPA
2	National Disability Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitors compliance with the National Persons with Disabilities Act No. 109 2018 to achieve the objectives of the NDPA
3	Parliament – House of Assembly and House of Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enact legislations for the overall well-being of Persons with Disabilities
4	Ministry of Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures enrolment and retention of Persons with Disabilities at schools and training institutions• Ensures schools and training institutions are accessible to Persons with Disabilities, through elimination of barriers (physical and otherwise)• Provides educational materials to children with disabilities in formats accessible to them• Promotes inclusive education across all levels of education

S/N	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
5	Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures access to quality and affordable health care by Persons with Disabilities • Prevents and minimizes occurrence of disabilities
6	Ministry of Public Service and Civil Service Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures Persons with Disabilities are gainfully employed in the civil service and ensures equal opportunity in the civil service • Provides reasonable accommodation in the workplace for Persons with Disabilities
7	Ministry of Labour and Social Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures equal opportunity for Persons with Disabilities on employment related matters • Incorporates the interests of Persons with Disabilities in social protection
8	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the protection of the rights of Persons with Disabilities, and access to justice
9	Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures implementation of youth initiatives, sports, and cultural activities for Persons with Disabilities
10	Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures accessibility to disability inclusive ICT
11	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures accessible disability-friendly infrastructural developments including transportation systems
12	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures accessibility to vocational training and SME/SMME business opportunities
13	Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides budgetary allocations for implementation of the NDPA

S/N	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
14	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures resources are equitably distributed to Persons with Disabilities
15	Ministry of Tourism and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures the environment is accessible to Persons with Disabilities
16	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures access to affordable housing for Persons with Disabilities and modernizing of urban infrastructure to make it disability friendly
17	National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures provisions of the plan of action are integrated into HIV and AIDS activities and programmes
18	Lutsango Lwabomake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating the engagement of women with disabilities and caregivers of Persons with Disabilities in implementing the NDPA
19	National Human Rights Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures the rights of Persons with Disabilities are respected and protected
20	Civil society organizations, organisations for Persons with Disabilities and non-governmental organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective delivery of services Liaise with government in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NDPA Advocates for disability rights
21	International donors and development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical and financial support for the successful implementation of the NDPA
22	Private sector (Business Eswatini)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating the participation of the private sector in implementing the NDPA
23	Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information dissemination and social mobilization on the NDPA

Chapter 13: Monitoring and evaluation framework

The NDPA is structured into 10 main themes, each targeting the achievement of specified results through the delivery of a range of activities, which collectively will impact on all line ministries and local government authorities.

To fully operationalize the plan, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework has been developed to enable the measurement of performance and to ensure that implementation stays on track. The M&E framework also allows for the systematic documentation of lessons learned during the plan period and assist implementers to report in a standardized manner.

The framework lays emphasis on results-based planning, monitoring, and evaluation. This requires strengthening of the social welfare management information system and building capacity for the collection, analysis, and timely dissemination of coverage and impact data, as well as for developing new knowledge through operations research.

Purpose of the monitoring and evaluation framework

The M&E framework will be used for results-oriented planning and budgeting for various aid modalities, with a focus on learning and accountability. The framework links plans and results and aims at harmonising and aligning stakeholders' inputs in the social welfare sector and contributes to developing one single planning and monitoring instrument for results-based management. It is an important tool to guide the operationalization of the NDPA and provides indicators to be used in assessing progress towards reaching national and international targets.

Overview of the monitoring and evaluation framework

The production of the overarching M&E framework supports the process of result-based management, in which planning and monitoring and evaluation play a central role. Over the next five years, the framework should provide insight into progress towards improving the status in Eswatini. Generally, the framework is expected to:

- Improve accountability for both resources and results
- promote organizational learning and continuous improvement
- facilitate strategic decision-making.

The M&E framework has been developed around four linked components:

- Specific objectives
- Key result areas
- Outputs
- Outcomes

The following definitions apply to the indicators associated with the M&E framework:

- Specific objectives are short-term focused strategies that must be achieved within a specific time frame and are directly linked to the overall objective/goal.
- Key result areas define the result expected to be delivered or areas of importance where strong positive results must be achieved.
- Outputs include results of programme activities (e.g. number of people trained, number of documents produced, services produced, etc).
- Outcomes determine whether the outputs have reached the intended audience and had their intermediate effect (e.g. increased access to services).

NDPA key result areas

The key result areas for the NDPA as per the 10 thematic areas are presented below:

Thematic area 1: National coordination and mainstreaming for disability

- Government policy, legislation, regulation, and work practices do not intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against any person based on his or her disability.
- Institutional practices for inter-agency cooperation concerning planning, development, and implementation of the disability policy.

Thematic area 2: Advocacy and awareness raising

- All levels of society including families, community leaders, and the public are well-informed about the nature and cause of disability, the rights and needs and the positive contribution Persons with Disabilities can make to the social, cultural, and economic well-being of the communities in which they live.
- Persons with disabilities are well informed about their rights and are empowered to advocate their rights.

Thematic area 3: Education and training

- Persons with disabilities have equal access to early, primary, secondary, and further education.
- Persons with disabilities have equal access to Technical and Vocational Training (TVET).
- Most children with disabilities are enrolled in, and progress further through all levels of education and training.
- Educational infrastructure and the surrounding environment conform to principles of universal design and provide a user-friendly setting for all Persons with Disabilities.
- Educators are sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities and have the skills and resources to support their learning.
- Improved access to mainstream vocational training and skills development programmes for Persons with Disabilities of working age irrespective of the nature or severity of their disability.
- Skills training facilities, providing vocational education, and training specifically for Persons with Disabilities, have sufficient resources and competence to provide trainees with marketable skills and qualifications.

Thematic area 4: Health and well-being

- Persons with disabilities have equal access to health care.
- Disability is integrated into health promotion, preventative, and curative health services to reduce incidence of disability.
- Improved access to early diagnosis, intervention, and therapeutic services for children with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities (especially girls and women) are well informed and have equitable access to reproductive health, family planning and HIV and AIDS services.
- Persons with disabilities have equitable access to all health care services.
- Improved access to medical and psychosocial rehabilitation programmes for Persons with Disabilities in urban and rural areas.

Thematic area 5: Inclusive skills development and the open labour market

- Persons with disabilities have equal access to employment and other income generating activities.
- Improved access to business development and entrepreneurship training and mentoring programmes.
- A supported employment placement and small business development programme that systematically supports Persons with Disabilities to find and keep jobs in the mainstream labour market.
- Community-based, and industry-based employment programmes are available and accessible for all Persons with Disabilities on the same basis as other jobseekers without disabilities.

Thematic area 6: Social protection

- Persons with disabilities and families caring for a child and/or adult with disabilities are better informed about the availability, eligibility criteria and application procedures for social assistance and social services.
- Families caring for children and/or adults with disabilities receive a monthly financial family support allowance (grant).
- Eligible adults with disabilities, who are not in regular employment, receive a monthly disability support allowance (grant).
- A fund is established, with an annual budget, to provide workplace modifications and assistive and adaptive technology aids and appliances to support Persons with Disabilities to undertake vocational training, and secure and retain employment.
- Psychosocial rehabilitation programmes, home and community-based support services and accessible supported housing are available to assist Persons with Disabilities living in the family home or living independently.

Thematic area 7: Gender equality and underrepresented groups

- Women, the youth and elderly with disabilities including persons with intellectual, mental/psychosocial disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, or those with multiple impairments are meaningfully engaged and participate in decision making processes that affect their lives.
- Marginalized and underrepresented groups are economically empowered and able to live independent lives.

Thematic area 8: Inclusive emergency situations, humanitarian action and food security

- Persons with disabilities are meaningfully engaged in planning, implementation, and reporting on emergency and humanitarian responses.
- All Persons with Disabilities are adequately assisted and protected during natural disasters and emergency situations.

Thematic area 9: Sports, culture and recreation

- Persons with disabilities can enjoy Inclusive, social, sporting, and cultural facilities and activities.

Thematic area 10: Infrastructure and environment

- Persons with disabilities have equal access to public housing, transport and public services, public facilities, and the built environment.
- Public facilities and infrastructure are fully accessible to all Persons with Disabilities. Building regulations reflect the principles of universal design and international best practice in accessibility.
- Disability-inclusive, accessible public transport and transportation facilities are available for all Persons with Disabilities.

Guiding questions for evaluating the implementation of the NDPA

Below are some guiding questions for evaluating the implementation of the NDPA. These questions will be used as a basis for tracking progress towards achievement of the goal and objectives of this plan of action. Please note all quantitative data must be disaggregated by disability type e.g. number of persons with physical disabilities, number of persons with albinism, etc.

Table 12: Guiding questions for evaluating the implementation of the NDPA

<p>Thematic area 1: National coordination and mainstreaming for disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all policies have a disability dimension and is it disability inclusive? Do they address disability equality? Are they compliant with the Convention? • What are the government budget allocations for disability inclusion? • Is disability prioritized in national programmes?
<p>Thematic area 2: Advocacy and awareness raising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the media report on disability issues? How frequent are disability rights advocacy activities conducted, and on which areas/issues? • Are there any structured programmes for social mobilization on disability rights targeting communities?
<p>Thematic area 3: Education and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is inclusive education defined, how is the inclusive education policy being implemented? • Are the aspects of physical accommodation, child centred curriculum, early childhood care and education (ECCE) (home environment, family, and community focus), competency based curricular considered? • Any measures in place to improve teacher training (quality and numbers)? • What opportunities exist for Persons with Disabilities to access vocational training? • What has been done to improve the capacity of vocational centres under MOLSS in terms of resources and curricular and providing reasonable accommodation? • How many Persons with Disabilities access scholarships and tertiary education? • What has been done to improve the proficiency (trainers) in sign language? • Is there a mechanism to improve collaboration of Persons with Disabilities between MOLSS and MOET under this portfolio?

<p>Thematic area 4: Health and well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any measures to improve access to preventive, PHC and rehabilitation Persons with Disabilities? • Are there any community-based rehabilitation programmes in place? • Are outreach services being provided? • What has been done to improve access to therapy, assistive and adoptive technology? • What measures are in place to address the shortage of key professionals including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, audiologists, and speech therapists?
<p>Thematic area 5: Skills development and the open labour market</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of participation of Persons with Disabilities in the labour market? • What measures have been put in place to increase access to employment opportunities?
<p>Thematic area 6: Social Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the range and types of social assistance programmes for Persons with Disabilities (size of grant allowance for unemployed and number of beneficiaries, financial and material support provided, family support allowance)?
<p>Thematic area 7: Gender equality and underrepresented groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many women, elderly, and young people with disabilities and underrepresented groups such as persons with intellectual, mental/psychosocial disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, or persons with multiple impairments have benefited from programmes implemented by government, civil society, and development partners? • What types of support have been provided? • How are women, youth and elderly and underrepresented disability groups involved in decision-making processes from the community to national level?

<p>Thematic area 8: Emergency situations and humanitarian action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the types of support that have been provided to Persons with Disabilities facing emergencies and natural disasters? • How many were supported? • Was the national disaster management plan revised to cater for Persons with Disabilities? • Which interventions/programmes does the NDMA offer Persons with Disabilities?
<p>Thematic area 9: Sports and culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are Persons with Disabilities involved in cultural activities and competitive sports?
<p>Thematic area 10: Infrastructure and environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What efforts have been done by public authorities and municipalities to improve accessibility? • Do new buildings conform to universal design? Are current building regulations compliant with principles of universal design? If not, what is being done to ensure compliance? Any plans to review/modify/enforce the Building Act and regulations? • Is there a long-term plan to upgrade public buildings and infrastructure (to comply with universal design)?

Monitoring and evaluation framework

A summary of the key outcomes and outputs per thematic area is presented in the table below:

Table 13: Monitoring and evaluation framework

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 1: National coordination and mainstreaming for disability	Improved national coordination and implementation of disability programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policies/plans/legislation/ • Programmes that have mainstreamed disability issues • Number of sectors reporting on the implementation of the Convention as part of State Party reporting • Number of initiatives or decisions implemented by coordinating structures to protect and advance the cause of Persons with Disabilities • M&E Unit established • Disability Unit additional staff recruited • Number of OPDs capacitated • Percentage of sectoral budgets allocated for disability-oriented interventions

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 2: Advocacy and awareness raising	Increased awareness and knowledge of community and society on the needs and rights of Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policymakers, communities and traditional leaders mobilized • Number of campaigns on disability rights conducted • At least three commemorative events held annually at national and regional level • Number of media platforms utilized to raise awareness on disability rights and disseminate disability related information • Number of individuals from OPDs and stakeholder institutions trained • Information produced in readable formats. • Proportion of Persons with Disabilities participating in elections and the voting process • Number of Persons with Disabilities in key political and policy positions

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 3: Education and training	Increased proportion of students with disabilities access to an inclusive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of teachers qualified in special education • Number of children and teachers provided with special educational equipment • Number of additional inspectors hired and deployed • Number of TVET institutions accommodating educational needs of Persons with Disabilities • Proportion of students who are using assistive devices, adopted curricula, and appropriate learning materials • Number of libraries with assistive and adaptive technology for Persons with Disabilities • Percentage of learning institutions with a social worker/guidance counsellor • Percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in ECCE • Percentage of children with disabilities that have been supported to progress from primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational training • Percentage of learning institutions with disability-inclusive facilities • Number of learning institutions implementing strategies on early identification of children with disabilities • Number of schools that have adapted competency-based curricula • Percentage of educators with appropriate teaching and learning materials • Number of educators trained in special education • Vocational institutions rehabilitated to comply with universal design • Number of vocational institutions offering new trades • Number of instructors trained in sign language, braille, and use of communication technology • Percentage increase of students with disabilities in agricultural programmes

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 4: Health and well-being	Increased proportion of Persons with Disabilities provided with disability specific health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of health-workers trained • Percentage of Persons with Disabilities receiving information in readable formats • Number of hospitals and health centres providing outreach and community-based programmes • Number of hospitals providing full range of disability and mental health services • Number of parents trained on managing children/relatives suffering from mental health conditions • Exemption fees for Persons with Disabilities introduced in all health facilities • Percentage of health facilities providing accelerated services to Persons with Disabilities • Sunscreen and related medical products included in Essential Medicines List
Thematic area 5: Skills development and the open labour market	Reduced unemployment rate and increased employment rate among Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with disabilities revolving fund for business start-up re-established • Number of graduates with disabilities benefiting from revolving fund • Number of companies/employers participating in graduate internship programme • Number of companies/employers implementing affirmative action policies • Number of graduates with disabilities accessing microfinance loans from financial institutions and government sponsored loan schemes e.g. RDF • Percentage of graduates trained in business start-up • Percentage of industry players and business entities sensitized on the rights of Persons with Disabilities

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 6: Social protection	Proportion of Persons with Disabilities covered by social protection programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National database on families caring for Persons with Disabilities established • Number of families caring for Persons with Disabilities receiving monthly grant • National database on Persons with Disabilities established • Number of Persons with Disabilities registered • Number of Persons with Disabilities receiving living allowance • Guideline and manual for management of grants and allowances developed • Number of Persons with Disabilities provided with rehabilitation services at community level
Thematic area 7: Gender equality and underrepresented groups	Percentage of women, youth and elderly empowered to live independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women and youth with disabilities trained on economic empowerment programmes • Percentage of public resources allocated to and spent on women, youth, and elderly with disabilities and underrepresented groups • Proportion of women and youth with disabilities involved in economic empowerment activities

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 8: Emergency situations and humanitarian action	Inclusive national plan adopted for post-humanitarian crisis and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of institutions in charge of delivering basic services that have received support to strengthen their capacities on disability inclusion in situations of risk and emergencies • Percentage of emergency awareness, preparatory campaigns and materials that are accessible to all Persons with Disabilities • Proportion of civil protection, rescue and emergency staff, humanitarian actors and members of security forces who are trained on inclusive evacuation and early warning systems • Budget allocated and spent in the design and implementation of measures for prevention and preparedness inclusive of Persons with Disabilities • Proportion of Persons with Disabilities who received support during disaster and humanitarian crisis
Thematic area 9: Sports and culture	Percentage of participating in leisure and competitive sports and cultural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability inclusive framework for sports and recreational activities introduced • Number and types of cultural activities that include Persons with Disabilities

Thematic area	Key outcome	Indicators
Thematic area 10: Infrastructure and environment	Percentage of public buildings, transportation systems and green spaces meeting standards on accessibility and usability of the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of new buildings and public facilities and infrastructure complying with the Buildings and Housing Act • Suitable modes of public transport for Persons with Disabilities identified and introduced • Revised Road Transportation Act and Road Traffic Act in place • Number of municipalities and towns that have rehabilitated roads and transportation facilities • Number of parks and green spaces meeting accessibility standards

Monitoring will focus primarily on tracking the output indicators as stated above. Overall, the purpose of output monitoring is to document the efficiency of implementation. As a result, the focus of output monitoring is on the availability and use of resources and the achievement or production of outputs on time and within budget. Monitoring is a very important management tool, and institutionalizing a monitoring process by tracking the required output indicators is an affordable and easy way to determine how well implementation of activities is progressing towards the stated goals.

Review of the National Disability Plan of Action

The review of the NDPA will be coordinated by the Deputy Prime Ministers Office and will be balanced with the need to maintain a solid core set of disability-disaggregated data to enable trend analysis and monitoring over time. Given that implementation of the NDPA commenced in 2024, a mid-term review should be undertaken in 2026 and an end-of term review in 2028. The review/evaluation will seek to address the following:

- Hear from Persons with Disabilities and organizations that represent them on the impact of development interventions targeting them.
- Assess achievement of objectives compared to targets.
- Assess whether Persons with Disabilities have been meaningfully engaged in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of interventions set out in the NDPA.
- Accountability – to enable donors and beneficiaries to know how much funds have been allocated and mobilized for national disability inclusion interventions.
- Strengthen disability inclusion in policy and legislative development or reforms.

- Strengthen linkages of the NDPA priorities and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).
- Identify lessons learned and make recommendations for improvement.

Data sources

Various data sources will be utilized for feeding into the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation framework. This will include:

- Social welfare management information system
- Health management information system
- National population census
- Demographic health surveys
- Household, income and expenditure survey
- Integrated labour force survey
- Ministerial annual/quarterly parliament performance reports
- Departmental annual reports
- Study reports
- Performance assessments
- Data from UNSDCF results groups and key data collection portals

Reporting

The DPMO will facilitate the reporting of the implementation of the NDPA to all stakeholders. This will be in form of quarterly and annual reports. The DPMO will also be responsible for preparing the mid-term and end-term review reports. In addition, the reports will be shared with the respective government ministries in charge of drafting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities State Party Report.

Capacity building in monitoring and evaluation

In recognition of existing gaps in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) skills and infrastructure, the DPMO will facilitate the development and strengthening of existing M&E systems at national and regional levels to support the realization of the M&E framework. The strategy would include institutional capacity building, strengthening of existing structures and systems, building linkages between ongoing systems, and development of procedures and guidelines for implementation. The Disability Unit will be capacitated through the training of all officers in M&E and the recruitment of M&E officers.

Chapter 14: Conclusion

The implementation of the previous NDPA was hindered by several factors, key among them, the inadequacy of funding allocated to DPMO. There was also lack of coordination among key stakeholders that affected the implementation of activities that were of a multisectoral and intersectoral nature. The Disability Unit had also not been allocated with the required resources including staff, vehicles, and other important materials to execute their function. Another notable gap was the absence of a management information systems necessary for the creation of databases of Persons with Disabilities and reporting on the indicators in the NDPA.

The successful implementation of the NDPA will therefore depend on several factors as outlined below:

- Re-organizing and restructuring the Disability Unit to enable it to fully execute its functions and particularly oversee the full implementation of the NDPA.
- Establishing functional M&E and reporting systems. This would also assist in designing relevant interventions and informing policymaking based on evidence.
- Availability and allocation of adequate funding to the DPMO and line ministries to support the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Mainstreaming Disability Issues.
- Functionality of the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the National Disability Council.
- Building capacity of the OPDs to actively monitor compliance with the National Persons with Disability Act No. 109 of 2018, implementation of the plan, creating awareness and supporting their members.
- Engagement of the private sector to support the implementation of the NDPA.
- Supporting community focused interventions.

The DPMO is primarily responsible for leading resource mobilization efforts towards the full implementation of the NDPA. Evidently, government allocated budgets for the implementation of activities directed at improving the quality of lives of Persons with Disabilities, but additional funds and increased partnership building are required to meet the goal of this national plan of action.

It is expected that development partners, civil society, and the private sector would also contribute towards implementing the NDPA, either financially or otherwise. A lot of groundwork must be undertaken in the first year to establish a solid foundation for introducing interventions in subsequent years. Most of the groundwork involving activities such as development of guidelines, standards, curriculums, and capacity building would be through consultancies and consultative meetings. This is where development partners could provide financial and technical support. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities must continue to be meaningfully engaged in the supporting planning, implementation, and monitoring of the NDPA.

The NDPA must be linked with the national budgeting cycle. As such, it is important that each responsible ministry incorporates the activities enlisted in the plan of action in their respective budgeting processes. The Disability Unit has the responsibility of continually advocating for the inclusion of activities in ministerial budgets. In addition, the NDPA should create synergies with the UNSDCF processes for maximum implementation. Finally, it is also important that the NDPA is costed to estimate the resource requirements for implementation. A detailed costing of the plan of action would clearly reflect the funding gap.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary of disability-specific terminology

Accessible formats: Print, audio, or visual information that are easily accessed and understood.

Assistive devices / Assistive technology: Tools or technologies whose primary purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, to facilitate participation in society, and to enhance overall well-being. They can also help prevent impairments and secondary health conditions. Examples of assistive devices and technologies include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids, and specialized computer software and hardware that increase mobility, hearing, vision, or communications.

Braille: A writing system comprised of raised dots, used by some individuals who are visually impaired or have low vision.

Disability: Long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder one's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability discrimination: Any distinction, exclusion, or restriction based on disability that has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (CRPD, Article 2)

Organization for Persons with Disabilities: An organisation run by and for Persons with Disabilities.

Inclusion: A human rights-based philosophy that promotes including in everyday activities and allowing for Persons with Disabilities to have roles in all aspects of society that are like their peers who do not have a disability.

Inclusive education: An educational model that promotes children with and without disabilities participating and learning together in the same classes. Where special support cannot be accommodated in a mainstreamed environment, children with special needs will receive those services/support elsewhere but spend most of their time in class with non-disabled peers.

Mainstreaming: An aspect of the broader concept of 'inclusion', which refers to persons with and without disabilities interacting in the same environment without segregation.

Universal design: The design of products, environments, programmes, and services that can be accessed by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Appendix 2: Appropriate disability terminologies

Inappropriate	Appropriate
Persons living with a disability	Persons with disabilities
Crippled, suffers from, afflicted with, stricken, victim of, invalid	Person who has a disability, person with a disability, person with a physical disability
Retarded, retard, slow	Person with an intellectual disability
Deaf and dumb, mute	Person with a hearing disability / Deaf
Spluttered, tongue tied	Person with speech impairment
Blind person	Person with a visual impairment
Normal person, healthy, whole	Person without disabilities
Albino, albinos	Person with albinism
Autistic	Person with autism
Epileptic	Person with epilepsy
Dwarf, midget	Little person
Crazy, maniac, lunatic, insane, nuts, deranged, psychotic, demented	Person with mental/psychosocial disabilities
Wheelchair bound /restricted to a wheelchair /confined to a wheelchair	Person with physical disabilities
Physically disabled /crippled	Person with a physical disability



