

[A year since the Global Disability Summit: UK invites stakeholders to review progress](#)

6th Aug marks a year since Pakistan made commitments towards disability inclusion at the UK hosted Global Disability Summit. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP) invited government representatives and members from disabled persons organisations to review progress towards disability inclusion to ensure that the commitments are met and work is on track.

The roundtable was held at the Centre for Inclusive Development (CIDP) which was also inaugurated today as part of Pakistan's commitment to make education inclusive for all and to invest in the necessary training skills so that no one is left behind.

The Centre was inaugurated at the National Library of Pakistan by the head of DFID, Joanna Reid. This is the first ever resource centre established to empower persons with a disability by giving them opportunities to learn better. This is an excellent initiative as the braille text and equipment alongside other facilities at the Centre will be accessible to all. CIDP will facilitate research, disability studies in the country and will serve as official repository of publications on disability inclusive development.

Addressing the event, DFID head Joanna Reid said:

Disability inclusion is a top priority for the UK in our international development work. I'm proud of what we've achieved over the past year and we're gathered today to ensure that we don't stop here.

We will not rest until every single person with a disability in Pakistan is counted, heard and included so that we leave no-one behind.

Giving the opening remarks, executive director STEP Atif Sheikh said:

We are grateful to DFID for ensuring disability inclusion in their programmes and in the overall development of the country. Global Disability Summit held in July last year played a significant role in bringing stakeholders on one table in Pakistan.

CIDP which is being inaugurated today right after one year of the summit, is a breakthrough initiative to have record of all the efforts of disability stakeholders and to conduct evidence based research for policy level decisions. We are also obliged to

National Library of Pakistan for their support.

Addressing the ceremony, Secretary, Ministry of National History and Literary Heritage Nadeem Shafiq said:

Congratulations to the STEP Team & DFID on the inauguration of the Centre of Inclusive Development (CID). We will make sure that our department will help the Disabled People Organizations (DPOs) in taking practical steps in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities in Pakistan.

Pakistan was one of the priority countries at the Global Disability Summit which brought together Ministers, heads of agencies, DPOs, and a range of other stakeholders from across the world. Representatives from Pakistan presented sustainable commitments for disability inclusion – which included eliminating discrimination, ensure inclusive education, promote financial empowerment and gather better data for the empowerment and inclusion of persons with a disability.

The roundtable was held to review progress and assess the extent to which those commitments are being translated into better lives.

The roundtable was attended by senior research analyst, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), Afzan Munir, project director Centre for Education and Consciousness, Shabnum Sarfraz, Member Social Sector & Devolution Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, Nadeem Shafiq, Telenor Pakistan Manager of Corporate Social Responsibility Abdullah Khan amongst other representatives of government, international organisations and persons with a disability.

Further information

The Charter of Demands is the legacy document of the Global Disability Summit. The Government of Pakistan signed up this Charter last year. The Minister for National Health Services and the Secretary of the Planning Commission represented the government at the Summit and committed to ensure the rights, freedoms, dignity and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This included a commitment:

- to eliminate stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities through legislation and policies that make a difference
- to support actions to advance inclusive quality education
- to create conditions for decent work and financial independence of persons with disabilities, creating more and better jobs, and providing social protection, ensuring the necessary skills training, and making workplaces accessible
- to revolutionise the availability and affordability of appropriate assistive technology
- to gather and use better data and evidence to understand and address the scale, and nature of challenges faced by persons with disabilities

Some good developments towards disability inclusion have taken place in the last year:

- There is some progress towards enacting the Pakistan Disability Act; its legal vetting is complete, but it still needs parliamentary approval.
- The government announced a policy for universal access to assistive devices disabled persons under the Ehsaas programme.
- The Supreme Court issued orders to provincial governments for effective implementation of employment quota for persons with disabilities
- The State Bank of Pakistan launched a Small Enterprise (SE) Financing and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Special Persons”
- The Prime Minister issued a directive for provision of provision of necessary infrastructure including ramps, lifts, toilets for persons with disabilities in all buildings in Islamabad Capital Territory, and in all new construction projects.

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British High Commission
Islamabad
tel. 0300 500 5306