

THE 3RD KIPPRA ANNUAL REGIONAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, 28th -30th July 2020

The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) is organizing the 3rd KIPPRA Annual Regional Conference themed ***“Enhancing inclusivity through empowering persons with disabilities”***. The conference offers a platform for stakeholders to engage in policy dialogue on pertinent public policy issues, with this year’s issue being inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the development agenda. The conference is planned for ***28th -30th July 2020 through a Virtual Platform*** and targets various stakeholders including: national and county governments (ministries, departments and agencies); international and regional institutions; private sector; civil society and organizations mandated with disability issues; persons with disability; and other special interest groups, capacity building developers, policy makers, academia among other sector players.

It is estimated that over one billion people live with disabilities in the world. In Kenya, PWDs aged five years and above are estimated to be 918,270 (2.2 % of the total population) according to the 2019 Census, disaggregated into 57.1 per cent female and 42.9 per cent male. The forms of disability identified using the Washington Group of Questions method include mobility impairment (42%), visual impairment (36%), cognitive impairment (23%), hearing impairment (17%), inability to care for one-self (15%), and communication challenges (12%). The Question on albinism was administered to the total population and a total of 9,279 persons had albinism.

In response to the clarion call for the world to be more responsive to the needs and rights of PWDs, the global policy dialogue culminated in the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities while at regional level there exists the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the East Africa Community Policy on Persons with Disabilities. At national level, Kenya has enacted an Act of Parliament, namely Disability Act, established the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, and developed a Plan of Action on disability mainstreaming. There are also other national policies and plans that support disability mainstreaming initiatives, including social protection, gender, employment and procurement. Various sectors such as housing, health, education and transport also have policies, plans, standards and measures that strengthen disability mainstreaming. The policy question that still lingers is why then do PWDs continue to face barriers that limit exploitation of their full potential? What are the implications of COVID-19 on PWDs?

Barriers to social, economic and political development of PWDs manifest in various adverse outcomes, including limited access to education and its attainment, high unemployment and adverse working environment, exclusion in property ownership and business opportunities, unfavorable built environment, hostile transport facilities and behavior, limited access to assistive devices, negative societal perceptions, negative cultural attitudes and practices, stigma, limited access to justice, limited political representation, and constrained participation in sports and art. These and other exclusions have resulted in high poverty incidence among PWDs, relative to people without disabilities.

KIPPRA appreciates that the country is on the right path in disability mainstreaming but there is need to re-energize the policies and implementation parameters to pace up the momentum in disability inclusion. It recognizes that disability mainstreaming requires a multi-disciplinary approach to be more inclusive,

since the needs and rights of PWDs are multi-dimensional, thus attracting multiple stakeholders in undertaking various initiatives on disability mainstreaming. Therefore, KIPPRA is organizing this conference to encourage national dialogue and to consult with stakeholders on effective and efficient planning and implementation of the country policies on disability and informing policy documentation and discussion.

The conference provides a forum for sharing knowledge and experiences in various topical areas including:

- i) Creating an enabling environment for disability mainstreaming with policy and legislative framework addressing, technology and innovation, social protection, elimination of exclusion, marginalization and inequalities for PWDs;
- ii) Implications of COVID-19 on PWDs and supporting inclusion of PWDs in related interventions;
- iii) Promoting inclusivity of disability in the “Big 4” initiatives including: suitable housing facilities; access to quality health care; access to safe and nutritious food; and access to assistive devices through local manufacturing;
- iv) Leadership, governance and public participation in public sector, corporate sector and community levels;
- v) Safe spaces, safe cities, accessible built environment, transport facilities, corrective facilities; and sanitation;
- vi) Mental and Reproductive health;
- vii) Provision of social services, including education, sports and art, media interaction, cash transfers and donations;
- viii) Business and entrepreneurship; formal and self-employment; talent management for economic empowerment; recruitment, remuneration, career growth and promotions; work environment; tax exemptions and other incentives; affirmative action platforms, including access to government procurement, and private sector opportunities;
- ix) Data and statistics to support initiatives for PWDs;
- x) Institutional coordination including the role of the family and community; government agencies; associations of PWDs; homes and rehabilitation centres; regional and international institutions; disability code; and
- xi) Disability mainstreaming amongst the youth targeted at creating awareness on people disability, participation in leadership and governance, innovation and technology targeted at inclusive learning for persons with disabilities, attitudes of teaching staff to persons with disabilities, gender-based violence, relationship management, career networking and transitioning into employment, and providing for appropriate facilities.

“Thinking Policy Together”