Roundtable 1: Population Dynamics and Climate change

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My name is Setareki, from Fiji. I represent CSOs and youth organizations from 25 countries that convened for a forum on 13-14 November ahead of 7APPC.

The UN General Assembly has highlighted that it is impossible to achieve development agendas without incorporating the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities in development efforts at all levels.

Persons with disabilities are often disproportionally affected by disasters and climate change impact and have different and uneven levels of resilience and capacity to recover. Exclusionary policies, inaccessible building environments, and stigmatizing attitudes are just some of the underlying disadvantages experienced by persons with disabilities which further exacerbate the risk and marginalization of persons with disabilities during times of disaster.

Global Agreements and frameworks such as the 2015 Paris Agreement and CRPD highlights persons with disabilities as populations most acutely affected by climate change. CRPD Article 11 specifically references the need to address, safety, and protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergency.

In the Pacific, a recent study commissioned by the Pacific Disability Forum shows that climate change is already negatively impacting persons with disabilities in the areas of agriculture and fishing, food security, access to water, and health. The increasing frequency and intensity of sudden onset disasters, such as tropical storms, and persisting issues in disaster risk management are noted as a concern. It also points out that climate change is amplifying the risks and exclusion that persons with disabilities already experience in their daily lives. Preparedness efforts that do not include persons with disabilities often compound situations of vulnerability and poverty exacerbate the exclusion of persons with disabilities and leave them further behind.

Persons with disabilities are among the poorest of the poor within a community and typically do not have access to education or other resources and are often left out of decisions affecting their lives. Including persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in development can and will enhance their livelihood and quality of life including their health and access to sexual and reproductive health services in humanitarian settings.