



## DISABLED PEOPLE'S DEMANDS IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The new Constitution of Zimbabwe must promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The constitution, in all its sections, must therefore embrace the following fundamental principles:

- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Respect for the inherent dignity and individual autonomy of all disabled women and men, including the freedom to make their own choices;
- Promotion of non-discrimination and full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- The right to an accessible physical, social, economic and cultural environment, including access to health, education, information and communication;
- Guarantee equality of opportunity, an adequate standard of living and social protection;
- Promotion of equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and their right to develop their skills and to preserve their identities.

To this end, the Constitution is expected to commit the State to ensure and promote the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability. Successful athlete Elliot Mujaji, famous singer Prudence Mabhena or internationally respected disabled people's leader Alexander Phiri prove daily that disabled persons are able to make it . if adequately supported.



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## **JESUS SAID:**

***“When you give a feast,  
invite the poor, disabled, the blind.”***

**Our constitution must assure that disabled persons are  
included in all society!**

Not only has the Bible demanded the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the United Nations, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, have proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind.

Persons with disabilities are, however, concerned that, despite these various commandments, they continue to face barriers in their participation as equal members of society and they suffer from violations of their rights in Zimbabwe.

A study on disability issues in Zimbabwe in 2007 revealed that the country has approximately 1.500.000 people with disabilities are struggling to survive in the current political and economic crisis. They are among the most vulnerable and poor in the country. They are discriminated against with respect to health, education, clean water and sanitation, HIV and AIDS services, and sports and recreation. On the whole, they are treated like second-class citizens in their own country.

Discrimination against any persons on the basis of disability is a violation of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person. Women and girls with disabilities in particular are at greater risk of violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation . both within and outside the home.

The government therefore needs to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support.

Disability is an evolving concept which results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudes of communities. Very often traditional views stigmatize disability as a curse. So barriers are built up which hinder persons with disabilities to fully participate in society on an equal basis with others.

## **JESUS SAID:**

***“It was not that this blind man sinned, or his parents,  
but that the work of God might be displayed in him.”***

**Our Constitution must guarantee that disabled persons are  
not discriminated against!**