



Pacific Disability Forum

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Press Release

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INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES – Leave No One Behind.

International Day for Indigenous People is commemorated yearly on the 9th of August, and it is a day set aside to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population. It is also a day to recognize the achievements and contributions that indigenous people have made and continue to make to improve world issues.

The theme this year is “Leaving No One Behind: Indigenous Peoples and the call for a new Social Contract.”

This year's theme is fitting given the current global Covid-19 pandemic which has greatly impacted the Pacific region. The pandemic has brought about a lot of changes and also challenges the way that we do things as individuals, communities and Organizations that we work with.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting populations of persons with disabilities throughout the Pacific that were already suffering from poverty, illness, discrimination, institutional instability or financial insecurity.

From the perspective of indigenous peoples with disabilities, the contrast is even worse. In many of our societies, the social contract, at the very least, needs some revision. But what is a social contract?

It is an unwritten contract on the way that societies do things for social and economic benefits. For indigenous persons with disabilities, being marginalized by the unavailability of the preconditions to inclusion components adds more to the current pressure brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the building and strengthening of social contracts should also be inclusive of indigenous persons with disabilities.

On this note, these social contracts must be based on genuine participation, individual's choice and partnership that fosters equal opportunities and respects the rights, dignity and freedom of all including indigenous persons with disabilities. Their right to inclusion to participate in decision-making is a key component in achieving reconciliation between indigenous peoples in general stakeholders including the government.

The Pacific Disability Forum works closely with Indigenous Persons with disabilities in the region to ensure that our dream of an inclusive Pacific society where all human rights of all persons with disabilities are realized for an inclusive Pacific 2030.

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Should you have any queries, feel free to contact Paradise Tabucala on 7720138 or paradise.tabucala@pacificdisability.org.