



Embedding Disability in the Just Transition Work Programme

Key Messages



Although JTWP recognises persons with disabilities, inclusion remains symbolic and unsupported in practice. It must now be embedded into specific operational mandates, measurable outcomes, and accountability mechanisms



To ensure just transition, the UNFCCC must move beyond viewing disability as a condition of vulnerability and instead adopt a human-rights-based approach that mandates universal design, disability-disaggregated data, and dedicated climate finance

Current Gaps

Disability is absent from the JTWP's implementation. There are no specific operational mandates, activities, or measurable outcomes linked to disability inclusion

Executive Summary

The Paris Agreement embeds climate action within principles of human rights, equity, and sustainable development, explicitly requiring Parties to respect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. The Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) under the UNFCCC reflects a growing commitment to people-centred and inclusive climate action. This recognises that transitions to low-emission and climate-resilient economies should be inclusive, fair, and participatory.

Despite normative recognition of persons with disabilities in JTWP dialogues, this recognition has not translated into operational mandates, measurable outcomes, financing mechanisms, or accountability structures. Therefore, disability inclusion is accounted for on paper but is absent in implementation efforts.

As per the provisions outlined under the human rights model of disability under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disability inclusion must be embedded systematically within the JTWP. This will enhance pathways to disability-responsive climate governance, inclusive financing practices, and social protection of persons with disabilities in the green economy transition.

No disability-specific financing instruments exist within just transition frameworks. Funding procedures rarely consider the costs of reasonable accommodation or assistive devices, making disability inclusion efforts structurally underfunded

Calls for capacity building in just transition programmes lack requirements for accessible curricula or incentives for employers to recruit persons with disabilities, risking their continued exclusion from the formal sector



Policy Recommendations



P1

Governance, Participation, and Institutional Representation for OPDs

Grant OPDs official UNFCCC constituency status with full participation rights, agenda-setting power, and adequate resourcing. Mandate OPD inclusion in national and local Just Transition bodies, sectoral committees, and community-level planning processes, covering policy design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Track disability-disaggregated participation metrics for delegates, speakers, and technical experts. Universal design principles should be adopted for all stakeholder consultations.

P2

Disability-disaggregated data, monitoring, and accountability

JTWP guidance should be updated to require disability-specific metrics and reporting across NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, LT-LEDS, Biennial Transparency Reports, and JTWP progress reports. Develop disability-responsive indicators and expand intersectional data collection to address inequities in training programme accessibility, employment outcomes in green sectors, representation in governance, access to finance and social protection and adaptation/mitigation benefits and burdens.

P3

Disability-responsive social protection and safety nets

Integrate disability-specific provisions into Just Transition social protection systems and guarantee continuity of support services during job/livelihood transitions. Address the compounding vulnerability of disabled persons in climate-related economic disruptions.

P4

Disability-inclusive climate finance

Establish disability-inclusive finance mechanisms across climate finance and Just Transition channels. All funding proposals should mandate resource allocation for accessibility, assistive devices, and support services. Financing processes, from applications to reporting, must be accessible, supported by micro-grants and capacity-building for OPDs. Promote inclusive green entrepreneurship through disability-responsive MSME instruments, subsidized loans, and safeguards embedded throughout the funding lifecycle.

P5

Inclusive employment, skills development, and workforce transitions

Mandate universal design, accessible platforms, and reasonable accommodations across all JTWP training, reskilling, and vocational programmes. Track participation, completion, and employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. Support accessible green entrepreneurship and employment through dedicated start-up funds with accommodations, and incentivise disability-inclusive hiring in green sectors with inclusive workplace standards.

P6

Disability-responsive technology transfer and climate information

Integrate disability across climate research, technology needs, and transfer. Require Universal Design, fund assistive technologies, and ensure accessible climate information and early warning systems.



This policy brief was researched and written by Wambui Muchaba and Belinda Momanyi in their capacity as consultants commissioned by the European Disability Forum for the UNFCCC Disability Caucus, under the supervision of Marion Steff (EDF), and funded by the Disability Rights Fund.