



**Indigenous Persons with  
Disabilities Global Network**

## **Statement for the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People**

14 July 2021

To be delivered by Rosario GALARZA

On behalf of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and  
Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network (IPWDGN)

This statement is delivered on behalf of the International Disability Alliance and the Indigenous Persons with Disability Global Network.

Indigenous people with disabilities, estimated to be over 54 million and 28 million of indigenous women and girls with disabilities across the globe, face historical invisibility and exclusion from participation, both within indigenous communities and society at large, and face several forms of discrimination, including both multiple and intersectional discrimination, based on gender, disability and indigenous background, among others, in the full exercise of their rights.

Over-represented among those in poverty, indigenous persons with disabilities and particularly women and girls within them, face limited access to inclusive and culturally appropriate services, including education, health care, social protection services, and employment opportunities. This reinforces social exclusion and restricts our rights.

The Global Network of Indigenous People with Disabilities, with the support of the International Disability Alliance, wants to highlight some recommendations based on our contributions sent to the EMRIP within the last months, focusing on indigenous children and youth with disabilities.

Across indigenous people with disabilities, including indigenous children with disabilities in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific as well as other parts of the world, multiple layers of challenges and discrimination are experienced in accessing inclusive quality education at different levels.

Racism, ableism, gender-stereotypes, and discrimination based on geography hinder them in their daily lives, which exacerbates their exclusion in education. Indigenous children/persons with disabilities experience direct and indirect challenges from State-led policies and the educational curriculum, pedagogy and the lack of an enabling learning environment, including teachers and classrooms, especially considering that many of these youth and children are the first generation in their family accessing formal education.

These existing barriers were exacerbated during the COVID 19 pandemic, especially in accessing distance learning methods, which failed to ensure inclusive approaches reflective of the reality of indigenous youth and children with disabilities. School dropouts increased due to the difficulties of distance education and its reliance on the internet or television using digital signal systems that many times does not reach the indigenous communities. Illiteracy of parents and family members has meant that in home support has been limited during this time as well. Indigenous persons with disabilities/families have also largely remained excluded from social protection measures that could have supported these costs.

Design and frame inclusive, intercultural and disability related policies that ensures the educational, social, cultural, individual and collective rights of indigenous children with disabilities so that they can exercise their rights as other children.

Given the fact that the pandemic widened existing gaps, we now need to make sure that indigenous people with disabilities are not left behind anymore, especially considering the risk that an entire generation of youth and children that have been denied their right to education.

As a follow up recommendation from 2016 we would reiterate and request to conduct a study on Indigenous Women with Disabilities by the EMRIP body to understand, accept and

ensure the rights of indigenous women with disabilities that are violated in many forms at grass root levels.

Finally I would like to recommend to the EMRIP to ensure the creation of a technical or advisory team with regards to the Indigenous People with Disabilities and their intersectionalities, to support a twin track approach to their requirements of indigenous persons with disabilities, and ensure the effective and meaningful participation of indigenous children and youth with disabilities, including in the issuance of final recommendations by this Mechanism.

Thank you very much