

Excellencies,

My name is Nelly Caleb, I am the Co. Chair of the Pacific Disability Forum and a Board member of the International Disability Alliance.

The Pacific Disability Forum is a regional body of organisations of persons with disabilities in the Pacific region. Our aim is to build the capacity of these organisations and improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the Pacific through advocacy.

I'd like to share my experience with situations of disaster and humanitarian emergencies in Vanuatu.

In 2013, there were landslides in one of the rural indigenous areas in my province. Staff from one of the NGO's came to the area to urge people to move to another place, because the landslides were coming. The men in the village disagreed and said it won't come, but all the indigenous women were scared and moved out with their children to another village.

One indigenous pregnant woman with a hearing impairment and her 6 children did not move, due to lack of information on two sides. First, she did not receive accessible information from the NGO. Second, due to her hearing impairment she did not receive information from the members of the community either who had decided to stay. She, her six children and the child she was carrying, passed away in the landslides.

Inaccessible humanitarian action impacts our lives directly, because we have a lack of access to information, infrastructure, and aid packages. But it also impact us indirectly by loss of family and community support mechanisms.

Without official data disaggregated by disability, we cannot say where people are, what they need and barriers they face to access simple and basic services. Our information comes from our own members, including from rural area, but it is our knowledge, our work and not official data.

Let's work together to make humanitarian action inclusive of persons with disabilities and finally leave no one behind.

Thank you.