

Preliminary Report

Preparatory Workshop on the Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities and Observance of International Day of Persons with Disabilities



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Introduction

Last year, a joint event was organized titling “United in Action to Rescue and Achieve the SDGs for, with and by the Persons with Disabilities” with the same goal by the focal points such as Sightsavers Bangladesh, UNDP, Australian Aid, UNFPA, ILO, UN Women, UNPRPD, UNICEF, and UNRC commuting all the relevant stakeholders, i.e., disabled persons, different benevolent organizations working on disabilities, respective government authorities, private sector, civil society representatives, and media to the same table to discuss so that we all can jointly work for the persons with disabilities. During the day-long discussions, stakeholders launched the Reporters Forum for advisory aspects promoting awareness. Moreover, a consensus was developed for thoroughly reviewing the social protection benefits for the persons with disabilities. Also, the Joint UN committed preparing the Social Protection Framework for persons with disabilities under the purview of Leave No One Behind (LNOB)¹. It will help developing the NSSS 2026 and beyond. To be mentioned, a National Action Plan (NAP) for persons with disabilities was developed in 2018 and at the Global Summit last year, Bangladesh secured 11 commitments, one of which emphasizes the joint effort to implement the National Action Plan. Thus, it is essential to revisit the NAP and monitor its progress to ensure effective outcomes.

Objective

1. Present the draft Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities;
2. Build consensus among stakeholders on findings and analyses;
3. Ensure the framework is inclusive, human rights-centered, and evidence-based;
4. Plan for the observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) on December 3, 2024.

The event had two sections. On the first section, presenting the Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities and one the second half, participants were divided into eight groups for working on eight thematic areas.

Welcome Remarks

Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario

Country Director, Sightsavers & Convener, Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh

In her opening remarks, Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario articulated the objectives of the event, emphasizing the critical importance of developing a robust Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh. She provided valuable context for the framework's preparation,

¹ SSPS. (2024). Report on International Day of Persons with Disabilities – Seminar 2023. Retrieved from <https://socialprotection.gov.bd/2024/02/report-on-international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-seminar-2023/>. Published on 25th February, 2024.

highlighting the need for inclusive policies that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure that no one is left behind.

Ms. Rozario offered insights into Sightsavers' work in Bangladesh, detailing the organization's efforts to empower individuals with disabilities and promote their rights. She highlighted their flagship campaign, Samatar Bangladesh, which focuses on raising awareness, fostering social inclusion, and advocating for the legal rights of persons with disabilities. Through this campaign, Sightsavers aims to create a more equitable society where individuals with disabilities can thrive and contribute to their communities.

Additionally, Ms. Rozario stressed the numerous challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, including social stigma, lack of accessibility, inadequate healthcare services, and limited employment opportunities. She pointed out that these barriers not only hinder their participation in society but also perpetuate a cycle of poverty and exclusion. Ms. Rozario concluded by underscoring the urgent need for collaborative efforts among stakeholders to address these challenges and implement effective solutions that will enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh.



Objective of the Preparatory Workshop Discussed by Mr. Ayon Debnath, Sightsavers

Mr. Ayon Debnath commenced his address by outlining the core objectives of the preparatory workshop, focusing on two key areas:

1. Developing the Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities
2. Building Stakeholders' Consensus on the Social Protection Framework

He provided a comprehensive context for the framework's preparation, emphasizing the need for a well-structured approach to address the multifaceted challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. Mr. Debnath outlined the objectives of the workshop, underscoring the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to create an effective and inclusive social protection system.

Mr. Debnath briefly discussed the current scenario of disability in Bangladesh, highlighting the pervasive challenges that hinder the inclusion of persons with disabilities in various aspects of society. He pointed out the slow implementation of the National Action Plan for Disability, which has led to a gap between policy intentions and practical outcomes. This delay in execution underscores the need for immediate action and collaboration among stakeholders.

Drawing from international best practices, Mr. Debnath emphasized the potential of assistive technology to transform the lives of persons with disabilities. He advocated for tax rebates on the importation of assistive technologies, which would make these crucial tools more accessible. Mr. Debnath argued that providing persons with disabilities access to assistive devices is a vital step toward ensuring their inclusion in the labor market. He also stressed the necessity of equipping persons with disabilities with essential skills and ensuring their inclusion in the workforce. Mr. Debnath highlighted the importance of fostering an inclusive labor market that provides

opportunities for individuals with disabilities to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. He reiterated that this focus on skills development aligns with the overarching goal of improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities.

Addressing the thematic areas of the workshop, Mr. Debnath emphasized the significance of Article 3 of the framework, which pertains to health care affordability and access. He noted that ensuring access to affordable health care is a critical component of a comprehensive social protection strategy for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Debnath concluded his remarks by stressing the importance of group work during the workshop. He encouraged active participation from all stakeholders, asserting that collaborative discussions would be instrumental in shaping a robust Social Protection Framework. He expressed optimism that through collective efforts, the workshop would yield actionable insights that can lead to effective policies and initiatives for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh.

Keynote PowerPoint Presentation Mr. Aminul Arifeen, SSPS Programme, UNDP

Mr. Aminul Arifeen started his keynote presentation by outlining the objectives of the preparatory workshop and the overarching framework aimed at enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. His articulation of the goals set a proactive tone for the discussions to follow, emphasizing a collaborative approach to developing a more inclusive society.

The goals highlighted by Mr. Arifeen include:

- **Analyzing Existing Policies:** A thorough examination of national public and social policies, programs, and initiatives—both national and international—to identify gaps and opportunities.
- **Reviewing International Standards:** An assessment of international treaties, conventions, and best practices that serve as benchmarks for inclusivity and rights protection.
- **Budget Analysis:** A critical analysis of the national budget and ministry-specific budget documents to evaluate the adequacy of financial resources allocated for the support of persons with disabilities.
- **Inclusive Social Protection Framework:** The development of a social protection framework that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- **Integration into National Strategies:** Ensuring that persons with disabilities are integrated into the upcoming National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) for 2026.

Understanding Inequality Through the Capability Approach

In his introduction, Mr. Arifeen discussed the development of inequality and exclusion through the lens of the Capability Approach. He emphasized how these factors create a discriminatory system that perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability for persons with disabilities. This



perspective underscored the need for a framework that not only acknowledges these disparities but also actively seeks to address them.

Research Methodology: A Qualitative Approach

Mr. Arifeen detailed the qualitative research methodology employed in developing the framework, which involved a comprehensive analysis of existing policies and frameworks. This approach ensures that the needs and rights of persons with disabilities are central to the discourse, guiding the development of a more effective and inclusive framework.

Legal Instruments: Protecting Rights and Promoting Inclusion

A significant part of Mr. Arifeen's presentation was dedicated to the legal framework safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities. He highlighted key documents that form the backbone of these protections, including:

- The Constitution of Bangladesh (1972)
- Disability Welfare Act (2001)
- Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (2006)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) (2007)
- NSSS (2015) and its Action Plans (2016-2022)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — Leave No One Behind (2015)
- Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013)
- National Action Plan on Disability (2018)
- Commitments to the Global Disability Summit (2022)

He underscored how the NSSS emphasizes the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, recommending essential reforms, such as a Child Disability Benefit for children under 18 and a Disability Benefit for adults with severe disabilities.

Statistical Insights

Mr. Arifeen presented alarming statistics regarding the prevalence of disabilities in Bangladesh, shedding light on the urgent need for action:

- The Disability Information System (DIS) indicates that 3,413,507 persons with disabilities are receiving government benefits.
- The Population and Housing Census (2022) reports a disability prevalence rate of 1.37%.
- The National Survey on Persons with Disabilities (NSPD, 2021) finds a rate of 2.80%, while the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES, 2022) reports 5.71%.
- The widely cited prevalence rate is 9.70%.

He noted that disability rates tend to increase with age, particularly among women, and that over 67% of households with disabilities lack formal education. Despite a national literacy rate of 78%, only 9.51% of disabled students have access to higher education.

Economic Disparities

Utilizing lower poverty lines from the HIES (2022), Mr. Arifeen stated that the headcount rate of poverty at the national level is 5.6%, with 29% of disabled households classified among the poorest. The overall employment rate for individuals aged 15-64 years stands at 33.78%, revealing significant disparities across gender and other demographics.

Political Representation

Highlighting the critical underrepresentation of persons with disabilities in the political process, Mr. Arifeen noted that only 0.17% are involved in local government, and 0.53% in elections. This statistic underscores the pressing need for inclusive policies that amplify the voices of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.

Financial Assistance Trends

Mr. Arifeen reviewed the growth of financial assistance for persons with disabilities from FY 2005-06 to FY 2024-25, noting a significant increase in the number of disability allowance beneficiaries from 104,166 to 3,234,000, with the allowance amount rising from BDT 200 to 850. This trend reflects a growing recognition of the needs of persons with disabilities.

Discrimination Factors: Analyzing Vulnerability

In a comprehensive analysis, Mr. Arifeen examined data-driven evidence highlighting factors contributing to vulnerability and discrimination. He discussed variables such as age, sexual orientation, patterns of disabilities, gender dimensions, geographical location, political identity, and enabling infrastructure, which collectively exacerbate the challenges faced by persons with disabilities.

A Comprehensive Social Protection Framework: Rethinking Approaches

Mr. Arifeen emphasized the importance of shifting perspectives towards a comprehensive social protection framework that respects dignity, autonomy, and inclusion for persons with disabilities. He advocated for a twin-track approach that promotes both mainstreaming and specialized support, ensuring that all individuals receive the attention and resources they need to thrive.

Thematic Roadmap: Collaborating for Change

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Arifeen discussed the thematic roadmap for the framework, urging stakeholders to collaborate and build consensus on the draft Social Protection Framework for persons with disabilities. This collaborative effort is essential to understand the diverse needs and aspirations of the disability community, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future in Bangladesh.

Reflection on the PowerPoint Presentation

Mr. Monsur Ahmed Chowdhuri, Founder, Impact Foundation

Mr. Monsur Ahmed Chowdhuri began his address by expressing appreciation for the keynote speaker and paying tribute to those injured or lost during the tragic events of July-August. Chowdhuri passionately argued for a nation that actively includes and integrates persons with disabilities into

every aspect of life. He emphasized that a truly progressive society must prioritize the needs and rights of all its citizens, especially those with disabilities.

National Action Plan: Funding Gaps

Focusing on the National Action Plan, which involves 35 ministries since its launch in 2019, he called for allocation of funding. Chowdhuri pointed out that only a few ministries, such as the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), have received necessary financial backing, while the Ministry of Social Welfare, which is pivotal to this cause, remains underfunded.

Governance Challenges

Mr. Chowdhuri stressed the urgent need for a unified national consensus to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. He raised concerns about the frequent turnover of government officials, which leads to instability and lack of commitment to these crucial initiatives. He urged for improved cooperation between ministries and called for a strengthened governance framework to enhance the social protection system.

He addressed the negative perception surrounding the Ministry of Social Welfare, which is often viewed as a less desirable posting. This has led to a lack of engagement from talented and motivated officers who could drive positive change. He called for a shift in this narrative to create a more supportive environment.

Reviving Focal Points for Disability Advocacy

Reflecting on past initiatives, Chowdhuri noted the establishment of focal points in 2007-2008 aimed at disability advocacy, which have since disappeared. He urged the re-establishment of these points to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are adequately represented in government discussions and policy-making. Furthermore, highlighting the role of the SDG Network, he urged stakeholders to direct their efforts toward concrete actions that address the needs of persons with disabilities. Chowdhuri emphasized the necessity for ongoing reforms by the Interim Government to be inclusive, encouraging all parties to formally present their demands for change. Chowdhuri did not hesitate to criticize the previous government for conflating the needs of transgender individuals with those of persons with disabilities, asserting that this approach undermined the distinct rights and requirements of each group.

In closing, he expressed his deep disappointment regarding the government's progress on initiatives for persons with disabilities. He highlighted a particularly striking example: the National Bangla Braille Committee, which was established in 1976. Despite the significant time that has passed, it took 48 years for the government to officially approve the National Bangla Braille in 2024. This prolonged process vividly underscores the sluggish pace at which the government is addressing the critical needs of persons with disabilities, revealing a troubling gap between policy intentions and actual implementation.

Ms. Ashafunnahar Misti, Executive Director, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation

Insights from Ms. Ashafunnahar Misti: Targeted Support for Persons with Disabilities

Political Declarations vs. Practical Needs

Ms. Ashafunnahar Misti, Executive Director of the Women with Disabilities Development Foundation, emphasized that the concept of a disability allowance with 100% coverage was initially a political declaration. She argued that such support should be targeted and need-based, meaning it must directly address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. Drawing from her extensive experience, she stressed that the allowance should fully cover all necessary expenses to truly be effective.

Encouraging Employment Through Incentives

She highlighted a progressive initiative wherein companies employing a minimum of two individuals with disabilities would either maintain those positions or pay the equivalent salaries to the government. This approach encourages businesses to actively participate in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce.

Learning from Global Best Practices

Reflecting on her experiences during a fellowship in Japan, Ms. Misti noted the importance of adapting successful global practices to the local context in Bangladesh. She underscored the necessity for data to be segregated based on various factors such as socio-economic status and education levels. This detailed analysis is crucial for designing inclusive programs that cater to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

The Call for Inclusive Programming

In her closing remarks, Ms. Misti reiterated the urgent need for inclusive programming that not only addresses financial support but also encompasses comprehensive strategies for education, employment, and social inclusion. By tailoring programs to meet the specific needs of individuals with disabilities, we can create a more equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. She has also stressed on accessible tourism and the prevailing stigma and continued harassment against the persons with disabilities.

Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director, Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID)

Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), delivered a powerful address highlighting the systemic challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. He emphasized that national policies and actions have contributed to a cycle of poverty that traps disabled individuals, stating, "Our national efforts have shaped a reality where disabled people will remain poor for the rest of their lives."

Inadequate Support and Employment Opportunities

Alam pointed out the inadequacy of the current disability allowance of 850 Taka, arguing that it fails to meet the basic needs of individuals. He urged the government to acknowledge that at least 500,000 disabled individuals secure jobs earning around 8,500 Taka annually, underscoring the urgent need for sustainable employment solutions. "We need employment," he asserted, stressing the importance of accessible job opportunities.

Healthcare and Social Services: A Deceptive Approach

Alam voiced concerns about the healthcare services available to persons with disabilities, lamenting their isolation from essential support systems. He criticized the Ministry of Social Welfare's initiative to create "One Stop Service Centers," branding it as a mere deception. "Why do we need alternative services instead of inclusive ones?" he questioned, calling for genuine inclusivity rather than superficial solutions.

The Voice of Persons with Disabilities

Highlighting the lack of representation and advocacy, he noted that persons with disabilities struggle to act as a pressure group to influence government policies. The internal divisions among OPDs further complicate their collective efforts. "We do not have a unified voice," he remarked, emphasizing the need for solidarity among advocacy groups.

Commitment to Action

In conclusion, Mr. Alam reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the Social Protection Framework for persons with disabilities. He mentioned a recent initiative where 12 disabled individuals joined forces under the platform of 'Disability Rights Watch' to contribute to the Interim Government's reform efforts. He called for collaboration and assistance in these endeavors, reminding officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare that the responsibility for the well-being of persons with disabilities extends beyond their ministry to at least 34 others. "We seek appointments in various ministries, but we often do not receive responses," he lamented, urging a more positive and inclusive approach from the government.





S M Monjur Rashid, Senior Advisor for Communication at the SSPS Programme, UNDP, provided an insightful backdrop to the thematic group work during his speech. He began by underscoring the constitutional rights of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, emphasizing the nation's legal obligation to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities for all citizens, including those with disabilities.

Focused Thematic Groups

Mr. Rashid outlined the key thematic areas that would guide the group discussions, which aim to address the multifaceted challenges faced by persons with disabilities. These thematic groups included: Livelihood and Social Allowance, Inclusive Education, Accessibility, Human Development and TVET, Digital Divide, Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Management, AI, Data Interoperability,

Identification and GRS, Advocacy and Communication, Budget and Financing.



Thematic Group Exercise

Theme	Current Situation	Key Challenge	Prioritized Expectation
Livelihood and Social Allowance	<p>Lack of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities</p> <p>Social safety nets are insufficient, both in coverage and in amount.</p> <p>Lowest social protection benefits in South Asia.</p> <p>Limited access to TVET and skills development programs, with a missing link to income-generating activities.</p> <p>Absence of disability-disaggregated data.</p>	<p>Not all Persons with disabilities are included in the DSS (Department of Social Services) identification process.</p> <p>Enrollment processes for Persons with disabilities are not easily accessible.</p> <p>Safety nets are not viewed as a rights-based approach.</p> <p>Mis-targeting in safety net benefits.</p> <p>No scope for multiple benefits.</p> <p>TVET quota for Persons with disabilities is not being enforced.</p> <p>Lack of digital literacy.</p> <p>The NSSS commitment to unemployment insurance is still missing.</p> <p>Limited wage employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Allowances should be based on the degree of disability.</p> <p>Standardized and increased amounts of allowances for Persons with disabilities.</p>
Inclusive Education	<p>80% of children with disabilities are still outside mainstream services due to a coordination gap.</p> <p>Priority is being given to inclusion, but major gaps remain.</p>	<p>Coordination gaps between different sectors.</p> <p>Policy gaps, including the outdated education policy (2010).</p> <p>Conflicting policies, especially related to the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW).</p> <p>Lack of resources and rigid education systems.</p> <p>Numerous and unclear definitions of disability.</p> <p>Lack of accessibility to services and resources, including assistive devices.</p> <p>Inadequate digital technology for education.</p> <p>Lack of credibility in disability surveys.</p>	<p>Universal stipends for Persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Assistive devices and technology tailored to needs.</p> <p>Credible and comprehensive disability surveys.</p> <p>Mainstreaming of services for Persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Improved digital accessibility and technology.</p>

			Enhanced awareness and advocacy for inclusive education. Strengthening research, DIS (Disability Information System), and OPD (Organizations of Persons with Disabilities) engagement.
Accessibility, Human Development, TVET	<p>Accessibility challenges go beyond physical barriers, including digital accessibility.</p> <p>Public spaces, such as parks, transport stations, markets, and footpaths, remain inaccessible for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Transport systems are not inclusive.</p>	<p>Lack of accessible digital systems, including websites, online banking, and educational materials.</p> <p>Inaccessible software and a lack of assistive technology.</p> <p>Audio-visual communication systems are not disability-friendly.</p>	<p>Enforce compliance with the Bangladesh National Building Code for accessibility.</p> <p>Make transport systems (road and water) accessible to all.</p> <p>Develop specific legislation for digital accessibility.</p> <p>Create accessibility guidelines for public offices.</p> <p>Implement tax rebates for importing assistive devices.</p> <p>Improve accessibility in educational materials.</p>
Digital Divide,	<p>Lack of accessibility in digital services and assistive technology for Persons with disabilities.</p> <p>No proper assessments on digital technology needs for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Digital technologies are unaffordable, unavailable, and not user-friendly.</p> <p>Connectivity gaps and lack of data on digital inclusion for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Ensure affordability and subsidize technological devices for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Create more accessible user interfaces, including visual and audio signals.</p> <p>Conduct proper assessments for digital devices needed by persons with disabilities.</p>
AI and Data Interoperability, Identification and GRS	<p>AI and data interoperability are not fully utilized in disability services.</p> <p>Lack of AI-based guidance and intervention for Persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>AI initiatives are concentrated in Dhaka, with limited understanding and application elsewhere.</p> <p>Poor data management and a lack of specific guidelines within both government and non-government sectors.</p>	<p>Training on AI use and its potential for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Collect proper and disaggregated data.</p> <p>Develop an inclusive legal framework for AI in disability inclusion.</p>
Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction	Limited accessibility in emergency response plans, leaving persons with disabilities vulnerable during crises.	Lack of inclusive infrastructure in evacuation centers, shelters, and communication systems.	Enhanced inclusive DRR policies mandating accessible shelters, transportation, and communication.

(DRR)	<p>Inadequate data on disability needs and distribution in disaster-prone areas.</p> <p>Insufficient awareness and training on inclusive practices among DRR agencies.</p>	<p>Social stigma and isolation reduce access to timely information and assistance.</p> <p>Limited financial and human resources for integrating disability-inclusive measures within DRR frameworks.</p>	<p>Capacity building for DRR practitioners, responders, and communities on inclusive practices.</p> <p>Improved data collection systems to guide targeted disaster risk reduction efforts for persons with disabilities.</p>
Advocacy, Communication	<p>The collective voice of persons with disabilities is not being raised effectively.</p> <p>Grassroots-level OPDs lack clarity about their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Limited capacity building of OPDs.</p>	<p>Lack of support from policymakers and limited media engagement.</p>	<p>Implement capacity-building programs for OPDs.</p> <p>Provide training and guidance for the media to advocate for disability rights.</p>
Budget and Financing	<p>Except for the disability allowance, there is no disaggregated budget for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The budget is not being allocated according to the action plan or CRPD compliance</p>	<p>Lack of specific budget allocations for disability-related programs and activities.</p>	<p>Develop a disability-disaggregated budget.</p> <p>Ensure compliance with CRPD in the budget allocation process.</p>

Reflections by Dignitaries

Following the group exercises and participants' presentations, distinguished guests shared their reflections on the Social Protection Framework for persons with disabilities, providing valuable insights on critical aspects of disability inclusion, policy implementation, and rights-based approaches.

Ms. Nasima Akhter, Chair of the Equal Bangladesh Campaign, shared that while many people with disabilities face economic challenges, not all are economically disadvantaged. Consequently, she argued that a universal allowance may not be the most effective approach. Instead, she emphasized a need-based allowance that targets those most in need, maximizing impact and efficient resource distribution.

Mr. Saidul Haque, Executive Director of BERDO and an Ekushey Padak Awardee, expressed his support for the framework and its underlying principles, particularly the alignment with international standards and inclusivity. He highlighted the need for disability issues to receive higher prioritization within government agendas. He shared his concerns regarding the lack of proactive attention to disability inclusion at the governmental level, which he believes hinders meaningful progress toward national inclusivity goals.

Mr. Azmul Haque, Director (Development, Planning, and ICT) and Joint Secretary at the Jatiya Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation, Ministry of Social Welfare, reaffirmed his commitment to working on the implementation plan for the Social Protection Framework. From his perspective within government, he acknowledged significant barriers, notably the lack of a unified voice among Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) on setting policy priorities. He stressed that consensus within OPDs is crucial to ensuring government alignment and advocacy efforts that effectively address priority areas.

Mr. A.H.M Noman Khan, Executive Director of the Center for Disability in Development (CDD), reflected on his decades-long experience in disability advocacy, noting the progress made in inclusive education. While discussions on disability inclusion are now common, two decades ago, the idea of children with disabilities receiving a mainstream education faced considerable resistance. He expressed optimism that the framework could serve as a cornerstone for advancing the rights and representation of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, providing a structured approach to implementing and safeguarding their rights.



Mr. Shafiqul Islam, Asia Regional Director of ADD International, provided closing reflections, stressing the urgency of implementing the UNCRPD effectively. He remarked that this framework has the potential to support persons with disabilities by facilitating a rights-based approach, empowering them to advocate for their entitlements. He reiterated the participants' insights that the basic needs of persons with disabilities remain unmet and called for greater attention and action from all stakeholders.

These reflections underscored both the promise and challenges of advancing disability inclusion in Bangladesh, with an emphasis on strategic, rights-based approaches and effective collaboration among government, organizations, and advocates.



Conclusion

The preparatory workshop on the Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities marked a pivotal step toward enhancing disability inclusion in Bangladesh. By comprehensively examining national policies, budget allocations, and international best practices, the workshop laid a strong foundation for developing a framework aligned with both national priorities and global commitments like the UNCRPD. Insights shared by government representatives, OPDs, advocates, and academics highlighted the value of a need-based, rights-centered approach in addressing the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities.

Reflections from dignitaries underscored the importance of a coherent strategy for inclusive policy implementation, while acknowledging existing barriers, such as limited consensus among stakeholders and inadequate prioritization of disability issues on national agendas. The discussions reaffirmed that although progress is being made, significant gaps remain in access to education, economic support, and political representation for persons with disabilities. Bridging these gaps will require an integrated approach, incorporating data-driven policy, inclusive budgeting, and cross-sector collaboration.

The workshop successfully achieved consensus among stakeholders on the framework, setting the stage for further action plans, consultative dialogues, research, and cooperation. This consensus paves the way to implement the Social Protection Framework that can protect the rights of persons with disabilities and foster their active participation in society, contributing to an inclusive and equitable Bangladesh.

Participating Organizations in the Consensus Building Workshop on the National Social Protection Framework for Persons with Disabilities

- 1 Narsingdi Disabled Peoples Organization to Development (NDPOD)
- 2 Team Inclusion Bangladesh (TIB)
- 3 Spondon, Narsingdi
- 4 Seba Foundation
- 5 Strengthening DRM Structures & Capacities (SDSC)
- 6 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- 7 Society of the Deaf and Sign Language (SDSL)
- 8 BRAC
- 9 Disabled Welfare Society (DWS)
- 10 Action on Disability and Development Bangladesh (ADD)
- 11 Disabled Rehabilitation & Research Association (DRRA)
- 12 Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)
- 13 Aspire to Innovate (a2i)
- 14 World Health Organization (WHO)
- 15 The International Labour Organization (ILO)
- 16 Sightsavers
- 17 Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) Bangladesh
- 18 Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP)
- 19 Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
- 20 Manikganj Disabled People's Organization to Development (MDPOD)
- 21 Congenital sucrase-isomaltose deficiency (CSID)
- 22 জাতীয় প্রতিবন্ধী উন্নয়ন ফাউন্ডেশন (JPUF)
- 23 Christian Blind Mission (CBM)
- 24 National Grassroots Disability Organization (NGDO)
- 25 Visually Impaired People's Society (VIPS)
- 26 Bangladesh Protibandhi Unnayan Sangstha (BPUS)
- 27 Down Syndrome Society of Bangladesh
- 28 Organization for Disabled Improvement and Rights (ODIR BD)
- 29 Impact Foundation
- 30 Daily Bonik Barta
- 31 Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled (SWID)
- 32 Disabled Child Foundation (DCF)
- 33 NSUPUP