



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI



**THE LILONGWE DECLARATION
ON PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

AND FORMATION OF THE

**AFRICAN LEADERS ALLIANCE
ON INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

AS PRESENTED AT THE

AFRICAN LEADERS FORUM ON DISABILITY

AT

**THE BINGU WA MUTHARIKA INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE CENTRE**

**LILONGWE
REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

MONDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY, 2014

The Lilongwe Declaration on People with Intellectual Disabilities

With the goal of illuminating and addressing an urgent development challenge, we recognise the following:

More than one billion people worldwide are estimated to live with some form of disability, including some 200 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and that these individuals are present in every community, country, social class, and race as our children, spouses, brothers and sisters, parents and neighbours;

Bearing in mind that people with intellectual differences possess equally possess talents and abilities that allow them to make significant contributions to their families and communities, and that these talents and abilities are often limited by the discrimination against disability that is present, unintentionally or intentionally, subtly or explicitly, in every community across the world;

Further recognising that because of this discrimination, people with intellectual disabilities and their families are excluded from their communities, and that they get unequal or are denied access to the health care, nutrition, sanitation, education, employment, transportation, and social protection and supports that each of us need to live full, healthy, productive lives;

Noting that the public, private and civil society institutions dedicated to serving vulnerable people – including those focused on eradicating poverty and poor health – have not adequately confronted and have sometimes ignored this discrimination and social exclusion; noting also the urgent need for targeted efforts to include people with intellectual disabilities in national and international development goals, strategies, funding and interventions;

Recognising the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the African Disability Forum, the African Decade of Disability, and other efforts that signal a new era of awareness and action on the part of the global community to create inclusive and just societies for people with all forms of disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, and mindful of the fact that a lack of data on the status of people with intellectual disabilities has thwarted the monitoring and measuring of progress;

Acknowledging that the appropriate use data and research saves lives, reduces poverty and improves the quality of life for people living in developing countries and acknowledging the need to prioritize research and make such research accessible to decision-makers and to the people and organizations that work with them to achieve this ideal;

For these reasons, we voice our shared concern that during a period in which great progress has been made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the health, socio-economic status, and well-being of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have not experienced similar progress, and may have even deteriorated.

Therefore, to advance both global recognition of this concern and the cooperation needed to implement innovative solutions to address it, and also in alignment with the ambition and intended reach of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, we commit to the creation of a coalition dedicated to the following:

1. Goals. Creating, adopting and holding ourselves accountable to specific, measurable and attainable goals that advance the following for those with intellectual disabilities:

- Levels of access to primary education and inclusive recreation.
- Reduction of prevalence and infection rates for TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other conditions.
- Access to early childhood education and stimulation by parents/caregivers.
- Ability of health practitioners to identify, register and treat children with intellectual disabilities.

2. Data. Advocating for significantly enhanced data systems so that information related to poverty, health, education, social integration and well-being of people with intellectual disabilities in Africa is collected, analysed and disseminated, including:

- Accurate census data on individuals with intellectual disabilities in African nations, including not only due to genetic causes, but also environmental causes.
- Enrolment rates of children with intellectual disabilities in primary education.
- Prevalence of TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other fatal illnesses in children and adults with intellectual disabilities.
- Availability of early childhood development / stimulation resources designed for mothers/caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities.
- Percentage of health practitioners educated on identifying and treating intellectual disabilities as part of standard medical training.
- Amount of development assistance and funding that reaches the population of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

3. Resources. Designing high-impact, data-driven resource allocation models for African governments, funding agencies and other influencers that ensure an equitable share of resources and assistance is dedicated to improving the lives of those with intellectual disabilities.

- Specifically, in order to achieve the above data-driven goals, we intend to recommend targets that ensure that development funding in African countries dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with intellectual disabilities is allocated at a level at least equal to the percentage of the population they represent.

4. Commitments. Securing broad multi-sectorial participation in efforts and accompanying commitments that ensure that meaningful, data-based goals are adopted, and that adequate resources are dedicated in support of attainment of these goals.

- Specifically, in order to advance all of the above, we announce the formation of the **African Leadership Alliance on Intellectual Disabilities**, which, under the leadership of The Republic of Malawi and Her Excellency President Joyce Banda of Malawi, will serve as a critical forum and mechanism for advocacy and action on these goals.
- We commit to working alongside existing disability frameworks and coalitions to ensure that goals are aligned and the needs of those with intellectual disabilities are heard.
- We hereby urge all African Governments to join this Alliance, along with development agencies and funders, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- We dedicate ourselves to securing broad and active participation in this Alliance before the 21st African Union Summit, at which time a strategic framework and action plan shall be announced and endorsed.