

Disability Inclusion in Climate Policy: Briefing Paper for COP30, Belém

Disability Caucus

November 2025

Background

Persons with disabilities - an estimated 1.3 billion people globally - are among those most impacted by climate change, yet remain systematically excluded from climate policy, planning, and finance. Disability inclusion is not only a human rights obligation under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); it is also essential for effective, equitable, and sustainable climate action. At COP30 in Belém, Brazil, Parties must make bold steps to increase disability inclusion across all areas of the UNFCCC process, ensuring no one is left behind¹ in the transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient societies. This brief highlights five priority areas where disability inclusion should be embedded in climate policy negotiations, implementation and monitoring.

1. Just Transition

Current context: COP30 builds on the UAE Just Transition Work Programme, focusing on fair national pathways that combine equity, social protection, and decent work. Key discussions address labour rights, funding, and dialogue mechanisms.

Why It Matters: Persons with disabilities are often excluded from green jobs, workforce planning and skills training due to a lack of accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Inclusive transition planning ensures equal opportunity and strengthens workforce diversity in the green economy.

Recommendations:

- Include disability-related goals and indicators in the Just Transition Work Programme, aligned with ILO guidelines and CRPD Article 27 (right to work). Explicitly ensure that workforce pathways include fairness in career advancement in alignment with all other workers.
- Direct transition finance toward inclusive infrastructure, accessible mass transport, housing and adaptive livelihoods.

¹ All facing compounded climate risk, including but not limited to persons with disabilities who are from Indigenous Peoples, refugees, women, LGBTQ+ communities, racial minorities, low-income populations, older adults, children, people experiencing homelessness, rural communities, island nations, migrants, and those in conflict zones

- Ensure organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are invited and resourced to participate meaningfully in national planning and dialogue platforms.

2. Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)

Current context: Parties are finalizing indicators for the GGA, with debates on equity and implementation support.

Why it matters: If adaptation measures ignore accessibility, they risk excluding persons with disabilities from climate-resilient infrastructure and services and causing harm. Inclusive adaptation recognizes their heightened vulnerability, specific needs, and potential contributions to community resilience.

Recommendations:

- Include disability-disaggregated data and accessibility metrics in GGA indicators.
- Require accessibility audits for climate-resilient key systems - health, transport, education, and shelters.
- Fund local adaptation projects co-designed and implemented with OPDs.

Strengthen technical assistance for Parties to include universal design and accessibility standards into National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

3. Gender Action Plan (GAP)

Current context: The GAP is being updated to strengthen monitoring and intersectional approaches.

Why it matters: Women and girls with disabilities face multiple risks during disasters, including heightened exposure to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), economic exclusion and lack of access to recovery programs. They remain underrepresented in decision-making. Including disability in the GAP ensures that gender-responsive action is also disability-inclusive.

Recommendations:

- Explicitly mention women and girls with disabilities in the new GAP.
- Collect intersectional data on gender, age, and disability across all climate sectors.
- Support women-led OPDs through targeted finance, leadership training and participation in national climate delegations.
- Address GBV risks prevention and accessibility in disaster preparedness and during climate disasters.

4. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0)

Current context: Countries will submit new NDCs for 2035 by late 2025. To date, most drafts still lack measurable inclusion targets or participation mechanisms

Why it matters: Without disability-responsive indicators, NDCs risk perpetuating the exclusion of persons with disabilities from climate action. Embedding inclusion not only strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of NDCs but also ensures alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Recommendations:

- Require disability indicators, data collection and participation mechanisms in NDC 3.0. submissions.
- Align NDC monitoring to national disability action plans and CRPD reporting frameworks.
- Track progress on accessible climate services and early warning systems.
- Provide technical guidance for Parties on mainstreaming disability in NDC planning and monitoring.

5. Climate Finance

Current context: The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) aims to mobilize \$300 billion per year by 2035, with debates on access, transparency and delivery mechanisms.

Why it matters: Climate finance rarely reaches people with disabilities or funds accessibility improvements. Inclusive finance increases equitable and effective resilience.

Recommendations:

- Integrate disability inclusion criteria into all climate funds and NCQG reporting templates.
- Create dedicated funding windows for accessibility and OPD-led projects.
- Make accessibility and participation outcomes mandatory for project approval.

Build capacity of OPDs to access, manage and report on climate finance projects.

Call to action

At COP30, Parties and other stakeholders should:

- **Ensure disability inclusion in COP30 outcomes** through decisions, declarations, and technical mandates across the UNFCCC processes, with OPDs and the disability caucus providing guidance and advocacy support.
- **Mandate reporting on disability inclusion** in national communications, adaptation communications, and climate finance plans.
- **Recognise OPDs as essential partners** in climate governance, ensuring accessible participation in all relevant processes.
- **Request recognition of the Disability Caucus as a full Constituency.**

Conclusion

Inclusion of persons with disabilities is fundamental to achieving fair and effective climate action. At COP30, Parties should embed accessibility, participation, and accountability as standard practice across just transition, adaptation, gender, finance, and NDC frameworks. Doing so will not only fulfil human rights obligations but also strengthen resilience and ensure that the global response to the climate crisis benefits everyone.