

Disaster Management, Sustainable Development Goal 16 and Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

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Introduction

We live in a world where many people are forced to flee their homes daily as a result of sudden and calamitous events that have untold consequences. Whether natural or manmade, such catastrophes propel a kind of violence that undermines the development of people and communities. In most cases, disasters leave survivors with cases of impairment for life: amputated limbs, damaged spinal cord, brain injury, partial blindness to name but a few. They face the most daunting challenge of abandonment and neglect in emergency situations. As the Millennium Development Goals drew to a close, the World leaders came together at the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in September, 2015 and launched the new Global Vision 2030 which contains a set of clearly defined Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the ambition of leaving no one behind. 10 of the 17 goals have targets related to disaster risk reduction. Of particular interest in this study is the SDG 16 that

promotes Peace, Justice and strong institutions. The study makes a case for the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in the management of disasters in Nigeria against the backdrop of the Global Vision 2030. It adopts the content analysis method of key disability-specific documents with the aim of drawing the attention of policy makers and intervention agencies such as National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to the challenges faced by PWD in disaster situations. The discussion is organised around four sections as follows. A brief overview of persons with disabilities as defined in key documents is followed by the challenges faced by PWD in the Nigerian context. Maslow's theory of needs expatiated by the work of John Burton links deprivation with violence and in an attempt to domesticate the SDG 16 which revolves around the elimination of all forms of violence (visible and invisible). In particular the study takes onboard the needs of vulnerable peoples especially in emergency

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situations. In the end, a close look at the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) provides the answer to the question as to whether it has the interest of PWD in mind in discharging its mandate.

Persons with Disabilities: An Overview

A concept of disability covers a broad spectrum of human experiences and individual circumstances. So many different types, levels and combinations of physical, cognitive, sensory and mental conditions fall under the general umbrella of disability. Because it is a human condition, disability can be defined differently according to different people and cultures. However, the Humanitarian Disabilities Charter (HDC) describes persons with disabilities as "those who have long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in, and access to, humanitarian programmes" (HDC, 2017). In its recent report the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than one billion people worldwide have disabilities that limit their aspirations toward a meaningful life on a daily basis (Sminkey, 2011). They face mental and physical barriers such as low self-esteem, stigma, discrimination, lack of adequate health care and accessibility to public buildings, transport system, ICT to name but a few. According to Human Rights Watch, people with disabilities are literally forgotten worldwide: they encounter violence on daily basis yet they remain invisible in their communities (HRW, 2013). The Women's Refugee Commission reports that about 7.6 million of women and girls with disabilities face additional risk of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) because they

are less able to protect themselves from harm, more dependent on others for survival and less visible. Children with disabilities are also at risk of abandonment and violence during emergency situations, and yet their particular needs are often not taken into account in aid efforts (WRC, 2015).

Moreover, people identified as mentally impaired are abandoned to their fate in psychiatric hospitals where they face overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. In some spiritual healing centers and prayer camps, they are often chained to trees, frequently kept in the baking sun, and forced to fast for weeks as part of the long process of casting out demons while being denied access to medications (HRW 2013). Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) face unique challenges during humanitarian emergencies stemming from sudden calamities. These include abandonment, neglect and human rights abuses. The Human Rights Watch observes that:

In situations of risk such as armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies, persons with disabilities risked being abandoned in their homes, or in deserted villages for days or weeks, with little access to food or water. Persons with disabilities who reached sites for internally displaced peoples or refugees often faced difficulties accessing food, sanitation and medical assistance (HRW, 2016:7).

A story of a physically impaired 23 years old boy that was abandoned by his parents when a rebel group attacked Bangui (Central African Republic) in April 2015 is worth recounting:

The Seleka [an armed rebel group] came and started killing people. I was fast asleep when I heard gunshots and woke up to find myself alone at home. My parents had fled without

me. I started shouting and crawled to the entrance of my house but when I looked outside, there was no one. I stayed alone for a day until a young boy passed by. I started crying when I saw him and begged him; "Please help me! If you leave me, I will die." The young boy feared for me and agreed to carry me on his back until we got to the camp for displaced people (Ibidem).

Pathetic narratives of this kind are well documented in the literature. However, Article 11 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was adopted in December 2006 states unambiguously that:

In situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters (CRPD, 2006).

As such the Convention marks a "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches towards persons with disabilities by considering them not as "objects" of charity, medical treatment, and social protection but as human beings with rights, capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society (UN, 2017). The next section of the study focuses on the plight of persons with disabilities in the Nigerian context.

Challenges of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

The WHO (2011) estimates the number of

Persons with disabilities (PWD) in Nigeria around 19 million, representing about 20 percent of the country's population. Senior Special Assistant to President Muhammadu Buhari on Disability Matters, Dr. Samuel Ankeli, puts the figure of PWD around 25 million (Idoko, 2017). The constant rise in disabilities in the country is attributed to violent conflicts, ageing, illnesses and poverty. In the aftermath of natural as well as manmade disasters, many survivors sustain serious injuries that are capable of reducing their ability to meet their basic needs for the rest of their lives. The most common types of disabilities in Nigeria include visual, hearing, mental and physical impairments. Even though there is no reliable statistics to back up the above figures, the PWD constitute the poorest and socially marginalised section within the Nigerian population (Lang and Upah, 2008). Most of them throng public gatherings (churches, mosques, political rallies) as well as traffic jams in cities and towns to not only beg for a pittance but also display their peculiar conditions with a clear message written on their faces: we too have the right to life.

It is worth noting that the Federal Government of Nigeria ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 30 March, 2007 and its Optional Protocol on 24 September, 2010. Article 4.1 of CRPD spells out the responsibility of each State Party "to ensure and promote the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability" (UN, 2017). Yet, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria does not contain any provision to directly address their needs (Umeh and Adeola, 2013). The onus is on the

Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to look after the special needs of people with disabilities. However a dearth of legislation and social security towards the welfare of PWD means that their survival depends on almsgiving (Smith, 2011). Lang and Upah (2008) argue that lack of inclusion of PWD in socio-political life in Nigeria is due to the fact that issues related to the plight of PWD are discussed within the framework of charity by individuals and organisations. Lack of disability legislation that fosters the inclusion of PDW in the mainstream is apparent through a series of environmental, institutional and cultural barriers that make life difficult for them such as inaccessibility to high public buildings, transport system, adequate information (especially for the visually impaired) and many more impediments.

Barriers to inclusion refer to visible (physical) or invisible obstacles that prevent a person with disability from accessing or fully participating in 'normal' daily life activities. These can be clustered into four categories:

- (i) Physical barriers when accessibility to physical environments such as shelters, public toilets, schools, health centres, public transport etc, is made difficult (high/irregular steps without rails, narrow entrances or slippery floors);
- (ii) Socio-cultural barriers that consist of negative behaviours such as prejudice, pity, over protection and stigma or negative assumptions about the capabilities of people with disabilities from family members, the community, local authorities, the media, etc.;
- (iii) Institutional barriers in terms of

policies, legislation and institutions which are not representative of the rights of everyone in the community or discriminate against persons with disabilities, poor/non-implementation of international (and national) legislation supposed to promote the rights of people with disabilities, addressing disability concerns as 'welfare' or 'specialist' issue, lack of consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative groups, etc.;

- (iv) Communication barriers whereby information and resources are not available in accessible formats such as Braille, sign language, pictures or simple language (HI, 2012).

In Nigeria, persons with disabilities struggle to overcome the above-listed barriers on a daily basis (Eleweke and Ebenso, 2016). By way of illustration, a story is told of a young woman who, in her wheelchair was unable to withdraw cash at the ATM machine. She overstretched herself in order to reach the machine which was a bit high but fell over (James, 2017). This would not have happened if the facility at the bank was user-friendly for the PWD. Lack of public concern for PWD seems to corroborate the dominant view of disability as a curse on individual families in Africa and going through a disaster can be a matter of life and death for them.

However, on their own initiative, PWD have come together to form various interest groups and associations known as Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) in order to make their voices heard. At the national level, prominent among them include the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAWPD) and the Associa-

tion for the Comprehensive Empowerment of Nigerians with Disabilities (ASCEND). The latter was initially launched in 2002 under the appellation of the Movement for the Emancipation of Nigerians with Disabilities (MEND) and it rebranded itself in 2006 as ASCEND so as to avoid the confusion associated with the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). Other associations are: the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Nigeria (SCIAN), the Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CDD), the Accidents Victim Support Association, Deaf Women in Nigeria (DWIN), the Nigerian National Association of the Deaf (NNAD), and the Resource Centre for Advocacy on Disability among others. In particular, both JONAWPD and ASCEND pursue a common goal of mainstreaming PWD through active participation in every sphere of life, including politics (Lang and Upah, 2008). Despite such laudable initiatives, PWD are noticeably absent in the decision-making processes at the State and Federal levels in Nigeria (James, 2017). The truth of the matter is that PWD will always find it extremely difficult if not impossible to complete secondary education and compete for a long-term employment in Nigeria.

This portrait of marginalisation contrasts with the policy of inclusion being implemented in other societies in which discrimination on the basis of disabilities constitutes an infringement of human rights. It is not uncommon for politicians with disabilities to climb the ladder of power and even move at the top with ease in mature democracies. For example, David Blunkett was born blind but he served as British Home Secretary; current German Minister of Finance, Wolfgang Schauble and Vice President of Argentina Gabriella Michetti are

both wheelchair users, to name but a few (Wikipedia, 2017). In the next section the theory of human needs illuminates the concern for persons with disabilities as human beings.

Theoretical Framework

Life is worthwhile if individual members of the society, including PWD are able to satisfy their basic human needs. The pyramid of needs as propounded by Abraham Maslow (1943) contains five levels which can be divided into two categories, namely survival and growth needs. On the one hand the needs for survival or low-order needs include: physiological needs (air, water, food, shelter and clothing), safety needs (the feeling people get when they know no harm will befall them physically, mentally, emotionally and also the feeling people get when their fears and anxieties are low with regard to job, health . . .); social needs (love, affection, care, belongingness, participation and friendship). These three basic needs are also described as deprivation-related needs in that vital things that are lacking in the life of individuals motivate them to acquire such things. On the other hand, higher-order needs for growth include esteem needs internally (self-respect, confidence, competence, achievement, freedom, and recognition) and externally (power, status, admiration, attention) as well as the need for self-actualisation at the peak of the pyramid (the urge to be what one is capable of becoming by making use of their full potential, capacities and talents).

Maslow's pyramid of needs is premised on the principle that the satisfaction of needs follows a certain hierarchy: the urge for the safety needs surfaces when a person's physiological needs are relatively satisfied and it prepares them for a much more elevated set

of needs (self-actualisation). In other words, basic human needs for survival are more pressing than any other need or aspiration (social, self-esteem or self-realisation) especially in peacetime just as a hungry man would hardly think of satisfying the highest need for self-realisation on an empty stomach. More important, the growth-related need at the pinnacle of the pyramid is driven not by deficiency but a desire to grow to the full as human being, with a commitment to make a difference in the world. For all of us, self-actualisation needs are never fully satisfied because growing remains a life-long process.

Maslow's theory of needs sheds light on human behaviour but when a disaster occurs, safety needs rise to the top for everyone concerned, irrespective of status, gender, nationality and health condition. In the tradition of human needs, John Burton (1990) establishes a link between unmet basic needs and violent conflicts. According to the Australian scholar in Conflict Studies, human needs are universal because every human being irrespective of race, culture, religion, gender or social status faces them at any point in time. As such they do not follow a hierarchical order but they are sought simultaneously in an intense and relentless manner. For Burton human needs, unlike interests and positions, are not negotiable and as a result, they are at the root causes of social conflicts. In other words, conflict stems from unsatisfied human needs and needs go unsatisfied because institutions have been designed from the context of power. Coercive measures are used by people in power to satisfy their needs at the expense of others. In using power to satisfy one's needs, there is always a corresponding action to prevent others (the hapless people at the bottom of the ladder) from meeting their own needs. Therefore, people will not

easily accept institutional arrangement that deny the satisfaction of their human needs (Burton, 1990). Given that the human needs theory has linked unmet needs with conflict, the concern for persons with disabilities plays out in the Global Vision 2030 which targets the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Why Sustainable Development Goal 16 matters

A few months before the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), world leaders realised that most conflict-torn nations were unable to halve poverty and hunger, improve on basic education, maternal care of women and children, gender equality and many more. More important, it was observed that disability issues were not included among the listed indicators and targets to help evaluate and monitor the achievements of the MDGs. During popular consultation leading up to the setting up of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), millions of people around the world observed that protection against violence by responsive governments were crucial issues to be included in the post-millennium agenda to be known as the Global Vision 2030 (UN, 2015). Moving away from the development goals which were tailored to meet the needs of poor nations only, the new vision has the ambition of being global in scope and local in its implementation. It encapsulates 17 goals with corresponding 169 targets that are expected to be domesticated by every Member State of the United Nations. Given that a specific goal on 'peace and justice' was a missing piece of the puzzle in the Millennium agenda, the inclusion of SDG 16 which revolves around the issues of peace, justice and strong institutions constitutes a keystone because,

according to paragraph 35 of the Global Vision 2030,

The new agenda recognises the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions (UN, 2015).

In order to facilitate the implementation of the SDG 16 a series of measurable targets are provided. One of the most specific targets is the elimination of all types of violence and related deaths as a precondition for building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Even though it appears at the bottom of the list, the SDG 16 plays the role of catalyst for the implementation of the Global Vision 2030. As such, it remains certainly the most important goal without which the basis for the implementation of the others will be threatened (Wylie, 2017). Put differently, goals 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) complement each other as they both seek to eliminate all types of violence. Moreover, it is unrealistic to think of eradicating poverty (Goal 1) and hunger (Goal 2), ensuring people's well-being (Goal 3), quality education for all (Goal 4) and Gender equality (Goal 5), creating sustainable cities and resilient communities (Goal 11), or environmental protection (Goal 13) in contexts where violent conflicts and social injustice are rife. In many aspects, SDG 16 appears to be the lifeblood of almost all the other goals and together they are interrelated. Progress in this regard can be measured according to the target 11.5.1: reduction in number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people. There is also an overlap

between Peace (SDG 16) and Gender Equality (Goal 5) when it comes to the elimination of all forms of violence to be measured according to the population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months (16.1.3); the proportion of the population that feels safe walking alone around the area they live (16.1.4); the number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population by sex, age and form of exploitation (16.2.2). Violence is therefore a negative force that must be eliminated in order to move the human society forward as far as sustainable development is concerned.

The conceptualisation of violence in the context of SDG 16 is very broad: it covers physical damage of bodily and psychological harm as well environment devastation. It also includes the all-out violence of armed conflict and terrorism as well as institutional failings in tackling peculiar issues (corruption, security, youth unemployment, organised crimes, electoral violence, marginalisation of minorities and discrimination in the name of religion, gender, ethnicity or race). According to Norwegian scholar and father of Peace Studies, Johan Galtung, violence can be visible, invisible or both and it is prevalent in societies where people cannot realise their full potential. Visible violence takes place when somatic incapacitation (physical abuse, torture and death) is inflicted upon one party (victim) by another (perpetrator). The scholar expands the common but narrow view of violence by adding invisible forms, namely structural and cultural violence. Structural violence is associated with the avoidable gap between potential ability to fulfil basic human needs and their actual impairment (Galtung, 1969). This is a form of invisible but ubiquitous violence because it lies hidden in structures of injustice which enable a few upper dogs to

satisfy their needs at the expense of the underdogs.

Structural violence encompasses all types of deprivation and discrimination, particularly against the most vulnerable section of the society: women and children, the sick, the aged and the physically impaired. Close to it is **cultural** violence that exists in the form of belief systems or cultural attitudes which condone direct or structural violence (Galtung, 1990). Thus, the implementation of the SDG 16 which revolves around the elimination of all forms of violence (visible and invisible) takes onboard the challenges of vulnerable peoples. PWD may not be subjected to additional physical violence but they are victims of structural and cultural violence by way of abandonment and neglect. Therefore, the most daunting challenge in the management of disasters is for state governments, UN agencies and humanitarian organisations to make sure that people with disabilities are not left behind (HRW, 2016). The remainder of the study focuses on the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

NEMA and Persons with Disabilities (PWD): A Critique

The common factors causing disaster in many parts of Nigeria include flooding, fire outbreak, road accident, oil spillage, building collapse, and epidemics among others. Current violent conflicts between farmers and herdsmen around the River Benue, the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast Nigeria, and the oil-related destruction of the ecosystem in the Niger Delta can be rightly described as man-induced disasters. Several factors explain the vulnerability of Nigerians to disasters: the level of poverty; population

growth and distribution; the condition of human settlements and their infrastructure; the level of environmental degradation; level of public awareness; and the dynamics of public policy and environment on disaster management (UNISDR, 2017). In paragraph 23 of the Global Vision 2030, vulnerable peoples must be empowered and they include "all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 percent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants" (UN, 2015). If, however a wheelchair user cannot afford a seat on a public transport and in most classrooms around the country, what will happen to them in emergency situations?

It is worth noting that Nigeria had first-hand experience of preventable disaster in the course of fighting the Biafra Civil War (6 July, 1967 – 13 January, 1970) that claimed more than 3 million lives through live bullets, famine and pandemics. The plight of people of Biafra, might have prompted the development of international humanitarian agencies such as Doctors without Borders in 1971. As one analyst contends,

From the standpoint of the international humanitarian sector, Biafra served as one of the first conflicts where issues of more contemporary complex emergencies began to develop. Biafra taught the international community how to better provide and coordinate aid and assistance to those affected by a complex emergency (Goetz, 2001).

Since then, the United Nations through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been contributing to disaster response and recovery in the World, coordinating the efforts of UN organisations and other non-UN agencies. In recent years, the management of disasters has

moved away from mere response and recovery towards protection against threatening or actual disasters. The success of this mechanism is dependent on coordinated effort of all groups, sectors, and levels of society (Nigeria 2010). In 1999, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) was established to coordinate the activities of the UN system and regional organisations in socio-economic and humanitarian fields. The current framework for disaster risk reduction in the world is known as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 agreed upon in March 2015. It calls on national governments to involve persons with disabilities in all programmes and plans of disaster management. How does the the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) domesticate these international frameworks with regards to the special needs of PWD?

NEMA is an intervention agency that was established in the Act 12 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in the Act 50 of 1999 but its humble beginning goes back to the creation of National Emergency Relief Agency (NERA) in 1976. It is charged with the mandate to formulate policies on all activities concerned with disasters, monitor the state of preparedness, provide succour to the victims of disasters and guide against unforeseen disasters. In 2009, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) unit was created in compliance with the 2007 Hyogo Framework for Action. In fulfilling its mandate, NEMA developed several plans and guidelines, some of these are National Disaster Response Plan, the Search and Rescue/Epidemic Evacuation Plan, the National Nuclear and Radiological Plan, the Early Warning System on Epidemic, etc. (Nigeria 2010). The objectives of Nigeria's Plan of

Action for DRR (2006-2015) are as follows:

- (i) identify natural/man-induced hazards and assess their associated risks and costs in Nigeria;
- (ii) improve the capabilities of communities to predict, and offer early warnings on natural hazards and disaster risks;
- (iii) enhance public awareness of disaster prevention and mitigation through training, education and public enlightenment; promote understanding of the DRR paradigm; and
- (iv) promote appropriate intervening institutions to enhance the capabilities of State Emergency Management Agencies, Local Government Authorities and communities (Dia *et al* 2012).

Over the years, NEMA has however encountered some challenges and learnt lessons which prompted the development of the National Disaster Management Framework (NDMF) to correct implementation gaps and increase efficiency as well as effectiveness of disaster management in Nigeria. Progress being made around the world in the area of disaster risk reduction and management has further exposed the limitations of the NDMF. Thus, the National Platform for DRR has this year, 2018 affirmed the need to mainstream DRR into plans, policies and programmes of Government at all levels, with emphasis on gender mainstreaming activities, and resolved among other things to develop a National Programme of Action for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

The safety and security of persons with disabilities in disasters and humanitarian emergency is expected to be at the heart of

NEMA's policy and in consonance with art. 11 of CRPD as earlier mentioned. Persons with disabilities deserve a place as stakeholders in NEMA's framework for disaster management (NDMF) to ensure that they are not left behind in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters; and to ensure that the treatment and services they receive are as effective as that given to the non-disabled population. A look at NDMF reveals however that this is not so, as they are not mentioned as stakeholders in the document. According to the Report of National Platform Workshop for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nigeria, the involvement of PWD is left to chance (NEMA 2010). A study conducted by Inclusive Friends with support from the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme draws a similar conclusion: "Not enough has been done to include people with disabilities in processes around the Institutional Mapping of Disaster Risk Reduction in Nigeria, or the development of a National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by the National Emergency Management Authority (NSRP, 2015)."

Following a disaster, NEMA takes the front seat in terms of housing the survivors and distributing food items to the needy (NEMA, 2017). As a result, schools, hospitals and religious centres are often converted into makeshift camps to receive Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) but the majority of these structures are not accessible to peoples with impairments, particularly women that find it extremely difficult to access services and facilities. Persons with disabilities need to feel valued and in control of their environment. Women are more susceptible to diseases due to unhygienic environments, as many are forced to crawl on the floors. Their privacy is often violated due to lack of

accessible mobile toilets and bathrooms.

Studies have shown that PWD often do not have knowledge of what to do in disaster situations (Smith, 2014). The need to know and understand cannot be overemphasised. Often times however, the information relating to disasters is not accessible to this group of people, contrary to article 21 of the CRPD regarding freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information which states that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice."

Ashi *et al* (2015) contend that people with visual disabilities in the Nigeria encounter tremendous barriers in accessing public information or communication issued in print form. Essential public information or communication is hardly made available in large print, Braille, or audio-format. People with hearing impairment are often the last to receive information, due to lack of sign language interpreters on major television stations. The social interaction of persons with disabilities is very often limited to relationship among close family members. Due to the diversity of disabilities, there are differences in the needs of various groups, thus, selective inclusion of groups in the consultation process places the excluded groups at a disadvantage when it comes to taking control of their respective environment.

At times of heightened tension such as conflicts and terror attacks, there is increased concern for the security and welfare of persons with disability despite the collaborative efforts of NEMA to disseminate

information and raise awareness about disaster risk reduction. Consequently, leaving persons with disabilities out of discussions regarding disaster management is a sign of disrespect which hurts their self-esteem. Moreover, the use of labels, languages or demeaning descriptions that suggest pity, charity and helplessness lowers their self-esteem and hampers their willingness to be included.

A person's non-ability does not eliminate the desire for expression and self-actualisation. As such, it is important that the human needs of persons with disabilities be seen as human right issues so as to minimise the risk of being caught unaware or abandoned during disaster situations. Granted that PWD are full-fledged human beings whose needs and rights are non-negotiable, efforts must be made to pull down physical and psychological barriers through the establishment of strong and working institutions to checkmate discriminatory policies so that no one is left behind (SDG 16).

Conclusion

This study has made a case for the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the management of disasters in Nigeria with a focus on NEMA in an attempt to domesticate the Global Vision 2030. A close look around us has revealed that many public buildings in the country are not equipped with ramps and elevators to cater for persons with disabilities during emergency evacuations. Lack of attention to the special needs of PWD in the management of disasters constitutes a kind of violence be it structural, cultural or both. Even though Nigeria has signed and ratified various instruments at regional and international levels including the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and African

Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), many institutions of government often do not provide inclusive and disability-sensitive services to the PWD. A sustainable disaster management framework would be disability-inclusive if PWD participate actively in preparedness, risk reduction, response and recovery planning. The knowledge of disaster risks can go a long way in protecting the lives and increase survival rate of persons with disabilities. The study recommends therefore that the bill which protects the rights of persons with disabilities in the country be signed into law so as to eliminate all forms of violence against them and leave no one behind. There is a pressing need for NEMA to redesign awareness campaigns such that persons with disabilities are in the know about impending disasters. It is also important for the Nigerian Government to develop credible data base for persons with disabilities in order to enhance proper planning for their welfare.

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