



ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Declaration of the Co-Presidents on putting youth, especially young people with disabilities, at the heart of ACP-EU relations

Members of the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment recall the importance of placing youth at the heart of the ACP-EU partnership and in particular young people with disabilities in the post-Cotonou negotiations. The Cotonou Partnership agreement under article 26 on youth issues, calls for Cooperation that supports the establishment of a coherent and comprehensive policy for realising the potential of youth so that they are better integrated into society to achieve their full potential.

We note with concern that 98 % of children with disabilities in developing countries still have no access to free universal primary education, which does not speak to the commitment of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the purposes of the “Agenda 2030 to leave no one behind”.

We therefore call for the inclusion of young people with disabilities in the future ACP-EU strategies, for new actions to mainstream disability and reinforce existing programmes to make such access possible. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes the importance of ensuring that all persons with disabilities, irrespective of age, enjoy the same human rights as everyone else and provides a framework for legal, civic, and socioeconomic empowerment. Effective implementation of the Convention requires a focused effort by all sectors to guarantee that young people with disabilities participate in mainstreamed as well as in disability specific programmes on an equal basis with others.

In this context, we call on the EU to support, both financially and through exchange of best practices, the appropriate training of teachers to deliver quality and inclusive education to all children including those with disabilities.

Critical to achieving this is financial support and we therefore call for an increase in EU financial support for building / providing accessible infrastructural facilities and learning material adapted for disabled children and youth. More broadly, we request that national and local governments include all aspects of accessibility in all new legislation and adapt existing legislation to meet accessibility requirements.

We call on the ACP-EU States to improve existing laws, or create new ones, against any form of stigmatisation and discrimination against girls, people with disabilities and any other vulnerable groups.

We request that Country Strategy Papers take into account the needs of young people with disabilities.

We reiterate the call to the ACP-EU States to mainstream the inclusion of youth with disabilities in their national development agendas, to adopt mechanisms for enhancing their representation

at all levels of decision-making, to provide specific and adequate budgetary allocations in programmes allowing all young people to benefit from primary, secondary and tertiary education.

We call for regular consultations with youth organisations especially disabled people's organisations (DPOs).

We call for a systematic and explicit inclusion of youth with disabilities in every session of the Youth Conference as well as regular inclusion of disability issues in developing countries among the topics of the Conference.

Finally, we call for a better mapping exercise through the civil society organisations' roadmaps to be completed by each EU Delegation in each ACP country; in order to better understand the environment in which youths with disabilities find themselves, it is necessary to collect comprehensive youth and disability data that will provide scientific evidence for increased targeted funding.

Brussels, 20 June 2018