

Press release: UK aid supports world's first mobile app to help the poorest people with disabilities into work

Landmine amputee Khtoeb Veb is a farmer in Cambodia. His prosthetic leg is waterproofed for his work in the rice fields and adapted to allow him to balance. Picture: Humanity and Inclusion UK

UK aid is behind the world's first mobile phone app to identify innovative ways to help people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries to get jobs and contribute to their society.

Speaking at a Humanity and Inclusion event, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt will set out how data, technology and collaboration are vital to making sure people with disabilities are consistently included in, and benefit from, the opportunities that are available to everyone in society.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Humanity and Inclusion are collaborating to prototype a mobile phone app that will help employers in developing countries share information on how to adapt tools, including cutting-edge prosthetics, and working environments, to make sure that workplaces are accessible for employees and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

For example, in Cambodia, farmers are using low-cost prosthetic legs made for unstable terrain, such as swampy fields. The app will share this adaptation with other farmers with similar disabilities in developing countries so they can adapt their own prosthetics and continue to work.

In her speech Ms Mordaunt will also announce that the UK government's first Global Disability Summit will be held at the Olympic Park in London on 24 July 2018. The Summit will be co-hosted with the Government of Kenya, building on the existing strong ties through the Commonwealth. Inclusion is also a key theme of this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

People with disabilities suffer appalling and entrenched stigma and discrimination, and in many parts of the world they simply don't count.

This cannot continue – which is why I have put disability at the heart of UK aid to make those invisible visible.

DFID is using new technology and building on innovative

collaborations like our work with Humanity and Inclusion to help people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries get jobs and contribute to their society and economy. Alongside this, we have issued a call for the world to step up and tackle this inequality.

We must all work together to create a healthier, more inclusive and prosperous world – this is in all our interests.

For too long many people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries have not been able to fulfil their potential due to stigma or a lack of practical support.

Ms Mordaunt met the World Bank earlier this month to call on them to scale up their work on disability and development, and pushed for data collection to make the invisible visible. The Bank is expected to announce high level commitments on disability at the Global Disability Summit in London this year.

The Summit will bring the private sector, technology companies, international governments and charities together to secure ambitious commitments which will deliver a significant and tangible difference to the lives of millions of people with disabilities around the world.

The Summit will be held at the Olympic Park in London, home to the Global Disability Innovation Hub which finds innovative ways to unlock the potential of people with disabilities, to grow global prosperity.

UK aid has already been supporting innovative technology to transform the lives of people with disabilities by collaborating with tech pioneer, D-Rev, which is supported by DFID's Amplify Programme. This project is developing low-cost, high performance prosthetic knee joints for amputees in developing countries.