

Collective Voice for Inclusion: Nepali OPDs' Priority Agenda for the **Global Disability Summit 2025**



Context and Rationale



The Global Disability Summit (GDS), established in 2017, is a leading international platform promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly from the Global South. It brings together governments, development partners, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to advance disability-inclusive development and humanitarian action. Beyond a triennial event, the GDS drives ongoing advocacy, partnership, and accountability. The upcoming third Summit in Berlin, Germany (April 2–3, 2025) offers a crucial opportunity for collective, transformative commitments to ensure no one is left behind.

For Nepal, meaningful participation in the Global

Disability Summit is vital to align national policies and investments with the CRPD, SDGs, and constitutional commitments to equality and inclusion. Despite progress through the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2074 BS) and the National Disability Policy (2073 BS), implementation remains weak due to limited resources, poor coordination, and persistent attitudinal barriers that hinder the full realization of disability rights.

To bridge this gap between policy and practice, a **National Disability Summit in context of GDS2025** was jointly organized by **Dalit with Disabilities Association Nepal (DDAN), KOSHISH, and the National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN)**, with support from the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) in Kathmandu dated March 6, 2025. The Summit was formally inaugurated by Hon. Bimala Subedi, Chairperson of the Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights of the House of Representatives, who graced the event as the Chief Guest. Bringing together 18 diverse OPDs, and disability rights activists, the consultation identified Nepal's priority issues and commitments for the Summit. These collective priorities represent the unified voice of Nepal's disability rights movement, calling on the Government of Nepal to move beyond participation and make transformative, rights-based, and accountable commitments for disability-inclusive development.

Priority Commitments for Disability-Inclusive Development in Nepal

1. Inclusive Education

- **Guarantee Inclusive Education:** Ensure that the Education Act (2028, with amendments) and related policies explicitly guarantee inclusive education for all children with disabilities, with adequate budget, teacher training, accessible infrastructure, and learning materials.
- **Strengthen Representation of Diverse Children with Disabilities:** Amend the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2074 BS) to ensure special representation of Dalit children with disabilities in decision-making, and provide targeted scholarships and educational support for Dalit, Indigenous, Muslim, and girls with disabilities.
- **Invest in Teacher Training and Capacity Development:** Provide regular, mandatory training for teachers and education staff on disability diversity, inclusive pedagogy, and sign language to create truly inclusive classrooms.
- **Ensure Accessible Build Environment and Learning Materials:** Build accessible school infrastructure—ramps, accessible toilets, and transportation—and provide Braille, easy-to-read, sign language, and assistive learning materials for all children with disabilities.
- **Promote Sign Language and Inclusive System:**

Develop and expand sign language training and vocabulary, and strengthen inclusive education systems to support children's transition to inclusive schools based on their individual needs.

2. Inclusive Health

- **Introduce Targeted Health Programs for Diverse Women with Disabilities:** Develop targeted health programs for diverse women and girls with disabilities — especially Dalit, Indigenous, Madhesi, Muslim, and other underrepresented groups—and ensure their specific needs are recognized and supported by the health policies.
- **Ensure Access to Health Information and Laws:** Conduct audits and make all health-related information and legal documents fully accessible in formats suitable for diverse persons with disabilities.
- **Provide Free and Accessible Health Services:** Guarantee free healthcare for diverse persons with disabilities and ensure easy access to health facilities, including accessible infrastructure, communication, and service delivery.
- **Ensure Availability of Assistive Devices and Technology:** Provide assistive devices, technical materials, and treatments without imposing additional burdens, and ensure necessary materials and technology are readily available according to individual needs.

- Train Health Workers and Provide Sign Language Support: Deliver disability-specific training for all health workers and ensure sign language interpreters are available in health facilities to facilitate effective communication.

3. Inclusive Livelihood and Social Security

- Inclusive Training and Capacity Development: Establish accessible and inclusive training centers that prioritize persons with disabilities, particularly Dalits, Indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other marginalized and underrepresented groups, ensuring reservation quotas and skill development opportunities for those most underrepresented like persons with psychosocial disabilities, autism, intellectual and deaf-blind persons with disabilities.
- Concessional Loans and Financial Access: Provide concessional loans and disability-inclusive financial systems to support self-employment among marginalized groups, with priority for those with intersecting disadvantages such as caste, ethnicity, gender, region, or religion.
- Product Priority and Market Access: Give priority and market access to products and materials produced by persons with disabilities particularly from Dalits, Indigenous women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other marginalized and underrepresented groups, with special arrangements for promotion and marketing of local production.
- Fair Allowances and Local-Level Services: Ensure equitable allowances, assistive devices, care facilities, counseling, and disability-targeted programs at the local level for persons with disabilities, particularly from Dalit, Indigenous, women, Madhesi, and Muslim communities, guided by human rights principles and affirmative actions.
- Tax Exemptions and Employment Incentives: Provide tax exemptions and incentives to industries and organizations that employ and train Dalits, Indigenous women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other diverse persons with disabilities, increasing employment opportunities and inclusive workforce participation.

4. Humanitarian Emergency, Climate Change and Disaster

- Reduce Discrimination through Targeted Policies: Implement special programs and positive policies to address social, economic, and cultural disparities affecting Dalits, Indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, Muslims, and persons with disabilities, prioritizing highly marginalized and underrepresented groups in education, health, employment, and other opportunities.

- Promote Accessible Information and Awareness: Develop and use accessible information and communication technologies for persons with disabilities, and conduct targeted awareness programs for Dalits, Indigenous women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other marginalized groups.
- Ensure Inclusive Disaster Management: Guarantee the active participation of persons with disabilities, especially Dalits, in disaster preparedness, rescue, relief, and rehabilitation, prioritizing their specific needs—including food, clothing, medical care, assistive devices, and psychosocial support—and ensure accessible early warning systems.
- Prioritize Employment and Rehabilitation: Provide special priority in employment, skill development, and self-employment support for persons with disabilities, Dalits, Indigenous women, Madhesis, and Muslims, alongside community-based programs for social rehabilitation.
- Ensure Access to Assistive Devices and Health Services: Guarantee easy access to assistive devices and medical treatment for persons with disabilities, with special attention to those with psychosocial, intellectual, autism, and deaf-blind disabilities among Dalits, Indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, and Muslims.

5. Meaningful Participation and Engagement:

- Ensure Meaningful Participation in Decision-Making: Guarantee the active participation of persons with disabilities, especially Dalits, Indigenous women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other marginalized groups, in civil service decision-making and in the implementation of national and international commitments (CRPD, CEDAW, SDGs).
- Strengthen Representation Across All Levels of Government: Increase representation of persons with disabilities at federal, provincial, and local levels, with special programs and reservations for Dalits, Indigenous women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other underrepresented groups.
- Promote Participation and Employment in the Private Sector: Ensure inclusive participation and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the private sector, with targeted capacity-building and employment creation initiatives for marginalized groups.
- Support Leadership and Advocacy: Encourage grassroots leaders among persons with disabilities to advocate for disability rights, with a focus on highly marginalized or underrepresented groups based on caste, ethnicity, religion, region, and gender.

- Address Dalit and Marginalized Disabilities in Law: Amend Nepal's Disability Act to specifically recognize the needs and rights of Dalits, Indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, and Muslims, ensuring social, economic, and cultural inclusion for highly marginalized and underrepresented persons with disabilities.

6. Data, Evidence and Research Studies

- Collect Inclusive, Disaggregated Data: Ensure comprehensive, disaggregated data collection on persons with disabilities, capturing their caste, ethnicity, gender, religious, and geographical identities, with participatory methods that respect privacy and dignity, to inform policy and program design.
- Build Capacity for Data Collection and Research: Provide training and capacity development for data collectors, local officials, and disability experts, focusing on marginalized groups to ensure accurate, sensitive, and evidence-based data.
- Promote Expertise and Evidence-Based Policy: Encourage research and development of disability expertise among Dalits, Indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, Muslims, and other marginalized communities, ensuring their active involvement in policy formulation and decision-making.

7. Disabilities Issues of underrepresented persons with disabilities

- Formulate an Inclusive Policy: Develop a comprehensive disability-inclusive policy that addresses the needs of Dalits, Indigenous peoples, women, Muslims, and other marginalized communities, ensuring meaningful participation of representatives from these groups.
- Ensure Equal Opportunities: Implement targeted programs and positive discrimination policies to guarantee equal access to education, health, employment, and socio-economic opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- End Discriminatory Legal Provisions: Review and amend existing laws to eliminate all forms of direct and indirect discrimination against persons with disabilities.

- Conduct Awareness-Raising Programs: Launch awareness campaigns to challenge negative perceptions and prejudices against highly marginalized or underrepresented persons with disabilities, including those defined by caste, ethnicity, religion, region, and gender.
- Ensure Representation and Participation: Guarantee meaningful participation and representation of persons with disabilities from marginalized communities in political and social structures, including reserved seats at local, provincial, and federal level.

Lists of OPDs who Participated, Collectively Identified and Prioritised Agenda

- Autism Care Nepal Society (ACNS)
- Association of Intellectual Disability Nepal (AID Nepal)
- Blind Women Association Nepal (BWAN)
- Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN)
- Center for Independent Living, Kathmandu (CIL Kathmandu)
- Dalit with Disabilities Association Nepal (DDAN)
- Deafblind Association
- Dwarf Association of Nepal (DAN)
- KOSHISH
- National Association of the Sign Language Interpreters Nepal (NASLI)
- National Disabled Albinos – Nepal (NDA Nepal)
- National Federation of Deaf Nepal (NDFN)
- National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN)
- National Indigenous Disabled Women Association – Nepal (NIDWAN)
- National Indigenous Disabled Self Employment Women Association Nepal (NID SEWA Nepal)
- Nepal Indigenous Disabled Association (NIDA)
- Parents Federation of the Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PFPID)
- Society of Deafblind Parents Association (SDBP)
- Spinal Cord Injury Network Nepal (SCINN)

