



## **REPORT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2023 AT ABUJA CONTINENTAL HOTEL**

### **Overview**

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is observed annually on **December 3rd** to promote awareness and mobilize support for the rights, dignity, and well-being of persons with disabilities. The day aims to promote inclusivity and accessibility in all aspects of society, encouraging the full and equitable participation of people with disabilities in political, social, economic, and cultural spheres.

The theme for this year's commemoration is **“United in Action to Rescue and Achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with Disabilities”**. The theme emphasizes unity and collaboration to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Governments, non-governmental organizations, and communities worldwide use this occasion to organize events, workshops, and campaigns to promote accessibility, equality, and the empowerment of persons with disabilities. It is in line with this that Voice PWDs CoP Network partnered with the Federal Ministry of Health and Cognito project to have a commemoration in two folds; a virtual event on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December and a physical event on 4<sup>th</sup> December, to discuss the issues of PWDs especially as it pertains to their health needs. These activities contribute to breaking down barriers, challenging stereotypes, and promoting a more inclusive environment that recognizes and values the contributions of persons with disabilities.

### **About Persons with Disabilities Community of Practice Network**

The Voice PWD CoP is a Community of Practice for Persons with Disabilities. This is a community of passionate actors in the Disability Community who come together to pursue a common goal that further impacts the PWD Community positively. Though each organization/actor have their thematic areas of impact as disability has a wide spectrum, there are pertinent common issues that border on awareness, communication, policies and governance which cuts across all these spectrums and this is where the CoP is needed to address this general problem whose solution and/or intervention helps the organization/actor expand more on the positive impact in their various projects while allowing for learning and knowledge sharing amongst organizations.

### **Registration**

Registration of participants started around 9.30am and lasted till 10:00am.

### **Opening Prayer**

For the opening prayer, the second stanza of the National anthem was recited by all the participants.

### **Introduction**

The introduction was delivered by Dr. John Ovuoraye, who serves as the Director/Head of Gender, Adolescent, School Health, and Elderly (GASHE), Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. In his presentation, he outlined the program's objectives and its significance. Dr. Ovuoraye also highlighted a recent webinar organized by Cognito which held on December 2nd, during which representatives from various disability clusters discussed their health challenges and put forth recommendations. He emphasized that the resulting communiqué from the webinar is slated for presentation to the Honorable Minister of Health and other stakeholders. The aim is to establish a cohesive strategy or implementation plan for the health needs of the different disability clusters.

### **Welcome Address**

The welcome address was given by the Permanent Secretary, Health, Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare who welcomed the participants and reiterated the commitment of the Ministry in ensuring accessibility and inclusion for PwDs. She also applauded the webinar that was held prior and the amplification on social media platforms.

### **Goodwill Messages**

Goodwill messages were given by the following organizations:

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA)
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (FMWA)
- Sightsavers
- JONAPWD

### **Role of Stakeholders in Ensuring the Implementation of the Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities Act**

The main emphasis during this session was on strategies for stakeholders to facilitate the effective implementation of the Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities Act. The speaker noted that 17 states have already embraced this legislation. An essential aspect of this effort involves Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) continually advocating for the pertinent issues. The speaker underscored the role of stakeholders, emphasizing the need for accessibility in all public facilities, including features like toilets and hospital beds in health facilities. It was pointed out that the concept of accessibility extends beyond ramps. In health facilities, stakeholders should prioritize ensuring confidentiality in the healthcare provided to persons with disabilities.

## **World Health Organization (WHO) Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities (PwD).**

Mrs. Esther Bature, the speaker, commenced by noting that the report was officially published in December 2022. She proceeded to provide an overview of the report, emphasizing the need for all stakeholders to take proactive measures in advancing health equity for persons with disabilities. Collaboration and advocacy for the implementation of the outlined recommendations were underscored as essential responsibilities for all stakeholders. The full report is accessible through the following link: <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/global-report-on-health-equity-for-persons-with-disabilities>

### **Keynote address**

The keynote address was delivered by Kachollom Daju, the permanent secretary of health, Federal Ministry of Health standing in for the Honourable Minister of Health, Prof. Mohammed Ali Pate. She conveyed the minister's regrets for being unable to attend in person due to prior commitments but proceeded to read his speech. In the speech, the minister commended the 2023 theme of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, appreciating its focus on unity. The importance of safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities was emphasized, with an assurance that the government is actively working towards building an inclusive society. She concluded by expressing her delight at the existence of a communiqué that emanated from the webinar.

### **Speech by Representative of Jonapwd**

Mr. Obinna Ekujereonye Bede, representing the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, delivered a speech, acknowledging the achievements made so far but emphasizing the need for extensive efforts to guarantee access and inclusion for persons with disabilities. He urged stakeholders to prioritize and actively contribute to the implementation of the Disability Act.

### **Drama by Deaf Group**

The Deaf Women Aloud Initiative (DWAi) staged a drama on behalf of the PwD community. The drama showcased the attitudinal challenge that deaf pregnant women face in the hospital and the attitude of law enforcement agencies to PwDs who have been molested.

### **Closing**

The program ended around 2:57pm with closing remark by Dr. John Ovuoraye