

## COVID19 MALAWI DISABILITY STATUS

August 2020

### FEDOMA INITIATIVES

- a. Media campaigns conducted through radio and television programmes aimed at influencing duty bearers to take a disability responsive approaches in the management of the pandemic. This has also provided an opportunity to sensitize the public and Persons with Disabilities themselves on the pandemic and disability.
- b. The setting up of the Presidential Taskforce on COVID19 has left behind the representation of Persons with Disability, however it was learnt through an engagement meeting with the Co-Chairperson of the taskforce that in their understanding disability issues are being addressed by the team through the representation by the then Ministry of Disability and Elderly Affairs in the committee. This however is against the stand of FEDOMA. An effort was made to write the former Chief Secretary to the Government to ensure self representation of Persons with Disabilities in the committee but yielded no results. The engagement meeting FEDOMA had with the taskforce chairperson it was agreed to have follow-up discussion so as to find how FEDOMA issues would be taken up by the committee.
- c. Apart from the Presidential Taskforce on COVID19 there has been other establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce on the Planning of the Re-opening of Schools and FEDOMA has representation in this committee. The main aim of this committee as the name implies is to prepare for safe re-opening of schools in the light of the pandemic. Meanwhile guidelines for this purpose have been developed for pre-school, primary and secondary schools and TTCs, Universities and Technical Colleges. These guidelines are expected to be used by education institutions to thoroughly prepare for reopening. FEDOMA took advantage to make input in the development process of the guidelines.
- d. Apart from working with the government on the subject FEDOMA has also been engaging other actors to ensure disability inclusive COVID19 response. However this has been done with very few institutions and the role of FEDOMA has been providing disability inclusion expertise.
- e. About 3 District Disability Forum (FEDOMA district structures) have also been active in advocating for the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in COVID19 interventions. They have mostly influenced district health offices and managed to have information in accessible format.

#### GAPS

- a. Inaccessible information and communication on the pandemic
- b. Unadapted preventive measures to the needs of particular disabilities making lives of Persons with Disabilities even more difficult. This means the messages are also unadapted.
- c. Lack of involvement of Persons with Disabilities in the fight against the pandemic
- d. Uncoordinated COVID19 response within the movement since FEDOMA has no funding for it and the Department of Disabilities is not consulting Persons with Disabilities when undertaking their activities and this compromises on the quality
- e. Lack of interventions to provide instructional processes to learners with disabilities during the period of school closure
- f. Insufficient supplies of disability related drugs like epilepsy and mental health drugs during the pandemic period