

**DECLARATION on**  
**Ending Marginalization of Persons with Disabilities in Africa’s TVET Ecosystem**  
**2022 ATUPA Annual International Conference: “Repositioning TVET Education Ecosystem**  
**in Light of COVID19 through Heritage Based Education”**  
**30th August 2022, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

Recalling that TVET systems have dual objectives to support economic growth and contribute to broader social objectives in the interest of society as a whole, including allowing marginalised people –such as persons with disabilities– to access skills development opportunities, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda;

Acknowledging that the session has identified key attitudinal, procedural and physical barriers for persons with disabilities in the TVET ecosystem which impact their access and completion;

Recognising the need for greater opportunities and improved strategies to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities in TVET and the labour market; and

Appreciating the need to regularly compile good practices, success stories and inspiring disability-inclusive testimonies;

The session has the following recommendations:

- **Nothing about us without us.** Ensure that persons with disabilities are involved as key stakeholders and drivers of change in all levels of TVET systems, recruitment, and adaption.
- **Raise awareness.** To enhance the participation of people with disabilities in the TVET system and labour market, it is essential to challenge mistaken assumptions about the abilities and capabilities of persons with disabilities.
- **Increase access to training.** Revise entry criteria to ensure that it does not discriminate against youth with disabilities and provide **reasonable** accommodation (i.e. technical aids) and TVET allowances so that financial barriers do not prevent people with disabilities from attending training programmes.
- **Remove physical barriers.** Conduct accessibility audits of buildings and facilities and adapt/renovate infrastructure as required.
- **Build capacity.** Continuous capacity building for the TVET workforce enables them to effectively teach persons with disabilities alongside non-disabled persons. Capacity building should include regular revisions and upgrading of curricula, materials and equipment to reflect new technologies, assistive devices and learning methodologies, all of which facilitate the removal of learning barriers for students with disabilities.

- **Anticipate needs.** Carry out assessments of individual candidates to identify their capacities, interests and potential, and offer bridging courses, when necessary.
- **Create disability support units.** Establish staff disability support units to meet inclusion standards and hold exchange programmes between TVET colleges with good practices. These units should provide support services to help students with disabilities solve problems with entering, undertaking and completing a training programme.
- **Ensure work readiness.** Develop short soft skills training/work readiness programmes for students with disabilities before they complete their studies at TVET colleges.
- **Pay special attention to intersectional marginalisation.** Women with disabilities and rural youth with disabilities, among other marginalised groups, face multiple discrimination and challenges. Specific measures to encourage and support their participation in TVET programmes should be put in place. These may include awareness raising of parents and community groups or providing scholarships and facilities to meet their accommodation needs, among other types of support.
- **Conduct research & data.** Collect data (and case studies) on the enrolment, experiences, lessons learned and completion/graduation rates and tracer studies of students with disabilities in each TVET institution, and ensure that data is disaggregated to capture trends as per sex and vulnerability.
- **Build effective partnerships with:**
  - Organisations of persons with disabilities to build capacity from and leverage their disability inclusion expertise, mentorship and advocacy promotion for equitable jobs programmes to ensure that students with disabilities stand an equal chance to access employment after completion of their studies.
  - Private sector - Sensitize potential employers on the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities and lobby them to ensure equal workplace practices.
  - Academia - Universities can contribute knowledge and expertise, raise awareness and stimulate innovative solutions through cross-disciplinary studies, research and teaching to improve spatial, technical and social environments.
- **Develop a comprehensive disability inclusive TVET strategy** in line with the provisions of the Africa Disability Protocol, UN CRPD and other related instruments, and building on the experience, networks, influence and opportunities created by the Africa Disability Alliance (ADA).