GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT

CONSOLIDATION STATEMENT AND CALL TO ACTION

Independent Living, Deinstitutionalization and Community Inclusion of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities

The third Global Disability Summit (GDS) will be held in Berlin, in April 2025. This is a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to come together from across the world including OPDs, civil society organizations, UN agencies, governments and multilateral agencies to engage in the discourse around disability inclusive development. We also acknowledge the efforts of organizers and co-organizers for hosting these spaces for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities globally.

However, discourse around key issues concerning the movement of people with psychosocial disabilities, users and survivors of psychiatry, mad persons, and those with intersectional and neurodiverse identities remain limited at national, regional and high-level policy forums. Our voices must be actively amplified in high-level forums such as the Global Disability Summit (GDS), the High-Level Political Forum, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Agenda 2030 process to drive meaningful and inclusive policy reforms.

We are developing this Call to Action to highlight issues at the heart of our movement—such as deinstitutionalization, access to legal capacity, and meaningful inclusion in decision-making to governments, civil society representatives, the international disability rights movement, multilateral agencies and UN bodies participating at GDS2025. We call on all stakeholders to take affirmative actions and make concrete commitments to advance the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities at national, regional and global levels.

"TCI is a global and a post CRPD movement of persons with psychosocial disabilities. For more than a decade, our focus and vision has been to empower OPDs, and dialogue with a variety of stakeholders including civil society organizations, development agencies, UN agencies and governments for the realization of CRPD, specifically Article 19, for realizing the right to independent living and community inclusion. Our key allies in this process have been the cross-disability movement."

This call to action is led and co-signed by members and partners of Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI-Global) as listed below.

Recognizing that,

We are frequently and wrongly reduced to the narrow framework of the "right to mental health care". The “mental health-ification” of our lives undermines our human rights, and diminishes our identities and struggles, framing us solely as subjects of medical intervention and institutional care rather than as rights-holders entitled to full inclusion. This restrictive biomedical approach sidelines our civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights under the CRPD.

This approach continues to authorise the discriminatory deprivation of our legal capacity, with guardianship and other substitute decision-making regimes remaining widespread globally, despite 15 years of CRPD implementation.

Discriminatory laws, policies and practices continue to render us as ‘civil dead’, triggering a catastrophic and cascading loss of rights and entitlements.

Millions of people with psychosocial disabilities remain segregated from mainstream services due to disability discrimination. Under the guise of ‘care’ or ‘treatment’, we are subjected to human rights violations, physical abuse, torture, and inhumane and degrading treatment. This is one of the most widespread threats to human rights in the world today. Our rights to liberty, equality and inclusion continue to be systematically denied around the world due to abusive, colonial systems of oppression, including guardianship, institutionalization, forced ‘treatment’, pervasive discrimination, stereotypes and stigma, and legally-entrenched forms of oppression.

True inclusion cannot be achieved while institutions, in various forms and sizes, continue to exist. Instead of directing resources toward transforming and building communities, investments are still being channeled into revamping, improving, or even constructing new institutions and expanding the range of medical model of disability continues to pervade development action. Instead, all efforts must be focused on strengthening our autonomy and inclusion as persons with psychosocial disabilities within communities and societies. International development must stop ignoring our existence. Our legal capacity must be prioritised and protected on an equal basis with others. There must be an end to all laws and policies that authorise locking us up, abusing us, detaining us, chaining and tying us up. Power must be shifted to us, and away from abusive mental health systems that continue to exert control over our lives and futures.

“Article 4.3 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which is a cornerstone of the global disability movement, affirms the full and effective participation of all persons with disabilities”.

However, representation of persons with psychosocial disabilities and our representative organizations remains largely tokenistic, with decision-making processes rarely being led by us or our organizations. Within cross-disability spaces and broader human rights movements, including in the gender justice space, and socio-economic rights advocacy etc., our issues remain marginalized and overlooked. Without true and meaningful leadership and participation by persons with psychosocial disabilities in broader disability and human rights movements, identifying policy priority areas and bridging the gap between policy and practice will always remain a challenge.

We stand and identify ourselves with other multi-marginalized groups of people with disabilities who are most impacted by ableism and other systems of oppression and whose lived experiences and priorities are also often excluded from disability conversations.

At GDS 2025

- **We call upon stakeholders to acknowledge and accept our identity as persons with psychosocial disabilities:** Our identity as persons with psychosocial disabilities is inclusive of users and survivors of psychiatry, autistic people, mad people, and people with neurodiverse identities. In our movement's experience, persons with psychosocial disabilities are pushed towards discussions around mental health or healthcare settings. Instead, we call for opening the bigger door of development to us, where we will have the opportunity to talk to a wide variety of stakeholders attending GDS, in all areas affecting our lives including education, employment, housing, nutrition, peace and just communities, etc.

- **We call for full recognition of our legal capacity without exception, and guarantees of our right to access to justice:** Community inclusion and independent living within mainstream communities is impossible without addressing the issue of legal capacity and access to justice. There are still discriminatory laws and legislative frameworks that refer to us as persons of "unsound mind" and constitutions that take away our civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights. Guardianship systems, conservatorship and substituted decision-making still takes place with a paternalistic notion of 'being done in our best interest'. We are still put under penal custodial mental health laws, which allows for our incarceration in institutions, sometimes for indeterminate periods or for the rest of our lives. Until these structural barriers are addressed, we cannot hope to be included in our communities.

- **We call for prioritizing discourse, building actions and mobilizing funding around deinstitutionalization of persons with psychosocial disabilities:** Institutions and psychiatric detention settings, in all forms or shapes, can never be places of care or residence for us. Millions of people with disabilities, including people with psychosocial disabilities and intellectual disabilities are segregated from mainstream communities and are sent to these institutions. We are institutionalized in the name of care, and rehabilitation, but we are subjected to coercion, inhuman and degrading treatment, and physical and sexual abuse. We call on all stakeholders to take this as a serious concern at GDS 2025 and call for deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities in line with realizing article 19 of the UNCRPD. We call for the effective dissemination, and implementation of the UN Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization including in emergencies adopted by the CRPD committee in October 2022. We call upon all kinds of stakeholders to build mutual cooperation, international solidarity and a whole of society approach to support deinstitutionalization initiatives globally and allocate robust funding towards community inclusion programs. **We call for all funding to institutions to end.**

- **We call for strengthening the Community of Practice around community inclusion by funding, supporting and scaling of grassroot initiatives led by us:** Over the years, organizations have sustained their focus on the right to live independently and have conducted various studies, developed community inclusion tools, practice various rights-based crisis support, and supported grassroot inclusion programs which should be funded, supported and scaled. States and stakeholders should formally recognize community support systems as vital social entities that facilitate the inclusion and participation of persons with psychosocial disabilities. Efforts should be directed toward strengthening and sustaining these ecosystems by investing in community-led initiatives, peer support networks, and inclusive practices that demonstrate their effectiveness and long-term viability.

- **We call for our active participation and involvement in high level political forums and centering our voices within cross disability and Human Rights spaces:** Collaborative efforts should be fostered to break silos, strengthen solidarity, and promote inclusive partnerships that recognize and amplify the voices of persons with psychosocial disabilities. Targeted actions should be taken to address the marginalization of our OPDs, ensuring equitable representation in disability, human rights movements and development agendas. The co-organizers of high level political spaces must commit to ensure inclusion, effective and meaningful participation in all areas of action through engaging directly with OPDs of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

- **We call all stakeholders, our friends, and allies, with and without disabilities worldwide to take affirmative actions:** To support and include persons with psychosocial disabilities and survivors of institutionalization, in the spirit of mutual aid, support and solidarity; to demand our rightful place as decision-makers and not as mere objects, in accordance with the collective spirit we drew on to create and give life to our Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We call on all stakeholders on this occasion of GDS2025 to address our demands in their commitments, explicitly joining us to roll back and repair the harms we as persons with psychosocial disabilities and survivors of institutionalization continue to face worldwide.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US