



Submission by Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA)

Proposed Inputs on the Inclusion of Girls with Disabilities in the Outcome Document of the 4th African Girls' Summit

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – December 2025

1. Introduction

Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA), a Pan-African network of women and girls with disabilities representing 22 countries across the continent, appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the outcome document of the 4th African Girls' Summit, held under the theme *"Building Innovations to Accelerate Girls' Social Rights and Empowerment."*

We commend the African Union and its partners for sustaining the momentum to advance the rights of girls across Africa. As participants and advocates for inclusion, we respectfully submit this position to ensure that the voices, priorities, and lived experiences of girls with disabilities are meaningfully reflected in the final summit outcomes.

Our submission draws from lived experiences, evidence from DIWA member networks, and regional consultations with young women and girls with disabilities in East, Southern, and West Africa.

2. Rationale for Inclusion

While the outcome document rightly addresses the empowerment of girls in Africa, it must recognize that girls with disabilities remain among the most marginalized. Across the continent, they face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that limit access to education, health, protection, and participation.

To fulfill the principle of *"Leave No One Behind"* and ensure the Summit outcomes align with Agenda 2063, Agenda 2040, the Maputo Protocol, the African Disability Protocol (ADP), and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the inclusion of girls with disabilities must be explicit, actionable, and measurable.

3. Proposed Additions to the Outcome Document

A. Preamble

We propose that the Preamble explicitly recognizes:

“Girls with disabilities, who continue to experience multiple and intersecting barriers to education, health, participation, and protection, must be at the heart of our collective efforts. Their inclusion is a measure of Africa’s progress toward equality and justice.”

We further propose referencing the African Disability Protocol and the UNCRPD alongside other continental frameworks.

B. Section on Eliminating Harmful Practices

Add language under *Empowering Girls and Survivors*:

“Ensure that responses to harmful practices are inclusive of girls with disabilities, providing accessible reporting mechanisms, disability-sensitive psychosocial services, and community outreach to families of girls with disabilities who are often hidden or institutionalized.”

Add under *Shifting Harmful Social Norms*:

“Engage caregivers, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and girls with disabilities themselves in community dialogues to challenge stigma and discrimination.”

C. Section on Innovation and Emerging Threats

We propose the following additions:

- **Digital Inclusion:** “Promote digital literacy and online safety for girls with disabilities through accessible technologies and inclusive e-learning environments.”
- **Climate Resilience:** “Integrate disability inclusion within climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction frameworks, ensuring that girls with disabilities are protected and supported during crises.”
- **Conflict and Displacement:** “Ensure humanitarian and migration policies include disability-specific protections and services for displaced girls.”

D. Section on Accountability and Governance

We recommend the following language:

“Strengthen collaboration between the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and National Human Rights Institutions to monitor inclusion of girls with disabilities in all national and regional reporting.”

“Encourage Member States to integrate disability indicators and data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability status in national accountability frameworks.”

E. Call to Action

We recommend integrating the following under each stakeholder group:

For Governments:

- Ratify and domesticate the African Disability Protocol and align national child protection and gender equality policies to include girls with disabilities.
- Ensure inclusive education through accessible infrastructure, teacher training, and reasonable accommodation.
- Institutionalize disability-inclusive budgeting and resource allocation in gender, education, and child protection sectors.

For Development Partners:

- Provide flexible and long-term funding for organizations of women and girls with disabilities to lead community-based initiatives.

For Civil Society and Traditional Leaders:

- Partner with organizations of women and girls with disabilities (OPDs) to co-design advocacy, awareness, and mentorship programs.

For Data and Research Actors:

- Adopt and implement Washington Group Questions to collect disaggregated data on girls with disabilities.

4. Proposed Paragraph for the “Our Pledge” Section

“We pledge to ensure that girls with disabilities are not left behind in Africa’s development agenda. Their leadership, voices, and contributions must shape the policies, programs, and systems designed to protect and empower every girl on this continent. We reaffirm that inclusion is not an act of charity, it is an act of justice.”

5. Conclusion

DIWA stands ready to collaborate with the African Union, Member States, and partners to ensure that the commitments of the 4th African Girls' Summit translate into inclusive, measurable actions that reach every girl, including those with disabilities.

We urge the organizers to integrate these recommendations in the final outcome document, ensuring that the Summit truly represents “An Africa where every girl regardless of ability can learn, lead, and thrive.”

Submitted by:

Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA)

Lilongwe , Malawi

Contact: info@diwaafrica.org | www.diwaafrica.org

+265999808031



Funded by
the European Union

