LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: ADVOCACY TO BRING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO THE CENTRE (The Zambian Human Rights Commission)

NHRIs play a fundamental role in building bridges between rights-holders and authorities, and in fostering opportunities for collaboration, partnerships and synergies between these actors. They can also shed light on the needs of those who are particularly vulnerable and work to ensure that governments fulfil their human rights commitments and the 2030 Agenda pledge to leave no one behind.

Drawing from human rights obligations and from the commitments made in relation to the 2030 Agenda, NHRIs are advocating for inclusive governance and advising governments to include the needs and interests of persons with disabilities in national processes.

The Zambian Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) identified that persons with disabilities in Zambia were not adequately represented in a variety of governance structures. Drawing from the 2030 Agenda principles, the ZHRC reiterated the importance of leaving no one behind in national processes and urged the government to accommodate the interests of persons with disabilities.

In this process, the Commission called for “physical representation of persons with disabilities in various national governance structures in order to give them a sense of belonging and promote an inclusive system of governance for sustainable development”. Specifically, it called for persons with disabilities to be “physically represented in Districts, Provincial and National Development Co-ordinating Committees as well as in the various Technical Working Groups and Cluster Advisory Groups aimed at facilitating effective implementation of the [Seven National Development Plan] 7NDP”, which is the government’s blue print for development for the years 2017 - 2021.

On one hand, the ZHRC drew from Articles 69 and 259 of the Constitution, which attempts to increase representation of persons with disabilities in parliament and public office. At the same time, the Commission has been inspired by the Seven National Development Plan – a plan anchored in the SDGs and with several references to persons with disabilities in its goals and indicators – to call for full implementation of the National Policy on Disabilities, which was created to meet the country’s obligations towards the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

13 This case has been featured on the webpage of the Zambian Human Rights commission: ‘Human Rights Commission calls for physical representation of persons with disabilities in the governance structures and decision making processes on national matters’, available at: https://bit.ly/2IvPs2P
14 idem
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