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EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAC POLICY ON PWD

"NOTHING FOR US WITHOUT US"

DRAFT

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
EAC	East African Community
EAFOOD	East African Organization for Disability
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmine
LC	Local Council
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OAU	Organization of Africa Union
PDO	Persons with Disability Organizations
PWD	People with Disabilities
UN	United Nations

Executive Summary

Under the Provisions of Article 120 (c) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, the Partner States undertake to closely co-operate amongst themselves in the field of social welfare with respect to, among others, **the development and adoption of a common approach towards disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including children, the youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities through rehabilitation and provision of, among others, foster homes, healthcare, education and training.**

Article 39 of the Common Market Protocol signed in November 2009 provides for the harmonization of social policies by Partner States in the following areas:

- I. Good governance, rule of law and social justice;
- II. Promotion of equal opportunities and gender equality;
- III. Promotion and protection of the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- IV. Promotion of unity and cohesion among the people in the Community.

Aware of the UN Resolution 61/196 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

Also conscious of the Assembly's adoption of a Resolution urging Partner States to ratify the Convention; in addition to the motion seeking a Resolution of the Assembly urging EAC Partner States to implement the provisions of the

said Convention passed by EALA on the 29th day of July 2009 in the 1st meeting of the 3rd session held in Dar-es-salaam in The United Republic of Tanzania) ; the EAC Secretariat together with the East African Legislative Assembly have developed a regional EAC Policy on Persons with Disabilities (PWD's).

This policy has emerged after a series of meetings and consultations the first one being the meeting of Experts on PWD that took place from 3rd to 4th December, 2009 in Kampala. At that meeting, a preliminary analysis of the national legislations and policies, and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was made. Delegates also identified the gaps, challenges of including Disability in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the current social protection initiatives in EAC Partner States. The meeting also identified common and emerging issues that were to be deliberated upon in the East African Disability Conference.

The policy will promote a framework for;

- i. Enhancing the recognition of the roles, contributions and potential s of PWD in the development process.
- ii. Strengthening/developing the informal and formal community based support systems and actions for PWD.
- iii. Recognizing that disability is not inability and providing special safety nets for PWD.

- iv. Ensuring and improving access to rehabilitation, education, training and community sports
- v. Guiding, coordinating and harmonizing interventions for PWD's by stakeholders.
- vi. Promoting and protecting disability rights as human rights.
- vii. Promoting research on issues of PWD's
- viii. Promoting the self representation of people with disabilities in all public decision making structures.

This policy is consistent with the following international Instruments for promotion of human rights and these are;

- i. United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- ii. International Convention on economic, social and cultural Rights (1966)
- iii. Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- iv. The UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for PWD (1993)
- v. The Convention on the Rights of PWD's (2006)
- vi. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981)
- vii. Continental Plan of Action for PWD in Africa (2002)
- viii. Windhoek Declaration (2008)
- ix. Common Market Protocol (2009)

The EAC policy on PWD will promote and contribute to ensuring equality and equity. The policy will inform other policies, programmes and sectoral plans among the EAC countries.

1.0. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Treaty establishing the East African Community recognizes the importance of addressing and responding to the challenges that confront persons with disabilities. Article 120(c) of the Treaty clearly spells out that the EAC Partner States shall closely cooperate in the field of social welfare with respect to among others, the development and adoption of a common approach towards the disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including children, the youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities through rehabilitation and provision of among others, foster houses, health care, education and training. In addition, Article 102(2) also makes reference to collaboration by the Partner States in putting in place education and training programmes for people with special needs and other disadvantaged group.

The first meeting of Experts on Persons with Disabilities which took place from 3rd to 4th December, 2009 in Kampala, Uganda was a preliminary process towards the East African Disability Conference (EADC).

The meeting of Experts, organized in collaboration with the EALA General Purpose Committee, was called to provide an initial ground for delegates from Partner States 's Organs and organizations in order to make a preliminary analysis of their national legislations and policies, and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Delegates also identified the gaps, and challenges of including Disability in the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) and the current social protection initiatives in EAC Partner States.

The meeting identified common and emerging issues to be deliberated upon in the East African Disability Conference.

The overall goal of the Conference was for the relevant departments of the EAC Secretariat, EALA Members, Partner States, Civil Society, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and Experts on the rights of Persons with Disabilities **to put into place a mechanism for engagement** towards the improvement of the status of PWDs in the region.

2.0 Situation Analysis

2.1 Socio- Economic Analysis

2.1.1 Economic

The majority of people with disabilities live in an economic quagmire and constitute a big segment of those who live below the poverty line and unable to afford the basic necessities of life.

It is clear that poverty and disability are closely linked. Disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Disability in majority of cases expose people to limited livelihood opportunities, which consequently lead them into a state of chronic poverty and vulnerability.

Many times PWDs are excluded or unable to benefit from socio-economic programmes that would otherwise alleviate their poverty.

2.1.2 Social

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank, Persons with Disabilities constitute at least 10% of the global population. In the context of the EAC region, this percentage would translate into at least 12 million persons with disabilities. However, this average percentage could in fact be higher in Africa because of conflict-induced disability. More acutely for Africa, people with disability tend to belong to the poorest strata in society. It is estimated that on average, less than 2% of People with Disability in Africa enjoy primary school education and that there are no real opportunities for rehabilitation.

As a consequence, people with disabilities are invariably marginalized and excluded from both the formal and informal job market. At the same time, women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to gender based violence. In this light, the challenge confronting policy and law formulation to promote, protect and safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities needs to be viewed in a broader context beyond a single piece of legislation. The AU was able to appreciate this fact when it adopted the Protocol on the Rights of Women in African which came into force in November, 2006. The Protocol provides a legal basis for broad protection for women's human rights including sexual and reproductive rights.

2.2 The Continent and Beyond

Whilst the EAC has lagged behind in promoting a regional policy and law to govern people with disability, both United Nations and the African Union have made significant headway in the direction. It has been recognized internationally and within the African Union framework that persons with disabilities have equal civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. "People with disability" have also received an extensive definition covering disability by physical, intellectual and sensory impairment, medical conditions and mental illness. These conditions may be either permanent or transitory in nature.

In this context the United Nations General Assembly in 1975 adopted a Declaration, which defined the term "disability" and conferred social, economic, civil and political rights on people with disability. In addition, the

UN has adopted several Declarations and Conventions which encapsulate disability rights and protection of persons with disabilities against discrimination. The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities was adopted in May 2008.

At the level of the African Union, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights provides under Article 18(4) that disabled persons have the right to special measures of protection, and under Article 16(1) the Charter spells out that every individual shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health.

On 3rd December, 1999 the then OAU declared the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (1999 – 2009). A Continental Plan of Action was drawn up in Addis Ababa in 2002 to serve as a guideline for African Union Member States in the formulation of their programmes on disability issues. The Action Plan outlined 12 objectives which the African states' governments in cooperation with civil society were to implement during the decade.

In 2003, the Secretariat for the Decade of Persons with Disabilities was established by the South African Government, the African Rehabilitation Institute and a number of continental disability organizations with a mandate of facilitating the AU Continental disability organization for the disability decade. The mission of the Secretariat is to empower governments, Disability Steering Committees, Disabled Peoples' Organizations and development institutions to work in partnership to include disability and persons with disabilities into policies and programmes cutting across all sectors of societies in Africa.

Additionally, it is significant to note that African Ministers responsible for Social Development met in Windhoek on 31st December, 2008 and adopted the Windhoek Declaration, which extended the AU Continental Decade of Persons with Disabilities that calls upon all AU Members States to empower and provide persons with disabilities with equal opportunities, safeguarding their rights and enlisting their participation and mainstreaming them in all development programmes.

2.3 Regional Analysis

While all the Partner States have either a policy or law on the rights of PWDs, the EAC and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), both recognize the importance of developing a regional policy and law to promote and protect the rights of PWDs. This is also in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of PWDs (herein referred to as the Convention) at the international level. The interests of the PWDs have also been taken into consideration at the Africa regional level by the Organization of African Union (OAU) declaration of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (1999-2009). This was followed by the development by the African Union (AU) of the Continental Plan of Action in 2002, to serve as a guideline for AU Member States in the formulation of programmes on disability issues. The Decade was recently extended for another ten years (2009 -2019).

2.3.1 Tanzania

The National Population and Housing Census 2002 states that there are 676,502 PWDs in Tanzania while the Tanzania Disability Survey (2008)

preliminary results indicate that there are 2,421,276 PWDs distributed across all categories, while in Zanzibar there are 100,000 PWDs across all categories.

a. Legislation:

- The constitution prohibits discrimination against PWDs;
- The Protocol of the UN Convention has been signed and ratified
- In Zanzibar the Rights and Privileges Act of 2006 provides for equal opportunities and the rights of PWDs. It also provides for the establishment of the Zanzibar National Disability Council and the Department of Disability Affairs in the Chief Ministers Office.
- The Disabled Persons Employment Act of 1982 provides for the employment of PWDs and also establishes the National Advisory Council.
- The Disabled Persons (Care and Maintenance) Act of 1982 provides and designates the responsibility of caring for PWDs to the respective families, relatives and local Governments, the Central Government and non state actors.
- The legislation on PWDs is currently being reviewed to provide for a comprehensive law on PWDs to be called the Persons with Disabilities Act.
- The Government also gives official recognition to the Disabled Persons Organizations PDOs.

b. Policies:

- There is a National Disability Policy of 2004 and the Cabinet Paper No. 19 of 1981 which was the first National document outlining the basic principles that guide services for PWDs.
- The Zanzibar Disability Policy of 2004 focuses on the promotion of the rights of PWDs to participate fully and to have equal opportunities in social life and development.
- The Zanzibar Education Policy of 2006, that provides for the need to promote inclusive education for children with disabilities.

c. Programmes:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of PWDs has been translated into Kiswahili and disseminated to different stakeholders.
- The National Steering Committee on the Africa Decade was established in 2008, to ensure that issues of PWDs and other groups are taken into consideration in the development process.
- The Government is reviewing the cost sharing guidelines to ensure a positive environment for PWDs to access health services.
- The Mother to Child Health Programme is in place as an early intervention initiative for children with disabilities. A manual is being developed to be used in a national programme for the identification of children with disabilities.

- The Local Government authorities have embarked on raising awareness and changing attitudes about albinos, using Social Welfare Officers in the regions and districts. They also work hand in hand with the Tanzania Albino Society.
- Vocational Training and entrepreneurship skills are under taken to empower people of various categories of disabilities, to engage in productive life and access micro credit.
- The Social Welfare Institute in Tanzania trains different people on social welfare issues.
- There are programs on community based care which involve the provision of seed money for income generation; assistive devices and the resettlement of PWDs who are able and willing to be integrated in the community, are in place.
- There are 43 Rehabilitation Centers which offer Treatment and Care for PWDs in the country. These include the Lions Club and the Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania.

d. Challenges

- Inadequate participation of the PWDs in planning and decision making.
- Poor implementation of the existing laws and policies regarding disability issues.
- Stigmatization and discrimination of PWDs
- Inaccessible environment (poor infrastructure, buildings, transport)
e.t.c

- Lack of employment opportunities and education.
- Inadequate funds to coordinate disability issues.
- Lack of adequate data and information on disability issues.
- HIV/ AIDs intervention strategies exclude PWDs.
- Stigma of PWDs.

e. Way Forward

- Government to provide sufficient funds in implementing disabilities issues.
- Self representation of PWDs in disabilities issues and decision making.
- Advocate for inclusive society.
- Capacity building and awareness raising on issues of disability.
- Partner states should conduct disability surveys.
- Identify issues of disability and mainstream them in policies and projects for EAC

2.3.2 Rwanda

a. Legislation

- Constitution commits itself to issues concerning PWD's,
- The adoption of the Law to Protect the Rights of PWDs (2007);
- Eight Ministerial Orders to implement this law (August 2009) has been passed;

- The UN Convention on the Rights of PWDs (December 2008) has been ratified.

b. Policies and strategies

The following are in place;

- A national policy for PWDs;
- A policy on Special needs Education;
- Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy: PWDs are included;
- A social Protection Strategy which is under development: PWDs are included;
- A comprehensive Policy of Special Needs Education has been developed and focuses on 'Inclusive Education' as an ideal educational model,

c. Programmes

- Disabled people are integrated in the national development programmes such as Ubudehe Programme and Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP). VUP and Ubudehe are the programmes aiming to reduce poverty and accelerate development.
- PWDs receive vocational training and they are trained in income generating activities;
- Affirmative action in institutions of higher learning;

- Vulnerable PWDs receive medical insurance free of charge. Prosthesis and orthosis are also available free of charge;
- They also benefit from housing programmes;
- They are also encouraged to participate in cooperatives;
- PWDs are represented in National Assembly;

d. Challenges

- Mindset and social attitudes towards PWDs ;
- Lack of self-esteem of PWDs;
- Lack of sufficient financial and human resources to execute the programmes
- People with visual and hearing impairment continue to lack access to information;
- Some children with disabilities miss out on education because of the ignorance of their parents.

Recommendations

- Promote social entrepreneurship targeting vulnerable people, particularly PWDs in order to promote active participation of PWDs in national development;
- Set up strategies and mechanisms on building self-esteem and on fighting a bad behavior of begging among PWDs;

- Promote partnership and cooperation between organizations representing PWDs in Partner States;
- Demonstrate and celebrate the abilities and achievements of PWDs in order to build more confidence and self-esteem, and to reduce marginalization;

2.3.3 Kenya

Recently, Kenya inaugurated the African Regional Institute – East African Region Office which 12 countries that include; Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Comoros, Somalia, Seychelles and Eritrea. The office will provide a unified approach to issues of disabilities in all aspects such as the exchange of information, organising for products in the field of rehabilitation, disability prevention and the analysis of national policies and laws for PWDs. There are 7 million PWDs as per the Kenya National Disability Survey of 2008. The PWDs are disproportionately represented among the poor and tend to be poorer than their counter parts without disabilities.

a. Legislation:

- The PWDs Act came into force on 16th June 2004, however it only began implementation in 2009. The Act provides for the rights, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities for PWDs. It also establishes a National Council for PWDs. However the Act is now being amended to come in line with the UN Convention on PWDs.

- There are also regulations that provide for the PWDs “access compliance” for all buildings in the next five years and for all public vehicles with effect from January 2010.
- There is the Children’s Act and the Employment Act both of which outlaw discrimination against PWDs.
- The Sexual Offences Act extends special protection to PWDs.

b. Policies:

The following policies are currently being developed to provide for the wellbeing of PWDs;

- The Orphans and Vulnerable Children’s Policy;
- The National Children’s Policy;
- The National Policy on Ageing and older persons and
- The National Policy on PWDs

c. Programmes:

- A National Development Fund for PWDs has been created worth 2.7m US dollars and this will continue to be increased in future.
- The Programme on Special Protection was piloted in 33 districts and targets the elderly persons, including those with disabilities.
- The mainstreaming of disability in all Ministries requiring them to have an indicator on their performance on disability.

- Voluntary Testing and Counseling Services are trained on to be sensitive to PWDs.
- National Rehabilitation Centers have been established that train PWDs in Vocational Skills.

Challenges:

- There is low awareness and education on disability which results in low attitudinal change.
- There is limited access to affordable devices and services.
- There is a contrast between the rural and urban PWDs, in terms of access to resource and the standard of living.
- Women with disabilities have been sidelined from the mainstream women's movement and as a result services like reproductive health are inaccessible and wanting.
- The access to free education for all has not been realized by Children with Disabilities because of the disability costs that they face in terms of travel, access to appropriate teaching materials and accessibility to buildings e.t.c.
- Unemployment is very high amongst the youth with disabilities, whether they are literate or illiterate.
- The implementation of the policies and legislation has been found to be wanting, because of lack of representation of PWDs at the formulation stages.

Recommendations:

- There is need for a coordination mechanism for the implementation of policies and legislation. This will help in the institutionalization and the mainstreaming of disability.
- The three arms of Government should all be involved in the mainstreaming of PWDs. The emphasis has been on the legislature and Executive, but the Judiciary has been left out. The Courts are inaccessible and the Judicial Officers are not trained on disability matters and laws.
- Budget allocations and other resources (human/ technical), affecting disability are very minimal. Development partners need to integrate the mainstreaming of PWDs as a priority development agenda, to facilitate effective implementation.
- There should be regular Census updated data, on PWDs including the classification of disability.
- There is need to have Disability Focal Points in strategic positions in all the Government Ministries and Departments including at the EAC and the AU.

2.3.4 Uganda

a. Legislation:

- The Constitution makes provision for PWDs.
- The People with Disabilities Act

- Children's Statute which emphasizes the non discrimination of children with disabilities.
- The Foundation of the Blind Act
- The Local Government Act gives PWDs seats at all levels of Local Governments.
- The Equal Opportunities Act.
- The Uganda Truck and Road safety act – PWDs should not be denied driving permits on the basis of disability.

b. Policies:

- Uganda developed a National Policy on Disability in 2006 to meet the concerns of PWDs. The policy is in line with the international instruments and the ILO Convention 159.
- The policy on Universal Primary Education prioritises for children with disabilities ;
- The Universal Secondary Education policy also provides for PWDs.

c. Programmes:

Government has developed various programmes for PWDs and these are;

- Training in Vocational Rehabilitation targeting the youth and adults who are non- literates.
- The Regional Community Based Rehabilitation uses a comprehensive approach that targets PWDs and their families and communities.

- A special programme on Victims' assistance to cater for land mine and explosives survivors.
- There is a coordination mechanism which brings together all the organizations working with PWDs to streamline their work.
- There is a Disability Desk in the Ministry of Health
- There is a department in charge of PWDs in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
- The Special Needs Education response in UNEB.
- The Government also provides for affirmative action for PWDs entering higher institutions of learning under which they are given four extra points.

d. **Challenges**

- The Vocational Rehabilitation is limited in capacity and expensive to maintain.
- Negative attitudes on disability still prevail and parents still hide children with disabilities.
- Inaccessible environment we are working on a standard on the physical environment have been finalized they will be distributed.
- The Building Control bill is being discussed.
- There is limited awareness on disability issues
- PWDs cannot access employment.

e. Recommendation

Uganda would like to propose a structure is put in place at the East African Region to follow up these matters and ensure that the policies and laws are properly implemented.

2.3.5 Burundi

a. Legislation:

- The Constitution does not have a specific provision on PWDs, however there are provisions on equal rights and there are plans to amend the existing Constitution to make the necessary provisions for marginalized groups.
- There is a draft national legislation for PWDs. A committee comprising of officials from the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice and members of Civil Society was established in January 2010, to review the draft legislation.
- The Government is in the process of ratifying the UN Convention on PWDs and plans are underway to ensure the domestication of this Convention once it is ratified.

b. Programmes:

- The Ministry of Social Development provides programmes for PWDs;
- There are institutions that provide apprenticeship training for PWDs in dress making, welding, painting and joinery;

- There is a Center that makes prosthesis and other equipment to help the PWDs readapt to life.
- There are also plans to establish a national infrastructure for PWDs.
- The Government has also increased the budgetary allocation on PWDs by five times to support their programmes.
- In future there will be sensitization programmes for PWDs to prevent them from begging on the streets and to provide them with alternative income generating activities;
- A programme is also being developed to support those with sensory disabilities (the deaf, blind and dumb)

3.0 Rationale

The EAC policy on PWD promotes and contributes to ensuring equality and equity. The policy will inform other policies, programmes and sectoral plans among the EAC countries. It will promote a framework for;

- Enhancing the recognition of the roles, contributions and potential s of PWD in the development process.
- Strengthening/developing the informal and formal community based support systems and actions for PWD.
- Recognizing that disability is not inability and providing special safety nets for PWD.
- Ensuring and improving access to rehabilitation, education, training and community sports
- Guiding, coordinating and harmonizing interventions for PWD's by stakeholders.
- Promoting and protecting disability rights as human rights.
- Promoting research on issues of PWD's

- Promoting the self representation of people with disabilities in all public decision making structures.
- This policy is consistent with the following international Instruments for promotion of human rights and these are;
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- International Convention on economic, social and cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- The UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for PWD (1993)
- The Convention on the Rights of PWD's (2006)
- The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981)
- Continental Plan of Action for PWD in Africa (2002)
- Windhoek Declaration (2008)
- Common Market Protocol (2009)

4.0 Guiding Principles

4.1 Rights Based Approach

In implementing this policy, the Rights Based Approach shall be used. This will ensure that all legislation and programming at the Secretariat and partner states will enhance the rights of PWD's

4.2 Participation

PWD's and their care givers shall be fully involved in the decision making process at the formulation, implementation of policies and legislations that directly affect their well being and at the monitoring and evaluation level of their programmes.

4.3 Gender responsiveness

The Secretariat will ensure that issues that affect both men and women PWD's are included in planning and implementation of programmes. The policy will ensure that affirmative action be applied where imbalances exist.

4.4 Dignity and Respect

PWD's shall be treated with dignity and respect by their families and service providers irrespective of their sex, social-cultural and economic status.

4.5 Multisectoral approach

This will involve building and strengthening partnerships and networks with different sectors, private sectors, CSOs and development partners for effective and efficient service delivery to PWDs at all levels.

4.6 Equity and Social Choice

Recognition - that all persons are equal before the law; and are entitled to equal treatment and benefits for the laws.

4.7 Family and Community Based Care

Families and care givers shall be charged with the responsibility of providing basic needs for PWDs such as food, clothing, housing, education, health, love and care and other basic services that promote and protect the rights of PWDs.

4.8 Good Governance and Accountability

This principle will promote effective governance through democratic processes at all levels. PWDs shall be able to demand and hold service providers accountable on matters that affect them and the communities at the same time be held responsible for their actions.

4.10 Capacity Building

The capacity of PWDs, care givers, communities and service providers shall be enhanced for effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes at all levels.

5.0 Vision, Mission, Values and Objectives

5.1 Vision

A society where PWD'S live in dignity and fully participate in all spheres of development

5.2 Mission

To provide an enabling environment for the empowerment of PWD to enable them effectively participate in and benefit from the development initiatives.

5.3 Goal

To achieve equal treatment , social inclusion and empowerment of PWD''s

5.4 Values

The core values are to understand PWD's, empower them so that they are self sustaining and live productive lives.

5.6 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are;

- i) To provide a framework for legislation, co-ordination and programming for PWD's
- ii) To establish mechanisms for promoting community based support systems
- iii) To provide opportunities for strengthening capacities of PWD's and their care givers to harness their maximum potential
- iv) To mainstream PWD issues in programs, policies, plans and M & E systems

5.7 Strategies

The policy will be operationalised through the following strategies;

- i) Research, documentation and dissemination on best practices and experiences for replication and scaling up interventions by all actors at all levels;
- ii) Sensitize all stakeholders and policy makers via mass media, reports, publications and any other communication strategy to enhance awareness on PWD issues including gender concerns;
- iii) Evidence based lobbying and Advocacy to all sectors and policy makers to appreciate and address the concerns of PWDs;
- iv) Mainstreaming PWD policies and affirmative action
- v) Capacity building, enhancing skills development and social support systems so that PWD's participate in and effectively contribute to socio-economic development
- vi) Net working and collaboration with all stakeholders

6.0 Policy Priority Areas

This policy focused on the priority areas that seek to improve on the quality of life as well as the inherent potentials of PWD. The policy also strives to provide a framework for protection and promotion of PWD.

The policy priority areas will, therefore, include the following: -

6.1 Training and Education (Capacity Building)

- (i) Often times, PWDs lack equitable access to opportunities for training (skilling) and education. For this reason, the policy will strive to ensure that PWDs have equitable access to capacity building interventions at all levels. Through this policy, EAC will implement the following interventions:
- (ii) -Promoting special needs education at all levels and including apprenticeship, vocational, functional education and life-long multi-skilling and training.
- (iii) Equipping service providers with disability-friendly skills and knowledge for effective service delivery and management.
- (iv) Establishing special centres for special programmes designed for PWDs empowerment
- (v) Promoting EAC Country Specific Networks to promote best practices and learning among EAC member states.

(vi) 6.2 Economic Empowerment

Although poverty is a common phenomenon within the East African Community, PWD tend to be more affected than others. This policy therefore will pursue recommended the following interventions:-

- (i) Establishing a Special Development Fund for PWDs
- (ii) Promoting centres of Special Development for PWDs
- (iii) Promoting Research documentation and dissemination on strategies that have worked in economic empowerment of PWDs
- (iv) Promoting affirmative action for employment of people with disabilities.

6.3 Accessibility to physical facilities and services

PWDs are adversely affected by the conventional design of infrastructure and many social amenities and facilities and services. EAC shall through this policy ensure that the following interventions are taken:-

- (i) Promote development/establishment of disability user-friendly facilities and infrastructure, including education and health facilities.
- (ii) Promote the use of sign language, Braille, tactile at EAC level including EAC conferences.
- (iii) Establish a tax-free regime on all equipments that facilitate PWDs.

6.4 Social Protection

PWDs are often more hit than other people due to lack of social protection safety nets. This policy will ensure that PWDs have special social protection safety nets to shield them from the vagaries of nature and other unfortunate incidences. Through this policy, the following interventions will be applied:-

- (i) Design and implement special psychosocial and counseling initiatives for PWDs;
- (ii) Establish an EAC machinery on social protection for PWD
- (iii) Mainstream social protection of PWDs in all EAC development programmes and interventions
- (iv) Carry out research documentation and dissemination of best social protection strategies for PWDs

6.5 Participation of PWDs

Exclusion of PWDs in the design and implementation of programmes and strategies, renders many programmes ineffective in addressing PWDs' issues.

To this end, this policy will promote the following interventions:-

- (i) Ensure that PWDs participate in designing, implementing /managing and monitoring and evaluation of programmes to effect them monitoring and evaluation at all levels;

- (ii) Support and strengthen disabled people's organizations that among others sharpen their civil competence, create exposure and confidence; and generally empower PWDs;
- (iii) Organize regular conferences on PWDs;
- (iv) Establish networks and promote regular exchange programmes.

6.6 Care and Support

Care and support will include provision of guidelines and basic physical and psychosocial needs of PWDs. Intervention to this end will include;

- (i) Developing standard guidelines for service delivery to PWDs in the EAC
- (ii) Increasing awareness on the needs and rights of PWDs especially among the EALA members , Heads of state and other policy-makers ;
- (iii) Promoting positive attitude and cultural values that protect and benefit PWDs in EAC.

6.7 Research and Management Information systems

EAC will put in place mechanisms to collect, analyze, document and disseminate comprehensive information on PWD. The interventions will include among others;

- a) Conducting research
- b) Creating a data bank
- c) Establish information channels (media programmes, films, documentaries, documentation of best practices, web sites etc)

- d) Establish Management Information and Monitoring and Evaluation systems on PWD

6.8 Sensitization and awareness creation

Interventions will include;

- a) Lobbying and advocacy
- b) Creating effective publicity mechanism and channels

6.9 Affirmative action

This will include establishing a mechanism whereby access to basic social services is mainstreamed through affirmative action. This will involve designing and developing appropriate interventions by stakeholders at all levels. The interventions will include;

- a) Access to promote education and training
- b) Access to quality health care including sexual and reproductive health
- c) Access to clean and safe water
- d) Access to decent shelter (Housing)
- e) Access to proper food nutrition and food security

6.9.1 Coordination and networking

In order to ensure frugal utilization of resources at the same time maximize benefits from the various stakeholders including CSOs, NGOs, Faith-based Organisations and development partners, the policy provides for;

- (i) Regular for a for exchanging views and ideas at various levels
- (ii) Establishment of a prudent coordination mechanisms
- (ii) A common platform portal for sharing information

6.9.2 Gender

The interventions will include;

- a) Establishing mechanisms that will promote equal access of resources and benefits to both men and women

7.0 Implementation Framework

Issues of disability are multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral in nature; therefore, this policy will be multi-prolonged and multi-inclusive in its approach at EAC, national, and community level.

7.1 EAC Secretariat

The EAC Secretariat will be the lead agency and will spearhead and manage the coordination mechanism in the implementation of the policy.

7.2 Governments of the EAC

- (i) EAC sister states will be responsible for effective implementation of the relevant aspects of the policy through their relevant Ministries' mandates. It is the duty of government to ensure the full realization of the rights of PWDs through taking steps to the maximum of its available resources.
- (ii) Ensure enactment of national laws and policies that will succinctly define among others the roles and duties of the following:-
 - Disabled persons organizations
 - The community
 - Parents and other care-givers
 - Persons with disabilities

- The private sector
- Local authorities
- Faith-based organizations
- Civil society organizations
- Development partners

7.3 National Disability Councils

The national Disability Councils in sister states will have the role of;

- (i) Resource mobilization
- (ii) Play an advocacy and watch-dog role in ensuring that governments comply with the standard requirements for effective delivery of services
- (iii) Monitor and evaluate the impact of policy and programme implementation