

Campaign to ratify the African Disability Protocol (ADP)

This briefing provides more information on the campaign to secure ratification of the African Disability Protocol. Sightsavers' Equal World campaign is partnering with the African Union, the African Disability Forum and the Africa Disability Alliance to mobilise countries in Africa to ratify the protocol. Ten more ratifications are needed for the protocol to come into effect across all African Union Member States.

What is the objective of the campaign?

The regional campaign aims to bring the African Disability Protocol into force by attaining the 10 necessary ratifications. Along with advocating for the ratifications, the campaign will seek to put disability rights on the political and public agenda and to enhance understanding among African governments and their populations of the unique issues that impact people with disabilities living in Africa.

Why should organisations join the campaign?

By joining forces, we can create a powerful collective voice for change and gather support for ratification across the continent. We will work together using online platforms, petitions and other influencing tools to ensure our message is heard by governments. Campaign partners will also have access to the expertise and guidance of the African Union, the African Disability Forum, the Africa Disability Alliance and Sightsavers (which is supporting #RatifyTheADP as part of its Equal World disability rights campaign).

What is the African Disability Protocol?

The African Disability Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights was adopted by the Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the African Union at the Thirtieth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in January 2018. It was developed after the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) recognised the need for the African Union to have a clear framework for Member States to promote disability rights. However, it requires ratification from 15 countries to come into effect. Five countries have ratified so far: Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Mali and Rwanda. Other African countries are following suit to ensure they protect the rights of their citizens with disabilities.

Why should African governments sign and ratify the ADP?

The ADP gives African governments an opportunity to contextualise the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) within an African framework to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities on the continent.

The ADP recognises specific challenges linked to customs, traditional beliefs, harmful practices, the role of the family, caregivers and community in upholding disability rights in Africa. For example, the ADP is explicit on the duty to protect people with albinism on the continent, in recognition of the specific stigma and risk of harm they face in some countries.

How can governments ratify the ADP?

To ratify the protocol there are three critical stages, although the process will vary between countries. First, the ministry in charge of disability must work with the Attorney General or the authority responsible for advising the government on legal affairs to ensure the protocol is in line with the country's laws. Second, once the ministry of disability has advised the government to ratify, the country will have to go through its domestic ratification process which usually involves consultations, cabinet approval and the protocol being passed by parliament. Third, the instruments of ratification should be submitted to the African Union Commission for the record. As a campaign partner, the African Union is available to provide support and guidance on ratification processes across all countries.

Further information

For more information on ratifying the ADP, please contact:

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