



**NATIONAL UNION OF DISABLED PERSONS OF UGANDA (NUDIPU) PRESS  
STATEMENT IN REGARDS TO COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (IDPD) 2021**

As NUDIPU joins the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), today Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 we are calling for a press conference to commemorate this day under the theme "Not all disabilities are visible: A call for stronger action during and post COVID-19 era".

The World Health Organization report on disability 2020 indicates that more than one billion people live with some form of disability out of this, it is estimated that 450 million people are living with mental or neurological condition. 69 million individuals are estimated to sustain traumatic brain injuries worldwide, one in 160 children are identified as having autism.

In Uganda, according to the population census 2014, persons with disabilities constitute 12.4% of the total population. Often, those with severe disabilities are locked up in houses while the invisible group are not easily identified.

This year's theme helps us to focus on bringing awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent and not given attention as much as the visible disabilities. These disabilities include; deafblind, epilepsy, mental and psycho-social disabilities, down syndrome, Autism, Hydrocephalus, Spina Befida, cerebral palsy, among others.

Many of the persons with invisible and marginalized disabilities are denied access to opportunities such as employment, education and social interaction due to their unseen disabilities and severe vulnerability. Others out of fear of stigma, they do not want to disclose their disability which makes them to live at risk and experience limited participation in the development process. On the other hand, there are those with visible disabilities but little or no attention is paid to them in respect to inclusion in services and targeting in development programmes since majority are not mobile and many are not able to speak for themselves hence remaining marginalized within the disability and mainstream programming.

Therefore, our call to action to government, the civil society and the public is:

1. To pay attention to the most marginalized disability categories by designing specific programmes that will empower them to effectively participate in the development processes.
2. Establish their unique needs that may require special attention from service providers in respect to health, education and social inclusion among others
3. Government through the Ministry of gender, labour and social development to design a social protection programme that will address the disability related costs, care and support for the invisible disabilities since the majority of them are not able to independently cope with the formal employment programmes.
4. The Ministry of health should subsidize specialized health services, equipment's and medicines that are used to manage the specific disabilities under the marginalized and invisible categories. Such services should further be extended to lower health centers for early identification and intervention and easy access by persons with disabilities and their care givers.
5. The general public is encouraged to avoid stigmatizing persons with invisible disabilities and parents and care takers for persons with invisible disabilities because stigma disempowers them to speak out and exhibit their potentials.

Signed by:



Mpindi Bumali,

Chairperson

**National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU)**

**Date:** Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021