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The experience of the Group of Friends of Persons with Disability in Sudan



Looking back at 2019, it was a year of big transformations in Sudan. The struggles of Civil Society for Democracy and Human Rights have achieved historical results and there is strong hope and awareness that the People of Sudan are now the main actors in building their future. Within this framework, also the support for the rights of persons with disabilities has seen a new contribution: the creation and launch of the Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities (GFPD). The GFPD originated by the initiative of the Italian Embassy, which, welcoming the request from relevant public institutions (Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Health and National Council of Persons with Disability), started a process leading to the creation of a “Common Space” where all the actors involved in supporting the rights of persons with disability might meet and exchange.

The rationale behind the GFPD is actually to provide a virtual space where all the interested stakeholders can participate under the common goal of supporting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. This is possible by sharing the available experience and expertise and presenting the actions already in place so that to improve the coordination among the different sectors. At the donors’ level, actors like the European Union (EU), Member States, UN International Agencies and other donors, have decided to meet regularly, discussing key technical issues, increasing coordination in the different sector of intervention and finding commonalities and possible synergies.



Nevertheless, the GFPD is intended as an inclusive space where all the interested stakeholders are invited to participate. Therefore, representatives of the main Public Institutions, as well as Civil Society Organizations, are regularly participating together with international agencies and representatives of the civil society and the private sector, creating a fertile environment for possible synergies to grow and develop further.

As per the last meeting hosted in November by the Spanish Embassy in Khartoum, the participants explicitly referred to the need for the GFPD to be “Operational” in both the Humanitarian and Development sector and growingly foster the cooperation with the private sector that might be utterly relevant in specific sectors (e.g. Equal access to employment). This recommendation, together with several others, is in line with the findings of the Report on the 10 years of implementation of the CRPD in Sudan, a study carried out by the NCPD and national OPDs, with the support of the Italian Cooperation, which will provide relevant inputs to future actions of the GFPD.

Finally, the GFPD has the opportunity of bringing together the efforts of many PwD, which are claiming their rights, now louder than ever. Knowing that, although there are still many challenges to be faced, it is also clear that, through organised forms of participation, there is also the opportunity to write a new history for Sudan together.



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