

MEDIA STATEMENT

**ISSUED BY DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
ATTENTION: JOURNALISTS AND NEWS EDITORS
SUNDAY: 25 JANUARY 2026**

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DWYPD IS CALLING FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

PRETORIA: Persons with disabilities in South Africa are vulnerable to severe climatic events. South Africa continues to experience the escalating impacts of climate change, including severe storms, floods, droughts, and extreme heat.

These impacts disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, who already face systemic barriers to access, participation, and protection. This has heightened the vulnerability of disabled communities to environmental conditions. Climate change is expected to exacerbate extreme weather events, increase the prevalence of diseases, and disrupt livelihoods.

This is especially alarming for persons with disabilities, as they are particularly susceptible to the detrimental impacts of climate change. The disproportionate vulnerabilities that persons with disabilities face under changing climate conditions. They include physical, social, economic, and institutional barriers that limit their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-related emergencies.

The call for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the changing climate follows the clarion call by the White Paper on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, which is calling for full inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, and sustainable development initiatives. Climate action that excludes persons with disabilities undermines these commitments and deepens inequality.

South Africa should protect persons with disabilities against climate change as mandated by law and policy. Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obligates States to ensure their safety during risks like natural disasters and emergencies.

Climate justice is disability justice. Building a climate-resilient South Africa requires inclusive planning, equal participation, and the protection of the rights and dignity of all, especially persons with disabilities.

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Issued by: Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

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