

PRESS STATEMENT

NATIONAL DISABILITY DAY ACCRA, JUNE 22, 2015

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY: THE RELEVANCE OF THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY ACT 715 AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

The Ghana Federation of Disability (GFD) will on June 23 celebrate the 9th anniversary of the passage of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715). We seize this occasion to call on government to take practical steps to fully implement the provisions in the said law and also domesticate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) for the total realization of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and their inclusion in society.

The Day will be marked under the Theme: Protecting the rights of PWDs; the relevance of the Disability Act, (Act 715, 2006) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

The occasion serves as a platform to assess the impact of the Disability law in the lives of persons with disability (PWD) and also to draw the attention of government and the public to the gaps and lapses in the implementation of provisions therein. It should be noted that the law protects the inalienable rights and inherent dignity and worth of PWDs.

The provisions of Act 715 and the CRPD recognize disability as resulting from the interaction between persons with impairment and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with persons without disability.

Both pieces of legislation further prohibit all manner of discrimination on the basis of one's disability and guarantees to PWDs equal and effective legal protection against discrimination. These laudable provisions in the act are further strengthened and enhanced by the tenets of the convention on the rights of PWDs ratified by the government of Ghana in 2012.

We however, regret to note that the implementation of the two legal frameworks have made very little impact in the lives of PWDs due to non-compliance with the provisions of the laws. Because there has not been general education about the laws, majority of Ghanaians are unaware of their existence. The Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations on this occasion urges government to take appropriate measures to prevent all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse of the rights of PWDs.

We further called on government to accelerate the process towards the Domestication of the UNCRPD into our local disability law so that we could have a comprehensive legislation that guarantee the full protection of rights of PWDs in Ghana.

The government must also take practical steps to raise awareness of the tenets of the pieces of legislation so as to promote positive behavior and attitudes toward PWDS.

As we celebrate the day, GFD also calls on families of PWDs to avoid all forms of discriminatory practices: denial of healthcare, food and education to PWDs. Noting that such abuses attract punitive actions in the Disability Act we seized this occasion to make a passionate appeal to government to adopt the day as a national day for the education and sensitization of the citizenry on the rights of persons with disability. It should be noted that the Day as observed in the current regime has been set aside by the Disability Movement in Ghana to raise awareness on disability issues.

The Federation and its partner organisations on this occasion congratulate the government and the people of Ghana for promulgating these protective laws hoping that all efforts would be made for their full enforcement.

END.