Country Profile on Disability
Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Country Profile on Disability
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Table of Contents

1. Basic Profile 1
1-1. Basic Indicators 1
1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability 2
2. Administration and Policy on Disability 8
2-1. Administration on Disability 8
2-2. Laws and Policies on Disability 14
2-3. Measures on Disability 21
3. International Treaties and International Cooperation 31
3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD 31
3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty 31
3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-related Policies 31
3-4. Ratification of and Efforts under Other International Conventions Related to Disability and Development 32
3-5. International Cooperation on Disability 33
4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities 36
4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities 36
4-2. Disability Support Organizations 38
5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities 40
5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services 40
5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education 41
5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment 42
5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation 43
5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access 43
5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender 44
6. References 47

List of Figures

Figure 1 Proportion of persons with disabilities by type of functional difficulty (ages 2–17) (2018).....6
Figure 2 Proportion of children with disabilities by area of residence (ages 2–17) (2018).....7

List of Tables

Table 1 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in the DRC.....8

List of Abbreviations

CBID	Community-based Inclusive Development	
CBM	Christian Blind Mission	
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation	
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	
CNDH	Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme	National Commission on Human Rights
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	German Agency for International Cooperation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo	
FECOPEHA	Fédération Congolaise des Personnes Handicapées	Congolese Federation of Persons with Disabilities
FENAPHACO	Fédération Nationale des Personnes Handicapées de la République Démocratique du Congo	National Federation of Persons with Disabilities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FNPSS	Fonds National de Promotion et de Service Social	National Fund for Social Promotion and Services
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities	
PNRBC	Programme National de Réadaptation à Base Communautaire	National Community-Based Rehabilitation Program
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization	

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators[1]

Gross Domestic Product[2] per capita	USD 649.4	2024

Government Expenditure by Sector

Healthcare (% of GDP)	3.79 %	2022
Education (% of GDP)	2.8 %	2022
Social protection (% of GDP)[3]	0.1 %	2019

Population

Total population	109,276,265	2024
Male (% of total population)	49.6 %	
Female (% of total population)	50.4 %	
Urban population (% of total population)	44.7 %	
Rural population (% of total population)	55.3 %	
Life expectancy at birth (total)	61.9 years	2023
Male	59.8 years	
Female	64.0 years	

Health

Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	38.5%	2023
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	44.5	2023

Education

Education system[4]		
Primary Education	6 years	
Compulsory education	6 years	
Adult Literacy rate (% of ages 15 and above)	69.0 %	2023
Male	85.0 %	2023
Female	54.0 %	2023

[1] Based on the World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator (Accessed: 14 January 2026))

[2] Hereinafter referred to as "GDP."

[3] Based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2024) World Social Protection Report, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/WSPR_2024_EN_WEB_1.pdf (Accessed: 5 April 2026)

[4] The education system of the Democratic Republic of the Congo comprises primary education (6 years), secondary education (6 years) and higher education (a bachelor's-equivalent degree after 3 years, followed by a master's-equivalent after a further 2 years and then doctoral studies). Children enter school at age 6. Under the 2014 Education Act (Framework Law No. 14/004 of February 11, 2014) and Article 43 of the Constitution, primary education is free and compulsory.

Gross Enrollment Rate (% gross)		
Primary Education (total)	117.6 %	2023
Male	120.9 %	
Female	114.3 %	
Secondary Education (total)	55.5 %	2023
Male	67.8 %	2021
Female	43.0 %	2021
Tertiary Education (total)	6.4 %	2020
Male	8.0 %	
Female	4.7 %	

Employment

Unemployment Rate (total)	4.6 %	2024
Male (% of male labor force)	5.4 %	
Female (% of female labor force)	3.7 %	

1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability

1-2-1. Definition of Disability[5]

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereinafter referred to as the "DRC"), the 2022 domestic legislation, the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, defines disability as "a condition in which a persistent decline in physical, mental, intellectual or sensory functions prevents a person from participating in social life on an equal basis with others." It reflects a shift from regarding persons with disabilities as "objects of protection" to "holders of rights." The Law also classifies disability by function as follows.[6]

Physical disability	A condition in which damage to or limitation of physical functions restricts mobility and daily life.
Sensory disability	Functional impairment of the sensory organs (vision, hearing, etc.). The main categories are as follows: ・ Visual impairment (blindness, low vision) ・ Hearing impairment (deafness, hard of hearing) ・ Speech impairment (language disorders) ・ Multiple impairments (more than one sensory impairment)
Mental disability (mentales)	A condition in which impairment of mental functions restricts social life.

[5] Government of DRC (2024) CRPD Initial Report (CRPD/C/COD/1)

[6] *Ibid.*

Intellectual disability (Intellectuelles)	A condition in which impairment of intellectual functions restricts social life.
Extended categories	Emphasizing "social vulnerability," the definition also includes persons with albinism[7] and persons with short stature (dwarfism).

1-2-2. Indicators on Disability

<Current Situation and Challenges of Disability Statistics>

The institution in charge of national statistics is the National Institute of Statistics (Institut National de la Statistique). However, in most fields there is no systematic disaggregation of data on persons with disabilities, such as by type of disability or by region[8]. As a result, the DRC has no reliable disability statistics, and no disability-certification system is in place[9]. The last census was conducted in 1984, and none has been carried out since; the next census is scheduled to begin in July 2026[10].

Under these constraints, according to the initial State Party's Report submitted by the Government of the DRC to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2024 (hereinafter referred to as the "State Party's Report"), based on estimates from local non-governmental organizations (hereinafter referred to as "NGOs") and international organizations, the number of persons with disabilities in 2016 was approximately 13 million, representing 13-18% of the total population, but the breakdown by sex is not provided[11].

The State Party's Report also positions disability not as an individual problem but as a challenge rooted in structural and social factors such as conflict, poverty and a lack of services, and points out the need to strengthen the foundation for reliable data and statistics and evidence-based policymaking (planning and budget allocation)[12].

[7] Albinism is a genetic condition affecting the skin and vision, and persons with albinism are sometimes subjected to discrimination and violence. As of 2021, attacks on and killings of persons with albinism had been reported in 29 African countries, with 70 cases confirmed in the DRC. Source: T. Ochiai (2021) *"A Social History of Persons with Disabilities and Human Rights in Africa*", Report of the FY2021 Research Project of the Committee for the Study of Human Rights Issues, Ryukoku University.

[8] Government of DRC (2024)

[9] UNPRPD (2022) *Situational Analysis of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*.

[10] Africa News (2026) *DR Congo Plans to Conducts Second National Census after 40 Years*. https://www.africanews.com/2026/03/24/dr-congo-plans-to-conduct-second-national-census-after-40-years/#:~:text=The%20Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the%20Congo%20is%20preparing%20to%20conduct,upcoming%20population%20and%20housing%20census (Accessed: 16 April 2026).

[11] These figures are based on the 2016 Disability Data Collection Report (Ministry of Social Issues, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity/National Social Promotion and Services Fund (FNPSS)) cited in the State Party's Report, but the source of the original data is not specified. According to Article 31 of the Report, it is presumed that these figures originate from the results of a survey conducted in the same year with the support of the United Nations and other organizations. Source: Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Action Humanitaire et Solidarité Nationale Fonds National de Promotion et de Service Social (2016) Rapport de la collecte des données sur les personnes Handicapées en RDC www.rodra.co.za/images/countries/drc/research/RAPPORT%20FINAL_COLLECTE%20DES%20DONNES.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026).

[12] Government of DRC (2024)

<Grasping the Realities of Disability through Complementary Evidence>

To compensate for the lack of official statistics, much disability data relies on surveys by domestic and international organizations of persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "OPDs") and by UN agencies. A major example is the third Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in 2023–2024 by the National Institute of Statistics and the Kinshasa School of Public Health with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (hereinafter referred to as "UNICEF") and the United Nations Population Fund (hereinafter referred to as "UNFPA")[13], and a study using its data reports a disability rate of 9.94%[14]. The same study reported that the prevalence of disabilities is higher among women, rural residents, the poorest, female heads of household, and those who are separated or widowed. It also shows that the poverty rate is 1.3 times higher in rural areas.

Regarding the proportions of children with disabilities and women with disabilities, there is the Sixth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) conducted with UNICEF support in 2017–2018[15]. It reports that about one in seven children aged 2–17 (around 14%) has at least one functional difficulty. By age, the proportion with functional difficulties from age 2 to 4 was 9.0% for boys and 6.0% for girls, reaching 20.0% for boys and 19.0% for girls age 5 to17, indicating that support needs become more apparent with age. The survey used the questionnaires of Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) to identify adults with disabilities, and the UNICEF–Washington Group Module on Child Functioning for children with disabilities (aged 2–17)[16].

As background factors in the occurrence of disability, the State Party's Report cites (i) armed conflict and violence centered in the east, (ii) disease (neurological disorders, malnutrition, infectious diseases) and (iii) natural disasters. In particular, the presence of large numbers of internally displaced persons owing to the conflict in the east, and conflict-induced disability, are important characteristics of the DRC[17], and the World Health

[13] The survey covered persons aged 5–95 and assessed difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking, carrying out daily activities and the like. https://drc.unfpa.org/fr/publications/enqu%C3%AAte-d%C3%A9mographique-et-de-sant%C3%A9-iii-eds-rdc-iii-2023%E2%80%932024 (Accessed: 18 April 2026)

[14] https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12939-026-02781-7#Sec10 (Accessed: 18 April 2026).

[15] The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is a national household survey (sample survey) supported internationally by UNICEF to collect data on the living conditions of children and women. Because it is a standardized method that allows for international comparisons, it is also used to monitor international indicators such as the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as "SDGs"). In the DRC it was conducted under the lead of the National Statistics Agency and measured key indicators in areas such as health, education, protection, and water and sanitation. The number of sample household of the DRC was 20,792.
https://mics.unicef.org/sites/mics/files/Congo%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the%2C%202017-18%20MICS%20Snapshots_French.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026)

[16] UNICEF (2017) *Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys - Disability Data, 6th Round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Programme*

[17] International Organization for Migration (2025) *Democratic Republic of the Congo Crisis Response Plan 2025*

Organization (hereinafter referred to as "WHO") also notes that the prevalence of disability in humanitarian-crisis areas is higher than the national average (about 28%)[18].

<Efforts toward Developing Statistics>

In light of this fragility of the statistical base, according to the State Party's Report the "Ministry of Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Persons" (described below in 2-2), in cooperation with the National Secretariat for Capacity Building (Secrétariat National pour le Renforcement des Capacités), has begun disability mapping covering all 26 provinces. This initiative aims to support the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes by developing qualitative and quantitative data on persons with disabilities[19]. It is also described as an integrated mapping management system intended to build a comprehensive database on persons with disabilities and other socially vulnerable persons. However, details such as the survey methodology, progress and results data could not be confirmed by this study.

As noted above, the DRC has no reliable official disability statistics; for reference, however, the following are the numbers of persons with disabilities given in the State Party's Report and the proportion of disabilities by type of functional disability and by area of residence for children with disabilities aged 2-17 based on the results of the 2018 sixth UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6).

Number of persons with disabilities (total)[20]	13 million	13–18% of the total population	2016

[18] A survey incorporating the Washington Group questions was conducted in 2021 in conflict-affected and displacement areas including Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu, Kalemie, Kananga, etc. https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/rapport_enquete_cap_wqg-hi_rdc_diffuse_ok.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026). WHO (2024) *Stratégie de coopération de l'OMS avec la République démocratique du Congo, 2024-2029,* https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/5a9985c8-6145-4ee4-b95b-ec26c7f16514/content (Accessed: 18 April 2026).

[19] https://www.opinion-info.cd/societe/2022/05/02/cartographie-des-personnes-avec-handicap-christophe-lutundula-donne-le-go-des (Accessed: 26 April 2026).

[20] Government of DRC (2024). Estimates of the number of persons with disabilities vary widely; according to the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter "UNPRPD") (2022), 5.4 to 10.8 million people, or 5–10% of the population (about 100 million), are estimated to be persons with disabilities. The National Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028, published in 2024, puts the figure at about 6 million. Sources: UNPRPD (2022) *Situational Analysis of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, and Government of DRC (2024) *Plan National Stratégique de Développement*

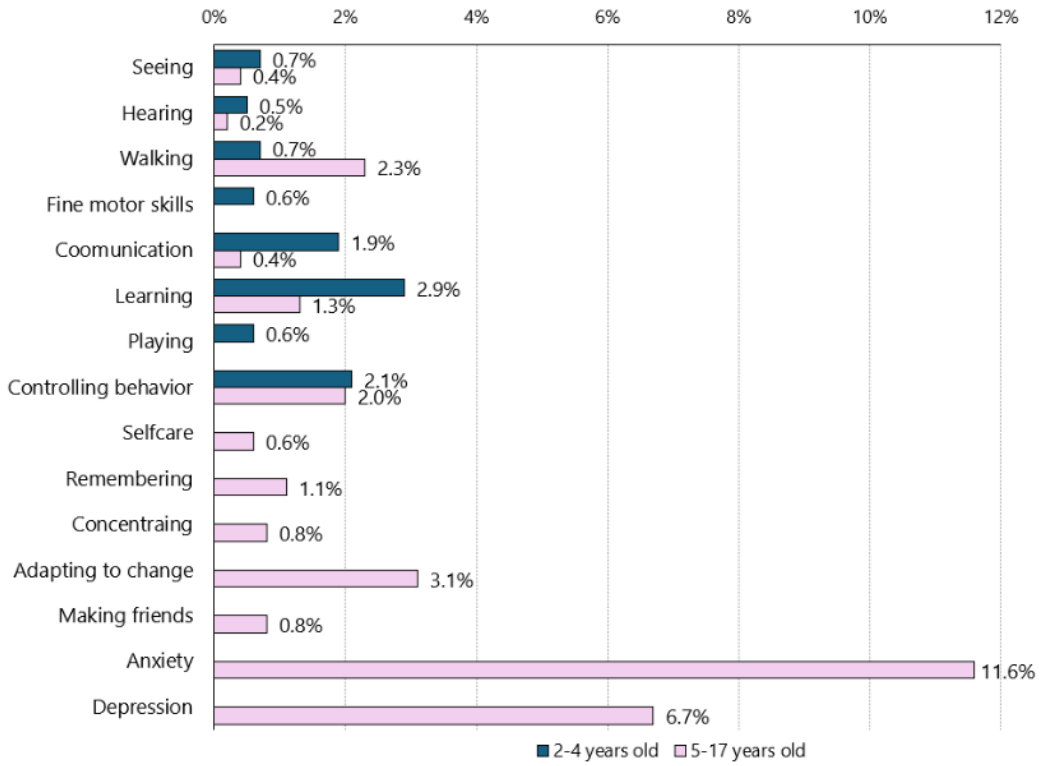


Figure 1 Proportion of persons with disabilities by type of functional difficulty (ages 2–17) (2018)

Among children aged 5–17, "anxiety" (11.6%) is the highest, followed by "depression" (6.7%) and "controlling behavior/adapting to change" (3.1%), indicating relatively high psychosocial difficulties. By contrast, "hearing" (0.2%) and "seeing" and others (0.4% each) are low. Among children aged 2–4, "learning" (2.9%) and "controlling behavior" (2.1%) are relatively high. In contrast, "seeing," "hearing," and "walking" tend to be relatively low at 0.7%, 0.5%, and 0.7%, respectively. The items beyond "seeing" are not shown for ages 2–4 and are indicators mainly for ages 5–17. Overall, there is a tendency for developmental and behavioral difficulties to be relatively high in early childhood and psychosocial difficulties in the school-age years.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 6th round (2018).

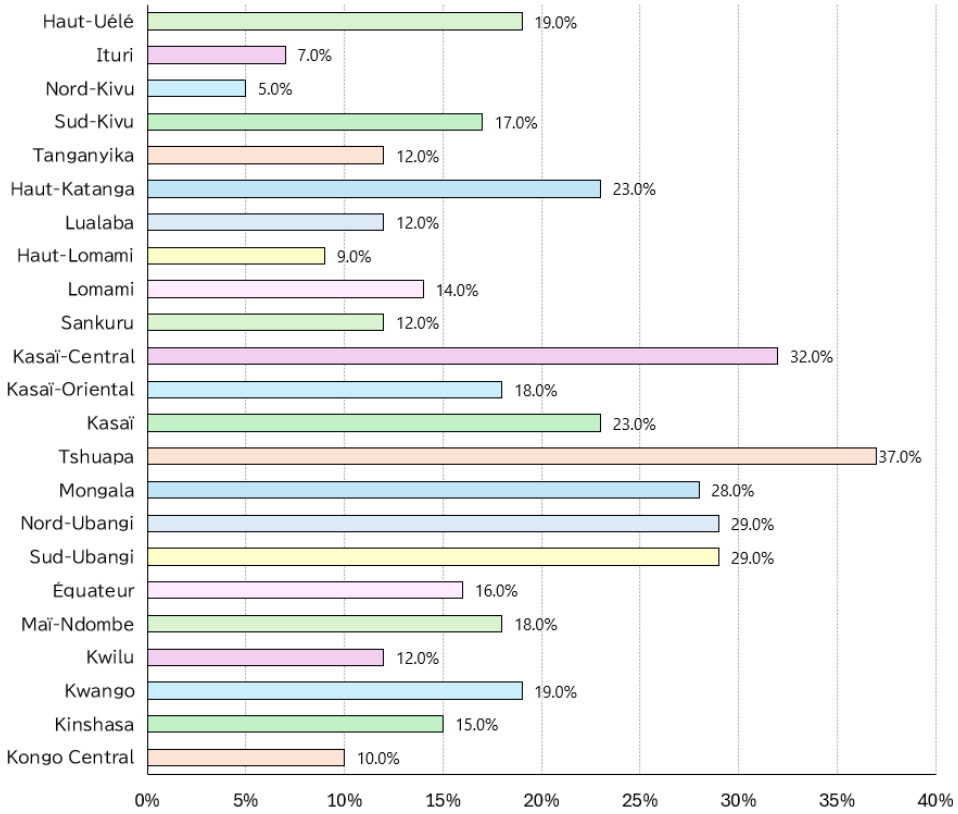


Figure 2 Proportion of children with disabilities by area of residence (ages 2–17) (2018)

The proportion of persons with disabilities is highest in Tshuapa Province (37%), followed by Kasaï-Central Province (32%). By contrast, the gap with the lowest, North Kivu Province (5%), is large, indicating substantial inter-provincial disparities.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 6th round (2018).

2. Administration and Policy on Disability

2-1. Administration on Disability

<Central Government>

In the DRC, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity leads policy for persons with disabilities. In 2022, a significant political and institutional step was taken to position the disability field within government: the creation of the Ministry Delegate attached to the Minister of Social Affairs, responsible for Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Persons (Ministère délégué auprès du Ministre des Affaires sociales, chargé des Personnes vivant avec handicap et autres personnes vulnérables; hereinafter referred to as "PVH-APV")" within the Ministry of Social Affairs[21]. On the other hand, in the education field, according to information from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereinafter referred to as "UNESCO") (2026), the formulation of the sector plan on inclusive education is undertaken not by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education but by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity[22], suggesting that the social-welfare sector performs the coordinating function even for disability inclusion that should be handled by respective mainstream sectors such as education, health and labor[23]. While this indicates that disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the legal system, it also suggests that disability inclusion has not been sufficiently institutionalized and internalized in the mainstream sectors, and that disability measures are still run under the lead of the welfare sector—that is, that the status of mainstreaming remains limited[24].

The disability-related institutions are as follows.[25]

Table 1 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in the DRC

Name	Overview
Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity (Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Actions Humanitaires et Solidarité Nationale: MINAS)[26]	・The lead ministry responsible for the protection and social inclusion of vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, older persons, children, disaster victims, internally displaced persons, etc.), handling social protection and humanitarian response in an integrated manner. ・In the disability field, it is one of the main ministries involved in the protection and promotion of the rights of

[21] A woman with a disability was appointed to head this ministry. Government of DRC (2024)
[22] UNPRPD (2022)
[23] https://education-profiles.org/fr/afrique-sub-saharienne/republique-democratique-du-congo/~inclusion#Gouvernance (Accessed: 27 April 2026)
[24] Global Disability Fund website, *Empowering Duty Bearers to Uphold the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in DRC*, https://globaldisabilityfund.org/programme/drc/ (Accessed: 31 March 2026)
[25] UNPRPD (2022)
[26] https://minas.gouv.cd/a-propos-du-minas (Accessed: 25 April 2026)

	persons with disabilities, rehabilitation and the coordination of disability-related services, and also collaborates with other ministries.
Ministry in Charge of Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Persons (PVH-APV)[27]	・PVH-APV was established within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity in 2019. It is reported to be not an independent ministry but rather something closer to a department or unit[28]. ・The role of PVH-APV is to promote consistency and coordination of support in the disability field. It also conducts studies to promote the formulation of disability policy. ・A woman with a disability has been appointed to head PVH-APV[29].
Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Social Protection (Ministère de la Santé Publique, Hygiène et Prévoyance Sociale)[30]	・Area of jurisdiction: public health, hygiene, prevention and social protection. ・Roles: (1) formulating and implementing national health policy; (2) operating the National Health Development Plan 2024-2030; (3) overseeing medical facilities, personnel and essential medicines; (4) responsibility, under Article 14 of the Organic Law, for the early detection and prevention of disability and the provision of assistive devices, and for the sexual and reproductive health of women with disabilities. ・Efforts in the disability field: (a) oversight of the Community-Based Rehabilitation National Programme (since 2003)[31]; (b) the orthopedic field (in cooperation with ICRC, the National Social Security Fund, etc.); (c) implementation of measures against disabling diseases (polio, leprosy, trypanosomiasis, etc.) with support from the World Bank, the Global Fund and WHO; (d) formulation of a draft national rehabilitation policy and a national strategic plan for assistive technology.
Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire,	・Under the current administration, the official name has been changed from the "Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education" to the "Ministry of National Education and New Citizenship (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et Nouvelle Citoyenneté: EDU-NC)"[33]

[27] The ministry maintains Facebook and X (former Twitter) accounts as its official information channels. https://www.facebook.com/Minipvhapv/, https://x.com/Minpvh_apvRDC/status/1594757176777646081 (Accessed: 25 April 2026)

[28] UNPRPD (2022)

[29] https://foxtime.cd/irene-esambo-diata-ministre-deleguee-aux-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap-et-femme-exceptionnelle/ (Accessed: 30 April 2026).

[30] https://www.sante.gouv.cd (Accessed: 27 April 2026).

[31] Disability & Inclusion Africa Network, https://www.dia-network.org/blog/working-to-fight-discrimination-against-disability-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 25 April 2026).

[33] As the reference materials refer the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education, this report uses the former abbreviation.

Secondaire et Technique)[32]	・Levels of jurisdiction: early childhood and primary (6 years), secondary (6 years), and technical and vocational education. ・Roles: (1) formulating and implementing education policy; (2) school accreditation and registration; (3) teacher formation and training; (4) operating the free-education system. ・Efforts in the disability field: registration of special needs schools and their inclusion in the free-education system, construction of special needs schools, inclusive-education pilots, and formulation of the National Inclusive Education Strategy (2025-2030)[34]
National Fund for Social Promotion and Services (Fonds National de Promotion et de Service Social: FNPSS)[35]	・An organization under the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity, a fund that supports the government's social and humanitarian activities. Established in 1963, it is, in principle, the government fund that manages all social services. ・Its beneficiaries include, in addition to the general public, persons with disabilities, children in difficult circumstances, women in vulnerable situations, older persons, vulnerable households and communities affected by external shocks. ・For households of persons with disabilities, it supports improvements in medical access and living conditions in an integrated manner through direct financial support and the promotion of income-generating activities[36]
National Fund for the Support of Autonomy and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (Fonds national d'appui à l'autonomisation et à l'accessibilité des personnes en handicap)[37]	・A national-level public fund (public institution) established under the Decree of 25 March 2024 (Décret n°24/27) to support the autonomy and accessibility of persons with disabilities. ・Its main objectives and functions include project funding support, support for autonomy and the promotion of accessibility[38]. ・Recently, concrete activities have been advanced, including the launch in December 2025 of fundraising for the development of rehabilitation facilities and vocational training centers[39]. On the other hand, the system remains

[32] https://edu-nc.gouv.cd/ (Accessed: 25 April 2026).
[34] https://core.unesco.org/en/project/3210112131 (Accessed: 25 April 2026).
[35] https://fnpss.cd/ (Accessed: 18 April 2026).
[36] https://fnpss.cd/partenariat-fnpss-project-cure-reception-et-livraison-de-materiels-et-equipement-medicaux-et-orthopedique-au-centre-mere-et-enfant-de-bumbu-centre-daction-sociales-integrees-de-matete-cas/ (Accessed: 18 April 2026).
[37] https://fona-pvh.cd/ (Accessed: 25 April 2026). Hereinafter referred to as "FONA-PVH."
[38] https://acp.cd/genre/kinshasa-echange-sur-le-fonctionnement-du-fonds-national-dappui-a-lautonomisation-des-pvh/ (Accessed: 18 April 2026).
[39] https://topdirect.cd/publications/6168-rdc-le-fona-pvh-lance-un-appel-de-fonds-pour-2-projets-en-faveur-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap (Accessed: 18 April 2026)

	at an early stage of development, and key challenges going forward include establishing an effective implementation framework, securing sustainable financing, and strengthening linkages with related systems and mechanisms.
Civil Protection Council (Conseil de la Protection Civile)	・An important public body responsible for the protection and security of persons with disabilities in emergencies such as disasters and accidents. Established within the Ministry of the Interior in 1996 to provide support during natural disasters. It exists in Kinshasa and all provinces. ・It is reported that facilities, infrastructure, and human resources remain insufficient, and that capacity to support persons with disabilities is limited.
National Human Rights Commission (Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme[40])	・Established by Law No. 13/011 of 21 March 2013 as a public body supporting democracy. It is independent, pluralistic and non-political, and has legal personality. It is a public, technical and advisory body responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the DRC. ・Its functions provided for in Article 6 of Law No. 13/011 also include matters concerning the rights of persons with disabilities; in particular, under paragraph 5 of this article, the CNDH bears the "responsibility to ensure respect for the rights of persons with disabilities." ・Reports by the National Human Rights Commission indicate that insufficient attention has been paid to the rights of persons with disabilities, pointing to a limited level of institutional engagement with this issue. This is considered to stem, at least in part, from insufficient knowledge and awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[41] among Commission members, particularly field investigators.

Status of Coordination Mechanism[42]

Name of mechanism	Inter-ministerial Committee for Monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Comité interministériel de suivi de la Convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées)

[40] Hereinafter referred to as "CNDH"

[41] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; hereinafter referred to as "CRPD"

[42] Based on the report by UNPRPD (2022) and on the ministerial order concerning the DRC government's inter-ministerial CRPD monitoring committee. Order: https://rodra.co.za/images/countries/drc/legislation/Arrete%20Comite%20de%20suivi%20CRDPH.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026).

Legal basis	· Ministerial Order of 11 November 2016 (Arrêté ministériel n°350/CAB.MIN/AFF-SAH.SN/2016[43]) · Established on the basis of Article 33 of the CRPD (national implementation and monitoring framework) and Articles 49 and 93 of the Constitution of the DRC.
Members	The country's institutions (the ministries responsible for social affairs, humanitarian action and national solidarity, health, education, employment, finance and human rights), OPDs, NGOs, and regional and international partners.
Role	It aims to contribute to the promotion of inclusive social development and to guarantee the full participation of persons with disabilities, through the following: · Monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol · Coordination of the measures of each ministry · Responding to reporting to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and following up on recommendations · Presenting policy proposals and improvement measures to the government · Ensuring the involvement of OPDs and reflecting the perspectives of persons concerned · Disseminating the CRPD and raising awareness of rights
Status	It is supposed to hold regular meetings, and members are paid an attendance allowance (jeton de présence). It was to implement the five-year plan (2016–2021) adopted at the "national general assembly", but since the change of political dispensation in 2018, there has been a lack of political ownership and it has not been adequately operated. Ultimately, the main tasks were entrusted to the aforementioned PVH-APV, but owing to a lack of technical personnel, PVH-APV struggles to carry out these responsibilities.

The establishment of the following National Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities and the consultation framework for organizations of persons with disabilities is provided for in the 2022 Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Organic Law No. 22/003). On 7 June 2023, the founding documents of both bodies were formally validated by representatives of persons with disabilities from the 26 provinces, but OPDs have noted that, as of January 2026, they had not yet been formally made operational[44].

[43] https://rodra.co.za/images/countries/drc/legislation/Arrete%20Comite%20de%20suivi%20CRDPH.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026).

[44] https://acp.cd/genre/inclusion-effective-des-pvh-le-gouvernement-appele-a-rendre-operationnels-les-dispositifs-legaux/ (Accessed: 26 April 2026)

Name of council	National Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities (Conseil National Consultatif pour la Personne avec Handicap)
Legal basis	Articles 34, 45 and 46 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities / Article 33 of the CRPD
Members	Representatives of relevant ministries and of OPDs and NGOs
Role	A formal, government-led advisory body that provides consultation and advice on disability policy and the legal framework, monitors CRPD implementation, and makes policy proposals to the government
Status	Founding documents validated in June 2023. As of January 2026, operationalization had not been completed.

Name of framework	Consultation Framework of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (Cadre de Concertation des Organisations de la Personne avec Handicap)
Legal basis	Articles 34, 45 and 46 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities / Article 33 of the CRPD
Members	OPDs
Role	An OPD-led inter-federal consultation forum (a framework rather than an association) that serves as a venue for standing consultation among OPDs, standing monitoring of CRPD implementation, and dialogue with the government
Status	Founding documents validated in June 2023. As of January 2026, operationalization had not been completed.

<Local Government>

The provincial offices of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity and their subordinate units bear responsibility for implementation in the disability field. As an implementation challenge, it has been noted that these units address matters concerning the rights of persons with disabilities mainly only on the occasion of official events[45]. In addition, the PVH-APV established at the center has not been rolled out to all 26 provinces, and the specialized implementation structure at the local level is not sufficiently developed. As a result, although disability policies and systems exist, implementation capacity and continuous service-delivery structures at the field level are limited, and disparities exist

[45] UNPRPD (2022)

between regions. Against this backdrop, efforts toward local rollout have begun, including the establishment of a provincial PVH-APV office in Kwilu Province in March 2026[46].

Provincial DPO Hubs

According to the State Party's Report, since the beginning of 2022, the PVH-APV has been establishing provincial-level OPD hubs (Provincial DPO Hubs) on the basis of Article 45 of the domestic disability law. As a formal, government-led mechanism grounded in this legal framework, the OPD hub structure is expected to function as a platform and meeting place where people of all types of disability come together. They are also an important framework for promoting cross-cutting cooperation at the provincial level with public institutions, other civil-society organizations, and technical and financial partners. The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "UNPRPD")[47], a joint UN project to make the CRPD function in each country, reports that the framework has already been established in some provinces and that the PVH-APV is developing its organizational structure and operating methods[48].

2-2. Laws and Policies on Disability

Since 2003, the legal framework for disability in the DRC has advanced considerably. Article 49 of the 2006 Constitution guarantees the protection of persons with disabilities, their access to public facilities and their participation in social, economic and cultural life. In 2022, the Organic Law on persons with disabilities was enacted, clarifying the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability and marking an important institutional turning point[49]. In addition, in July 2025, the Cabinet adopted the "National Policy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and the "National Strategy for the Autonomy and Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Persons", advancing the framework at the policy level as well. This progress in laws and policies is reported to be due in part to stronger civil-society engagement[50]. However, sector-specific frameworks lag behind.

The main disability-related laws are as follows.

[46] https://www.radiookapi.net/2026/03/29/actualite/politique/ladministration-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap-sinstalle-au-kwilu (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[47] Actual Global Disability Fund
[48] In the provinces visited by UNPRPD when preparing its 2022 report (Bukavu, Goma, Ituri, Kalemie, Lubumbashi, Kinshasa), the hubs were reported to be already established.
[49] Government of DRC (2024)
[50] https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/case%20study%202.pdf (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

Title	Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Organic Law No. 22/003)[51]
Year of enactment	3 May 2022
Overview	This Law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability and, in Article 2(e), clearly positions the "denial of reasonable accommodation" as discrimination, in addition to direct and indirect discrimination. It also provides for sanctions, including criminal penalties, for discriminatory acts and violations of the rights of persons with disabilities. The main contents of the Law are as follows: 1) general provisions; 2) prohibition of discrimination and definition of reasonable accommodation; 3) fundamental rights of persons with disabilities (dignity, equality, social participation, etc.); 4) protection and promotion of the rights of children and women with disabilities; 5) guarantee of access to education, healthcare and rehabilitation; 6) promotion of employment, working conditions and economic autonomy; 7) ensuring accessibility (public facilities, transport, information and communication, technology and services); 8) guarantee of political participation and participation in civil and social activities; 9) the State's responsibilities and implementation structure (relevant institutions, funds, statistics, cooperation, etc.); and 10) protective measures and penalty provisions (sanctions for discrimination, abuse, etc.). According to the State Party's Report, while rights are formally recognized, they are not fully realized in practice owing to a range of factors, including limited implementation capacity in terms of human resources, budgetary allocations, and administrative capability; social barriers arising from prejudice and cultural factors; inadequate infrastructure in education, healthcare, and transport; and insufficient data to underpin policymaking. The report further points to a particularly wide gap between the legal framework and realities on the ground.

[51] https://legalrdc.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Loi-organique-22_003_protection-et-promotion-des-droits-de-la-personne-avec-handicap.pdf (Accessed: 4 April 2026)

Title	Law No. 16/010 of 15 July 2016 (amendment of the Labour Code) (Loi N° 16/010 du 15 Juillet 2016 Modifiant et Complétant la Loi N° 015-2002 Portant Code du Travail)[52]
Year of enactment	2016
Overview	Articles 125 and 126 explicitly prohibit night work for persons with disabilities in both public and private workplaces. Article 134 defines workers with a disability as "persons whose prospects of securing and retaining suitable employment, as well as opportunities for professional advancement, are substantially limited by a physical or mental impairment". Article 135 further provides that "disability shall not constitute grounds for denying access to employment suited to the individual's intellectual, sensory or physical capacities, unless it seriously disrupts the operation of the enterprise". Article 136 establishes the principle of equal treatment in vocational training, while Article 137 requires the involvement of a physician to assess the compatibility between the work to be performed and the worker's disability status.

Title	Framework Law on National Education (loi cadre de l'enseignement national)[53]
Year of enactment	2014
Overview	This Law introduces important new provisions for persons with disabilities concerning the correction of discrimination and inequality in the field of education and the method of operating the education system. Article 33 provides that "the correction of discrimination and inequality in education aims to expand access for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in national education", listing girls and women, orphans, internally displaced persons, indigenous peoples, children over the prescribed age, people in poverty, and persons with disabilities as its targets. Article 34 further provides that the State and its partners shall work to address discrimination and inequality in education, and in particular shall take measures to respond to the needs of these groups in such areas as staff recruitment, school management, teaching methods and assessment. Articles 107 to 112

[52] https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/DroitSocial/Loi 16.010.15.07.html (Accessed: 4 April 2026)
[53] Government of DRC (2024)

	also contain provisions on special needs education for children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including gifted children and indigenous children.

Title	Child Protection Law (Loi n° 09/001 du 10 janvier 2009)[54]
Year of enactment	2009
Overview	It comprehensively defines the rights of all children (under 18). For children with disabilities, it provides specific articles as "children requiring special consideration." Article 42 provides that, in the case of children with physical or mental disabilities, their dignity must be safeguarded and support must be provided to promote their independence and participation in society. It also establishes their right to receive special assistance in the areas of health care, education, training, rehabilitation, recreation and preparation for employment. In addition, the State and public institutions are required to take the necessary measures to ensure effective access to these services.

National Development Plan

Title	National Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028 (Plan National Stratégique de Développement: PNSD)[55]
Year implemented	2024
Overview	The National Strategic Development Plan 2024–2028 constitutes the DRC's medium-term national development plan and serves as the overarching strategic framework for integrating and coordinating the efforts of the Government and development partners across such pillars as governance, human development, economic growth, infrastructure, and the environment. Persons with disabilities are positioned within the Plan as part of the vulnerable population groups. The Plan is structured around five pillars: 1) poverty reduction (identified as the country's highest priority); 2) the promotion of inclusive growth, encompassing social, territorial and economic inclusion; 3) the transition to middle-income country status; 4) improved access to public services; and 5) the consolidation of

[54] https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/JO/2009/L.09.001.10.01.09.htm (Accessed: 18 April 2026)
[55] https://plan.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/PNSD-2024-2028-V41.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026)

	national stability and peace. It includes a chapter specifically dedicated to disability, which sets out four objectives: Objective 1: to ensure the inclusion and autonomy of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups; Objective 2: to strengthen social infrastructure for the education and capacity development of persons with disabilities; Objective 3: to enhance the mobilization of financial, technical and material resources for the sector; and Objective 4: to improve knowledge of the situation of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, improve their living conditions, and strengthen efforts to eliminate discrimination. The Plan also envisages the establishment of (i) a National Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities; (ii) a consultation framework for OPDs; (iii) a specialized medical research and care center for persons with albinism; (iv) an academy aimed at promoting and standardizing sign language and Braille; and (v) the National Fund for the Support of Autonomy and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (FONA-PVH).

Main Disability Policies

At the 52nd Cabinet meeting held in July 2025, the following policy and strategy formulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity were adopted[56]. Thematic disability policies such as health, education, labor and the like could not be confirmed in this study.

Title	National Policy for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2025-2030) (Politique nationale de promotion et de protection des droits des personnes vivant avec handicap)[57]
Year implemented	July 2025
Overview	An overarching framework guiding the efforts of the Government and other relevant stakeholders, and positioned as a key reference for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and their social inclusion. In particular, it identifies autonomy and social inclusion as its two central priorities. The policy is structured around

[56] https://www.reporter.cd/rdc-le-gouvernement-adopte-une-nouvelle-politique-et-strategie-pour-linclusion-des-personnes-handicapees/ (Accessed: 4 April 2026).
[57] The original document could not be obtained in this study.

	six main pillars: 1) reducing prejudice and discrimination; 2) education; 3) support for independent living and accessibility; 4) healthcare; 5) employment and entrepreneurship support; and 6) the promotion of social, economic and political participation. The policy is accompanied by a logical framework, including expected results, indicators and means of verification, thereby enabling monitoring of implementation progress. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided technical advice to ensure alignment with the CRPD[58].

Title	National Strategy for the Autonomy and Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Persons (2025-2030) (la Stratégie nationale d'autonomisation et d'inclusion sociale des personnes avec handicap et autres personnes vulnérables)[59]
Year implemented	July 2025
Overview	A strategy document for concretely implementing the National Policy for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities described above. It addresses the challenges of correcting inequalities based on disability, reducing poverty and promoting accessibility in all respects. It also covers institutional coordination among relevant institutions and anticipated challenges, and indicates detailed action plan and budget outlook for the coming five years (2025–2030)[60]. The original document could not be obtained in this study.

Other related decrees are as follows.

Title	Decree No. 24/22 of 7 March 2024[61] PVH-APV
Year issued	2024

[58] UNPRPD (2022), https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/democratic-republic-congo/our-presence (Accessed: 4 April 2026)

[59] https://www.reporter.cd/rdc-le-gouvernement-adopte-une-nouvelle-politique-et-strategie-pour-linclusion-des-personnes-handicapees/ (Accessed: 4 April 2026).

[60] https://www.reporter.cd/rdc-le-gouvernement-adopte-une-nouvelle-politique-et-strategie-pour-linclusion-des-personnes-handicapees/ (Accessed: 18 April 2026).

[61] https://magazinelaguardia.info/2025/12/04/rdc-malgre-la-loi-linclusion-sociale-de-pvh-demeure-faible/ (Accessed: 18 April 2026), https://leganews.pro/articles/0195f5b4-c370-77c3-a8f7-c3a9c21a133b (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

Overview	Stipulates a disability employment quota of 5% in public bodies and 3% in the private sector. Provides for the establishment of a monitoring (follow-up) mechanism that publishes annual reports on the status of the employment rate.

Title	Decree No. 24/26 of 25 March 2024[62] PVH-APV
Year issued	2024
Overview	As an implementing decree under the framework law on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, it establishes detailed operational provisions governing accessibility to infrastructure, assistive devices and other basic social services for persons with disabilities. The scope of accessibility covered by the decree extends broadly to buildings, including public buildings and facilities open to the public; roads and means of transport; information and communication, including electronic and emergency services; and general social services, including education, health care, employment, housing and justice. Mandatory measures, including reasonable accommodation, encompass the identification and removal of physical barriers, the improvement of access to public facilities, the provision of Braille and easy-to-understand signage, and the ensuring of accessibility in information and communication. The lead institutions responsible for implementation are PVH-APV and the relevant sectoral ministries. While the decree does not directly amend the construction permit regime itself, it provides for the payment of special compensatory damages and the closure of buildings in cases of non-compliance.

Title	Decree No. 24/27 of 25 March 2024[63] PVH-APV
Year issued	2024

[62] https://lareferenceplus.cd/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/DECRET-SIGNES-PM-2024-ACCESSIBILITE-ET-AIDE-ET-AUTRES-SERVICES-SOCIAUX.pdf (Accessed: 28 April 2026).
[63] https://leganews.pro/articles/01904bf2-da19-712a-9dee-2571e6f86f51 (Accessed: 4 April 2026).

Overview	Organization and operation of the National Fund for the Support of Autonomy and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (FONA-PVH).

2-3. Measures on Disability[64]

The national budget allocated to disability policy remains extremely limited, and the provision of many services continues to depend heavily on international donors, churches and NGOs. Owing to broader fiscal constraints facing the country, including those associated with conflict and its status as a developing context, security continues to take precedence in budgetary priorities, creating a major sustainability bottleneck whereby institutional frameworks exist but cannot be effectively implemented. As noted in section 2-2 above, a cross-sectoral national disability policy and strategy was adopted in 2025; however, implementation remains at an early stage. It should also be noted that this study was not able to confirm the specific content of the policy in each sector. The sector-specific measures identified through this study are as follows.

1) Healthcare

Status of Legislative Framework

Access to healthcare services for persons with disabilities is guaranteed under articles 47 and 53 of the Constitution. In addition, Article 14 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities mandates the Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Social Protection to implement measures for the early detection and prevention of disability and for the provision of assistive devices. It further requires the Ministry, in coordination with the relevant ministries, to promote policies aimed at early intervention in cases of disability and at addressing the sexual and reproductive health of women with disabilities.

Disability Certification

No nationwide unified system for the issuance of disability certification cards could be identified through this study. The Organic Law (No. 22/003) provides for the protection of rights, employment quotas and a fund mechanism, but no explicit provisions were found regarding individual-level disability assessment or the issuance of disability certificates. The Government of the DRC launched the General Population Register (Fichier Général de la

[64] Unless otherwise indicated, this section is based on UNPRPD (2022) and the State Party's Report on the CRPD (Government of DRC (2024))

Population) by decree of 2 March 2022[65]. In 2025, following the conclusion of an implementation agreement with Singapore-based Trident, the country began the full-scale introduction of a digital identity system, as part of its e-government infrastructure, aimed at strengthening personal identification and improving access to administrative services[66]. On the other hand, no publicly available information could be identified at this stage regarding specific design features related to accessibility for persons with disabilities or the provision of reasonable accommodation.

Health Insurance

As for health insurance, according to the country database of the International Social Security Association, the health-insurance system is mainly employment-based, so persons with disabilities, who often work in the informal sector, are highly likely to fall outside its coverage[67].

Access to Healthcare Services

According to the UNPRPD report, medical services for persons with disabilities are highly dependent on NGOs. Community-Based Rehabilitation (hereinafter referred to as "CBR") was launched in 2003[68] under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Social Protection and promoted as a national programme (Programme National de Réadaptation à Base Communautaire)[69]. Using the WHO matrix, a comprehensive series of activities is implemented, including support for social reintegration, development of legal frameworks, community awareness-raising, integration of prevention and rehabilitation, securing means of mobility, and awareness-raising.

On the other hand, infrastructure and equipment for disability-responsive care in medical facilities remain inadequate, and major constraints persist in service delivery, including the lack of facilities equipped to support childbirth for women with disabilities. The National Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028 envisages the establishment of a specialized medical research and care center for persons with albinism. However, this study was unable to confirm details regarding its operational status or management arrangements.

[65] https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20Public/Identification/decret%2022.04.02.03.2022.html (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

[66] https://www.biometricupdate.com/202502/dr-congo-approaches-national-id-rollout-with-trident-implementation-agreement (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

[67] https://www.issa.int/sites/default/files/documents/2024-07/Congo%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of_0.pdf

[68] Disability & Inclusion Africa Network (2024) *Working to Fight Discrimination Against Disability in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

[69] Vaughan, K., & Thapa, R. (2023) "*Affordability of an NGO-government partnership for community-based disability rehabilitation,*" African Journal of Disability, 12.

The provision of rehabilitation services depends heavily on the physical rehabilitation programme (since 1997) of the International Committee of the Red Cross (hereinafter referred to as "ICRC") and its partner sites (five facilities were identified in this study)[70], as well as on donations from international NGOs and religious organizations such as Humanity and Inclusion and churches. Between 1998 and 2014, the ICRC provided orthopedic devices to more than 5,000 people. At the orthopedic center in Goma, located in a conflict-affected area, more than 800 prosthetic limbs were manufactured and provided in 2025 alone[71], yet demand reportedly continues to outstrip supply[72]. Efforts are also under way to establish a modern rehabilitation center at a major hospital in Kinshasa[73], as well as to strengthen orthotic services and specialized facilities in Goma and Lubumbashi. In addition, the National Fund for the Support of Autonomy and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (FONA-PVH), established in 2024, launched a funding call in December 2025 in the amount of USD 5 million, including for the construction of a massage and rehabilitation center, indicating an intention to build up domestic service provision, although the mechanism remains at an early stage of development[74].

Nevertheless, access to assistive devices and rehabilitation continues to be constrained by common structural challenges, including the absence of a dedicated public budget envelope, disparities in service availability in rural and remote areas, high costs linked to import dependence or reliance on donations[75], underdeveloped repair and spare-parts supply chains, insufficient training of prosthetists, orthotists and physiotherapists, and the absence of statistics on the number of persons in need of assistive devices[76].

With regard to assistive devices, a priority assistive devices list has been developed by the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Social Protection, identifying 31 priority items. Developed with the participation of persons with disabilities, rehabilitation professionals, suppliers and local manufacturers, the list is positioned as a normative reference document intended to facilitate improved access to assistive devices and more appropriate

[70] Kinshasa General Hospital; Goma (Shirika la Umoja); Bukavu (Heri Kwetu); Uvira (Bethanie); Bunia (Rwankole Hospital). https://blogs.icrc.org/hdtse/2021/12/09/l-orthopedie-en-rdc-une-specialite-cicr/ (Accessed: 30 April 2026)

[71] https://www.radiookapi.net/2026/03/29/actualite/politique/ladministration-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap-sinstalle-au-kwilu (Accessed: 30 April 2026)

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] With ICRC support, a physical rehabilitation facility was established at the general hospital in Kinshasa in 2021, strengthening the functional recovery and social reintegration of persons with disabilities through the provision of prosthetics and orthotics, physiotherapy and human-resource development. https://www.icrc.org/fr/document/rd-congo-un-centre-de-readaptation-physique-ouvre-kinshasa (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

[74] https://topdirect.cd/publications/6168-rdc-le-fona-pvh-lance-un-appel-de-fonds-pour-2-projets-en-faveur-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

[75] In 2023, religious organizations donated to the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Social Protection 400 improved wheelchairs, 150 crutches, 20 walkers and 30 canes. https://news-africa.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-donates-wheelchairs-and-other-mobility-aids-in-kinshasa--dr-congo (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

[76] Government of DRC (2024), UNPRPD (2022), Ministère de la Santé Publique, Hygiène et Prévention Sociale (n.d.) *Liste Nationale des Produits d'Assistance Prioritaires.*

procurement[77].

2) Education

Status of Legislative Framework

According to the State Party's Report, the right of persons with disabilities to education is guaranteed under articles 43, 44 and 45 of the Constitution, which explicitly prohibit discrimination in access to education. Building on this constitutional framework, the legal and policy architecture in the fields of education and disability has gradually been developed.

In 2014, the Framework Law on National Education (loi cadre de l'enseignement national) was adopted. Articles 33 and 34 clearly identify persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group that should not be subject to discrimination in access to education, while articles 107 to 112 set out provisions on special needs education for children with disabilities and children with special educational needs.

In September 2021, an "Inclusive Education Roadmap" comprising seven pillars, including the training of special needs education teachers, was formulated[78].

Article 13 of the May 2022 Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities clearly states that persons with disabilities have the right to receive formal and/or non-formal education on the basis of the principle of equal opportunity, and imposes on the State the obligation to provide special needs education for children who are unable to adapt to the regular curriculum, in accordance with their specific needs[79].

In April 2024, the mid-term review of the Education Sector Strategy (2016–2025) was published, noting that "the perspective of disability inclusion is weak" and that "access and financing need to be improved"[80].

As of April 2026, the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (now the Ministry of National Education and New Citizenship) is, with the support of UNESCO and UNICEF, advancing the formulation of a national inclusive education strategy through a committee of education experts. However, this study was unable to identify any document confirming the formal adoption of the strategy[81].

[77] The year of publication is unknown, but the State Party's Report notes that it was being prepared, so it was likely developed after the report was submitted in May 2024. https://topdirect.cd/publications/6168-rdc-le-fona-pvh-lance-un-appel-de-fonds-pour-2-projets-en-faveur-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

[78] https://acp.cd/nation/mise-en-oeuvre-dune-feuille-de-route-pour-leducation-inclusive-en-faveur-des-personnes-avec-handicap-en-rdc/ (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

[79] https://legalrdc.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Loi-organique-22_003_protection-et-promotion-des-droits-de-la-personne-avec-handicap.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026)

[80] UNPRPD (2022)

[81] https://core.unesco.org/en/project/3210112131 (Accessed: 25 April 2026)

Special Needs Education

The provision of special needs education for children with autism spectrum disorder and multiple disabilities continues to depend heavily on non-state actors such as NGOs, religious organizations and international agencies. Government support remains limited, largely to covering the salaries of teaching staff in some special schools. On the other hand, after education was positioned as a priority under the new political dispensation following the 2018 elections, 172 special schools were registered by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education in 2021 and made eligible for the free-education system. This registration process was still under way nationwide as of the 2024 State Party's Report, and as part of its local development programme (the local development programme covering 145 districts) the government aims to build special schools so as to address the problem of distance between children's homes and schools[82].

However, in the preparation of the 2024 report, out of a total of 81,711 primary and secondary educational institutions nationwide, only 177 were special needs education institutions (distributed across 35 educational provinces), representing just 0.2% of the total.

Inclusive Education

According to the State Party's Report, educational provision for persons with disabilities remains limited. With the exception of some inclusive schools in Bukavu[83], many schools and universities still lack systems for the education and support of students, teachers and staff with disabilities, and insufficient attention is paid to the accessibility of facilities and learning environments. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity undertook a number of activities in 2020–2021, together with stakeholders in the education sector, to promote inclusive education for vulnerable children, including children with disabilities and children with albinism[84].

In addition, efforts in inclusive education also appear to have been driven to a significant extent by the international NGO Humanity & Inclusion, in cooperation with the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education[85]. According to the State Party's Report, an

[82] A state-led local development programme covering 145 districts nationwide that pursues poverty reduction and local development through infrastructure development and the expansion of social services, with UNDP and others involved as implementing partners. https://www.undp.org/fr/drcongo/actualites/pdl-145t-promouvoir-de-meilleures-conditions-deducation-de-sante-et-renforcer-lautorite-de-letat-dans-50-territoires-enclaves (Accessed: 18 April 2026)

[83] It is assumed that the concentration of support from international organizations and NGOs—owing to its location in a conflict-affected area—has resulted in active engagement on inclusive education in Bukavu (South Kivu). One study on the implementation of inclusive education in Protestant secondary schools in Bukavu shows that teachers' main concern is a lack of resources (finance, infrastructure, specialized personnel), revealing a large gap between principle and practice. Balume, B. M. (2025) "Investigating Concerns about Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Protestant Secondary Schools in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)."

[84] Government of DRC (2024)

[85] https://education-profiles.org/fr/afrique-sub-saharienne/republique-democratique-du-congo/~inclusion#Lois,%20plans,%20politiques%20et%20programmes (Accessed: 27 April 2026)

inclusive education project supported by Humanity & Inclusion has been piloted in 18 mainstream public schools in Kinshasa, where 179 out of a total of 8,768 students were children with disabilities. Nevertheless, these efforts still appear to be largely pilot in nature, suggesting that their expansion as a nationwide system led by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education remains limited[86].

3) Gender (women with disabilities, etc.)

In the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, women and girls with disabilities are considered a particularly vulnerable group and their needs are recognized. Article 6 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that "the State shall formulate, adopt and implement policies and programmes aimed at strengthening and promoting the rights of women with disabilities". Article 14 further requires the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Social Protection, in cooperation with other ministries responsible for disability and gender, family and children, to formulate and implement sector-specific policies on the screening, prevention and early response to disability, and to address the sexual and reproductive health of women with disabilities. On the other hand, according to UNPRPD analysis, the national gender strategy contains no clear reference to women and girls with disabilities, and the integration of a disability perspective into gender policy has not progressed sufficiently[87].

Within the PVH-APV, a woman with a disability has been appointed minister, showing progress in political participation[88].

The police and courts have limited capacity to handle cases in which the victim is a person with disabilities, and have insufficient knowledge of how to respond appropriately to victims with disabilities. As a result, many cases of abuse go unreported, and abuse of women with intellectual disabilities in particular tends to be overlooked[89].

Empowerment for women with disabilities is primarily driven by international organizations, NGOs, and individuals with disabilities themselves. Economic empowerment initiatives, particularly those focused on entrepreneurship support, are expanding. For example, the World Bank's women entrepreneurship support project included women with disabilities, and

[86] https://education-profiles.org/fr/afrique-sub-saharienne/republique-democratique-du-congo/~inclusion#Lois,%20plans,%20politiques%20et%20programmes (Accessed: 27 April 2026)
[87] Government of DRC (2024)
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] *Ibid.*

75 women with disabilities participated through reasonable accommodations (e.g., sign language interpretation)[90].

On the other hand, many of these initiatives are project-based or limited to specific regions, and their institutional positioning and nationwide implementation are insufficient. Additionally, barriers to participation unique to women with disabilities, such as limitations on mobility and access to information, remain challenges.

4) Vocational Training and Employment

The government, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity, promulgated Decree No. 24/22 of 7 March 2024, setting out concrete methods for implementing the employment of persons with disabilities in public bodies. The decree requires securing employment of persons with disabilities of 5% in public bodies and at least 3% in the private sector. This study could not confirm (a) a reporting/monitoring system to measure compliance, (b) sanctions for non-achievement, or (c) an annual declaration obligation for private companies. Article 43 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates fines for employment discrimination in general (250,000–500,000 Congolese francs), but this is not a direct sanction for failing to meet the employment quotas.

In 2025, 1,200 persons with disabilities were employed by public institutions, indicating an expansion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the public sector. While this measure is considered a significant step towards correcting discrimination, its sustainability and institutional entrenchment still need to be examined[91].

The establishment of vocational training centers for persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups (Centres d'Actions pour le Travail des Personnes Vivant avec Handicap: CAT-PVH) is being envisioned as a solution to challenges such as reliance on the informal economy and begging (December 2025). From a policy perspective, this program is overseen by PVH-APV, not the Ministry of Labor, and aims to promote the social participation of persons with disabilities through vocational training, employment support, and entrepreneurship support. However, at present, the implementation of the system is still in its initial stages, and challenges remain in developing the implementation system and establishing sustainable operation[92].

[90] https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2025/12/08/empowering-women-entrepreneurs-living-with-disabilities-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo-drc (Accessed: 30 April 2026).
[91] JICA exchange rate for April 2026: CDF 1 = JPY 0.070190.
[92] https://www.radiookapi.net/2025/05/09/actualite/societe/rdc-1-200-personnes-en-situation-de-handicap-integrent-ladministration (Accessed: 15 April 2026).

5) Social Security, Social Service for Persons with Disabilities

Article 9 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that persons with disabilities have the right to (i) discounted use of public transport, and to use (ii) mobility assistive devices and (iii) human or animal assistance (guide dogs, personal assistants, etc.)[93].

In the DRC there is a contributory disability pension scheme run by the National Social Security Fund, under which benefits are paid to insured persons who meet a certain disability assessment (loss of earning capacity of 66% or more) and the enrolment requirements, but it is a scheme that mainly targets formal-sector workers[94]. Because it is an employment-based social-insurance benefit rather than a universal disability allowance funded from general tax revenue, its coverage is considered limited in the DRC, where informal workers are numerous[95].

For the social security of vulnerable groups outside the scope of social insurance, the National Fund for Social Promotion and Services (FNPSS), under the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity, plays a central role, providing support aimed at social inclusion and economic recovery. For example, in 2025 direct financial support was provided to about 200 households of persons with disabilities, promoting self-reliance through income generation, livelihood improvement and medical support[96]. In addition, according to the State Party's Report, the socio-economic recovery programme for vulnerable households and others run by the National Fund for the Support of Autonomy and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities promotes the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, through health and nutrition, education, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship support, accessible infrastructure and food security.

On the other hand, UNPRPD points out that the mainstream social-security system does not adequately respond to the needs of persons with disabilities and that developing disability-inclusive social security remains a challenge[97]. Conflict in the eastern region is a

[93] https://topdirect.cd/publications/6168-rdc-le-fona-pvh-lance-un-appel-de-fonds-pour-2-projets-en-faveur-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[94] www.issa.int/sites/default/files/documents/2024-07/Congo%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of_0.pdf (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[95] www.issa.int/sites/default/files/documents/2024-07/Congo%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of_0.pdf (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[96] https://fnpss.cd/journee-internationale-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap-le-fnpss-reaffirme-son-engagement-pour-la-promotion-de-lautonomie-financiere-des-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap-et-leur-inclusion-sociale/ (Accessed: 18 April 2026)
[97] UNPRPD (2022)

major cause of new disabilities resulting from explosives and armed clashes, and civil society has called for comprehensive support and compensation for victims[98].

6) Transportation and Urban Development (including accessible urban planning)

Decree No. 24/26, dated March 25, 2024 (Decree establishing practical implementation rules on accessibility for persons with disabilities in infrastructure, assistive devices and basic social services), was promulgated. This stipulates the obligation to pay compensation in cases of violation of these standards (see 2-2. Disability-related laws and policies for details).

According to UNPRPD, while these legal and policy frameworks are being established, significant challenges remain in the implementation phase. In the DRC, many public buildings and infrastructure are not accessible to persons with disabilities, and ensuring accessibility is not mandated in construction permits. Furthermore, neither the Framework Law on National Education (2014), the Architects Association Establishment Law (2016), nor the draft Urban Planning Law (2020) mentions accessibility requirements that should be considered in the design and construction of buildings, resulting in limited inclusion of persons with disabilities in urban development and infrastructure development. As a result, most public and private buildings, public service facilities, main roads, schools, residences, medical facilities, workplaces, sports facilities, and even public and private transportation, including roads, rivers, and lakes, are inaccessible to persons with disabilities due to the lack of ramps and elevators. The high cost of renovating existing infrastructure is also a factor hindering improvement[99].

In response to these challenges, efforts are underway to revise building regulations, hold discussions with architects' associations, and consider and promote initiatives such as incorporating disability considerations into national spatial planning[100].

7) Information accessibility

Articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution guarantee the right of all citizens to access information and communication. In addition, the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates the guarantee of access to information and freedom of expression, the obligation to ensure access to public information, and the provision of support such as sign-language interpreters, braille transcribers and guides. The State Party's Report indicates that progress is being made on initiatives such as standardizing sign language expressions used in the 26 provinces, creating a "Congolese Sign

[98] https://www.radiookapi.net/2026/04/21/actualite/societe/sos-du-mouvement-debout-congolais-face-laugmentation-du-handicap-lie (Accessed: 30 April 2026).
[99] Government of DRC (2024)
[100] *Ibid*.

Language Dictionary," establishing an academy aimed at promoting and standardizing sign language and braille, and improving accessibility in the media. This academy initiative for sign language and braille is also formally positioned within the National Development Plan 2024-2028. PVH-APV launched work on the harmonization and unification of sign language in Kinshasa in August 2021 and has also expressed a plan to position sign language as the fifth national language[101].

On the other hand, according to an analysis by UNPRPD, comprehensive systems and policies regarding information accessibility are not yet fully developed. In particular, specific institutional and operational frameworks for sign language and Braille are weak, and mechanisms for persons with hearing and visual impairments to access and fully participate in information, education and training, and public service are limited. In addition, positive discrimination measures to promote access to the knowledge and information necessary for persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making processes and national development are not adequately established.

8) Disaster Risk Management

Article 22 of the Organic Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides for the protection and security of persons with disabilities in risk situations, including armed conflict, humanitarian crises and natural disasters. According to the UNPRPD report, the DRC has formulated a National Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (2022–2026). This plan aims to reduce vulnerability factors and promote social inclusion, taking into account the differences in the impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups, including men, women, indigenous peoples, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

However, the State Party's Report points out that the disability perspective is scarcely mainstreamed in disaster and risk response, and that, because many reports in this field barely document the situation of persons with disabilities, responses are made without their needs being recognized.

[101] carmelmedia.info/2021/08/18/promotion-de-la-langue-des-signes-en-rdc-irene-esambo-lance-les-travaux-dharmonisation-et-duniformisation/ (Accessed: 30 April 2026).

3. International Treaties and International Cooperation

3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD

The Government of the DRC acceded to the CRPD and the Optional Protocol on 30 September 2015 [102]. The initial State Party's Report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was submitted on 22 May 2024. The list of issues from the Committee in response to the State Party's Report is scheduled to be published in September 2027. A parallel report has not yet been submitted. The first dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is scheduled for March 2031.

According to the Global Disability Fund, the content of the CRPD is not sufficiently recognized among both governmental and non-governmental institutions[103].

3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty

The Government of the DRC signed the Marrakesh Treaty in 2013 but has not ratified or acceded to it[104]. Therefore, it does not have a legal obligation to establish a domestic framework based on the treaty.

3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-related Policies

The Government of the DRC conducted Voluntary National Reviews (hereinafter referred to as "VNR"), in which national governments report to the UN High-Level Political Forum on their progress toward the SDGs and on policy progress, in 2020 and 2023. In the 2023 VNR, persons with disabilities are recognized as the most marginalized group among vulnerable people, but concrete indicators on the achievement of each target and sector-specific analysis are limited, and the disability field is treated mainly within the context of vulnerable groups as a whole. As noted above in 1-2, "Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability", because the statistical data on disability is insufficient, there are challenges in grasping progress on SDG indicators and in policy evaluation. Moreover, no clear description was found showing that OPDs participated systematically in the process of preparing the VNR.

SDG-related initiatives are being promoted through collaboration between the government, UN agencies, and international donors, and development policies and institutional development based on the rights of persons with disabilities are also being advanced. On the other hand, under implementation capacity and financial constraints, the

[102] According to UNICEF, "accession" means accepting a treaty directly, omitting the step of signature, while "ratification" means a treaty is approved after thorough deliberation in parliament and declared internationally. https://www.unicef.or.jp/kodomo/nani/history/hi_s2.htm (Accessed: 16 April 2026). Accession has the same legal effect as ratification. https://treaties.un.org/pages/overview.aspx?path=overview/glossary/page1_en.xml (Accessed: 16 April 2026).

[103] Global Disability Fund website, *Empowering Duty Bearers to Uphold the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in DRC*, https://globaldisabilityfund.org/programme/drc/ (Accessed: 31 March 2026).

[104] WIPO, *Marrakesh Treaty Contracting Parties List*, https://ipportal.wipo.int/home (Accessed: 7 April 2026).

delivery of social services, including those in the disability sector, is highly dependent on external support[105], and the establishment of a sustainable implementation structure led by the state is considered a challenge[106]. For this reason, progress in the disability sector toward achieving the SDGs remains limited. For example, while an "Inclusive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (hereinafter referred to as "WASH")" project is being implemented for vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, and accessible toilets and water-supply facilities are being developed, many persons with disabilities still cannot access water and sanitation services[107]. Additionally, structural constraints such as a lack of infrastructure, a fragile investment environment and conflict risk are also significant, highlighting the importance of support from donors and development finance institutions[108].

3-4. Ratification of and Efforts under Other International Conventions Related to Disability and Development

The Government of the DRC acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as "CEDAW") in 1986[109]. The CEDAW Committee issued Concluding Observations in 2013, 2019 and 2025, noting that, although the legal framework is in place, its effectiveness is limited due to custom, conflict and poverty, etc., and pointing in particular to the continuation of sexual violence in the east and to the multifaceted vulnerability women face in terms of poverty, education, employment and health. The latest Concluding Observations (2025) recommend strengthening the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence, strengthening medical, psychological and legal support for victims, holding the military and armed groups accountable, and rebuilding state services in conflict areas[110].

It ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as "CRC") in 1990[111]. The CRC Committee issued Concluding Observations in 2001, 2009 and 2017, pointing out that children with disabilities are "invisible" due to a lack of data, that inclusive education is underdeveloped and that they are excluded from education, that early detection and intervention systems are weak, that social stigma persists, and that the capacity of legal systems to address these issues is weak. In its latest Concluding Observations, the committee

[105] Joint SDG Fund, *Where We Work* - Congo DR, https://jointsdgfund.org/where-we-work/congo-dr (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[106] UNPRPD (2022)
[107] Congo Handicap, Disability Inclusive Water, https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Congo%20Handicap.pdf (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[108] https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/02/states-of-fragility-2025_c9080496/81982370-en.pdf (Accessed: 30 April 2026)
[109] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Lang=en&Treaty (Accessed: 28 April 2026).
[110] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2025) *Concluding Observations on the Report of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Submitted under the Exceptional Reporting Procedure* (CEDAW/C/COD/EP/CO/1)
[111] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Lang=en&Treaty (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

recommends promoting inclusive education, strengthening community-based rehabilitation, raising awareness to eliminate discrimination and stigma, and improving the compilation of data on children with disabilities[112].

In addition, as of April 2026 the Government of the DRC had not ratified ILO Convention No. 159, an international convention calling on states to formulate and implement national policies so that persons with disabilities can receive appropriate vocational rehabilitation and access employment opportunities on an equal basis with others[113].

According to the State Party's Report, the DRC is advancing domestic procedures toward ratifying the African Union's Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa. This Protocol is a regional human-rights framework that complements the CRPD while addressing challenges specific to Africa, such as the protection of persons with albinism and vulnerability under conflict and poverty, and it calls for the elimination of discrimination, accessibility, access to education, health and employment, and strengthened protection[114].

3-5. International Cooperation on Disability[115]

- The Government of Japan

<Technical Cooperation Projects: initiatives not specific to disability>

・ Project for Formulating the Kinshasa Urban Transport Master Plan (2017–2018)[116]

- Other Donors

<International Organization>

World Bank

[112] Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017) *Concluding Observations on the Combined Third to Fifth Periodic Reports of the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (CRC/C/COD/CO/3-5)

[113] Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention; entered into force in 1985. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:11110:0::NO:11110:P11110_COUNTRY_ID:103376 (Accessed: 12 April 2026)

[114] Government of DRC (2024)

[115] Prepared by the study team based on the Cabinet Office of Japan's White Paper on Persons with Disabilities, JICA's "Disability and Development" brochure, and information posted on the websites of other donors and international NGOs. Project names are listed exactly as they appear in the original text. However, this does not apply in cases where there is no English name or the English name is unknown.

[116] JICA (2019) Democratic Republic of the Congo: Project for Formulating the Kinshasa Urban Transport Master Plan—Final Report Summary, p. S1-6-25, which states: "It is necessary to develop guidelines that set out regulatory and technical standards for roads, transport facilities and related structures in order to secure equitable mobility for persons with restricted mobility, including all persons with physical disabilities (including wheelchair users), persons with visual and hearing impairments, and foreigners."

- Empowering Women Entrepreneurs and Upgrading MSMEs for Economic Transformation and Jobs in the Democratic Republic of Congo Project (TRANSFORME) (2022–2027)[117], a project supporting women entrepreneurs, including women with disabilities.
- Project to Strengthen Social Protection and Promote Decent Work[118] (from 2026): strengthening of the social protection system and vocational training for vulnerable groups such as youth, women and persons with disabilities, by the World Bank and the United Nations.

Global Disability Fund[119]

- Empowering Duty Bearers to Uphold the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in DRC (2022–2025)

UNICEF

- Emergency humanitarian assistance to support inclusive education access and protection for vulnerable children (including children with disabilities) under humanitarian crises[120]

United Nations Joint Human Rights Office[121][122]

- Support for the drafting, consultation and validation process of the initial State Party's Report on the CRPD
- Support for awareness-raising and advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities
- Support for establishing councils of persons with disabilities (in 26 provinces) and for building a CRPD monitoring system

European Union

- Through Humanity & Inclusion and Christian Blind Mission (hereinafter referred to as "CBM"), support for disability inclusion in inclusive education, CBR, advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities and humanitarian assistance[123][124]

[117] World Bank website, *Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Living with Disabilities in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2025/12/08/empowering-women-entrepreneurs-living-with-disabilities-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo-drc (Accessed: 4 April 2026)

[118] World Bank website, *The DRC Launches a Joint Project to Strengthen Social Protection and Promote Access to Decent Work*, https://www.unglobalaccelerator.org/drc-launches-joint-project-strengthen-social-protection-and-promote-access-decent-work (Accessed: 4 April 2026)

[119] Global Disability Fund website, *Empowering Duty Bearers to Uphold the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in DRC*, https://globaldisabilityfund.org/programme/drc/ (Accessed: 31 March 2026). For the above project, the Global Disability Fund works with UN Women and UNESCO as implementing partners.

[120] UNICEF (2025) *Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2 Democratic Republic of Congo,* https://www.unicef.org/media/170891/file/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo-Humanitarian-Situation-Report-No.2,-31-December-2024.pdf (Accessed: 31 March 2026)

[121] The field office has no department or dedicated staff specifically for persons with disabilities; it adopts an approach of mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities through support for legal frameworks, policy advocacy and capacity building. Source: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as "OHCHR") (2023) Report 2023.

[122] Government of DRC (2024)

[123] https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/democratic-republic-congo_en (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

[124] https://www.hi.org/en/country/democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

<Bilateral Assistance>

Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the European Union, and the Luxembourg Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[125]

- Financial support for Humanity & Inclusion's assistance to landmine victims in the eastern conflict zones (Ituri and North Kivu provinces)

<International NGOs>

Christian Blind Mission (CBM)[126]

- Support for the drafting, consultation and validation process of the initial State Party's Report on the CRPD (in cooperation with the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office)
- Support for community-based inclusive development (inclusive livelihoods and self-help group support) and for promoting awareness-raising
- Support for establishing councils of persons with disabilities (in 26 provinces)
- Support for persons with disabilities in emergencies and inclusive humanitarian response (conflict response)

Childhood Education International[127]

- Education and health support programme for children with disabilities (the Tunafasi Program) (since 2019)

Humanity & Inclusion

- Support for landmine victims in the eastern conflict zones (Ituri and North Kivu provinces)[128]
- Inclusive education project[129]

MAG International[130]

- Mine and unexploded ordnance clearance, mine-risk education, and victim assistance

Liliane Fonds[131]

- Support for strengthening the capacity of CBR workers using digital technology (RegApp) (2024–2026)

[125] https://www.hi.org/en/country/democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[126] Based on Government of DRC (2024) and information at https://www.cbm.org/search.html?q=Congo (Accessed: 8 April 2026)
[127] https://ceinternational.org/disability-inclusion-in-congo/ (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[128] https://www.hi.org/en/country/democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 28 April 2026)
[129] Government of DRC (2024)
[130] https://www.maginternational.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/dr-congo/ (Accessed: 28 April 2026).
[131] Liliane Fonds, *Testing RehApp in the DRC*, https://www.lilianefonds.org/project/telerehabilitation-pilot-for-cbr (Accessed: 8 April 2026).

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

The leading OPDs in the DRC are as follows.[132]

Organization Name	Overview
National Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities of the Congo (Fédération Nationale des Personnes Handicapées de la République Démocratique du Congo: FENAPHACO)[133]	The largest national federation of persons with disabilities in the country, a member of Disabled People's International and the African Disability Forum, with representative bodies in all 26 provinces and functioning as a platform encompassing organizations of diverse types of disability. As an organization led by persons with disabilities, it engages in policy advocacy, rights protection, dialogue with the government and awareness-raising, and conducts advocacy to promote CRPD implementation and improve the legal framework. It led lobbying toward the enactment of the 2022 Organic Law on persons with disabilities, has worked on provincial-level ordinances, monitored the development of environments that make it easier for persons with disabilities to vote (Braille ballots, ramp installation, etc.) in the late-2023 presidential and parliamentary elections, and has also worked on a campaign to eliminate sexual violence against women with disabilities in conflict areas (in cooperation with the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office), among other activities[134]
Congolese Federation of Persons with Disabilities (Fédération Congolaise des Personnes Handicapées: FECOPEHA)[135]	A non-profit organization established by a ministerial order of 5 November 2021, a national organization aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. It conducts policy advocacy, dialogue with the government, promotion of social participation and awareness-raising, and functions as a platform

[132] UNPRPD (2022)

[133] No organizational website could be identified, but a United Nations web article reports that in September 2025 the organization held an advocacy day with the United Nations, confirming that it is active. https://drcongo.un.org/fr/301270-le-syst%C3%A8me-des-nations-unies-r%C3%A9affirme-son-engagement-%C3%A0-renforcer-l%E2%80%99inclusion-des-personnes (Accessed: 26 April 2026)

[134] UNPRPD (2022)

[135] https://www.facebook.com/p/F%C3%A9d%C3%A9ration-Congolaise-des-Personnes-Handicap%C3%A9es-100083097648664/ (Accessed: 26 April 2026).

	connecting organizations of diverse persons with disabilities. Although its official Facebook page is not updated, according to media reports, in January 2026 the federation's secretary-general pointed to the lack of a CRPD compliance-monitoring mechanism as a challenge and recommended to the government that the statutory bodies be made operational, confirming that its advocacy continues[136]
Association for the Development of the Blind (Association des Aveugles pour de Développement: ASAD[137])	Works on advocacy for the rights of blind and low-vision persons and on promoting their social inclusion. As a member of the World Blind Union, it strives to promote accessibility, equal opportunity and full participation in society[138]
National Association of the Deaf of the Congo (Association Nationale des Sourds du Congo: ANSCO)[139]	Established in 1989. A national organization of persons concerned representing Deaf people in the DRC, working to advocate for the rights of Deaf people and promote their social inclusion. Its main activities are promoting recognition of Congolese Sign Language, improving access to educational and employment opportunities, policy advocacy, awareness-raising, and strengthening the empowerment and leadership of persons concerned. It also works on the official recognition of sign language and the promotion of civil rights, and provides support for Deaf people under humanitarian crises.
Association of Youth for Inclusive Development (Association des Jeunes Pour le Développement Inclusif - République Démocratique du Congo: AJDI DRC)	A national network working on advocacy for the rights of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities and on promoting their inclusion. It provides support through changing societal attitudes, strengthening the capacity of OPDs, and promoting socio-economic development programmes. A full member of Inclusion International[140]

[136] https://acp.cd/genre/inclusion-effective-des-pvh-le-gouvernement-appele-a-rendre-operationnels-les-dispositifs-legaux/ (Accessed: 26 April 2026)
[137] https://www.facebook.com/asaddrc/ (Accessed: 26 April 2026)
[138] https://wbu.ngo/fr/membres/association-des-aveugles-pour-de-developpement-asad (Accessed: 26 April 2026)
[139] https://ansco-cd.org/notre-association (Accessed: 26 April 2026).
[140] https://inclusion-international.org/our-members/full-member-listing/?biro-region=20#biro-filters (Accessed: 26 April 2026).

Congolese Association for the Liberation and Development of Disabled Mothers (ACOLDEMHA)[141]	An OPD established in 1995 and based in Kinshasa. Focusing on women with disabilities, it promotes social inclusion and autonomy through advocacy (awareness-raising), vocational training, the dissemination of inclusive education, training for teachers and health workers, and network-building among persons with disabilities. According to UNPRPD, its influence on policy is noted to be limited.

4-2. Disability Support Organizations

Organization Name	Overview
Association for Support to Children in Distress (Appui au Développement de l'Enfant en Détresse: ADED)[142]	An NGO established in Uvira in 2002, working to protect children and youth in difficult circumstances (including children with disabilities), provideing inclusive development support, and offering family- and community-based support. Its main activities include support for children with disabilities and CBR, inclusive education, support for the autonomy and employment of youth, humanitarian assistance and family-centered support. It also works on support for children with spina bifida and hydrocephalus and on integrating CBR at the health-center level. It operates mainly in the east (Uvira, Bukavu, Goma). It is the implementing body for inclusive education for children with disabilities (the aforementioned Tunafasi Program)[143].
Association of Youth for the Protection and Accompaniment of Persons with Impairments (Association des Jeunes pour la Protection et l'Accompagnement des Déficients: AJEPAD)	As a partner organization of ADED, AJEPAD serves as a local-level implementer, carrying out, on the ground, education and social participation for children and youth with disabilities and community-based disability inclusion[144].

[141] https://www.acoldemha.org/ (Accessed: 26 April 2026)
[142] https://aded-rdc.org/ (Accessed: 26 April 2026)
[143] https://ceinternational.org/disability-inclusion-in-congo/ (Accessed: 8 April 2026)
[144] *Ibid.*

Congo Handicap[145]	A humanitarian and development NGO established in 2005, working on the empowerment, rights protection and social inclusion of persons with disabilities and vulnerable people. Its main activities include advocacy and policy proposals on the rights of persons with disabilities, the promotion of social inclusion and accessibility, support in the fields of health and nutrition, education, WASH, food security and protection, disability prevention and community support, and support for persons with disabilities under humanitarian crises.

[145] https://www.congohandicaprdc.org (Accessed: 26 April 2026)

5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities

According to the State Party's Report on the CRPD, cross-cutting barriers faced by persons with disabilities include inadequate transport options and limited access to information[146]. It further notes the persistence of cultural and customary attitudes, as well as superstitious beliefs, that devalue persons with disabilities, with such tendencies reportedly being particularly pronounced in rural areas. In addition, the impact of armed conflict places persons with disabilities in particularly vulnerable situations, underscoring the need for adequate consideration in evacuation and protection measures. The report also indicates that support remains heavily dependent on families, highlighting the need to strengthen public services and community-based support systems[147].

Because no parallel report on the CRPD has been submitted, the barriers and needs in each of the sectors discussed below have been supplemented on the basis of the State Party's Report, reports prepared under UNPRPD, and the existing academic literature.

5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services

It is pointed out that in many healthcare facilities, owing to a lack of resources and specialized personnel, service structures for early diagnosis, rehabilitation and specialized care are not sufficiently organized, leaving children with disabilities vulnerable[148]. It is also noted that access to healthcare is limited, and the cost burden is heavy[149].

On the physical side, there are steps in many rural healthcare centers, so wheelchair users may find it difficult to enter the facilities themselves. Moreover, equipment is often not adapted to their needs—for example, examination tables whose height cannot be adjusted—making it difficult to receive proper examinations and consultations[150].

On the communication side, few medical workers have sign-language skills, so persons with hearing impairments find it difficult to receive consultations without a third party. As a result, additional care is needed to ensure that medical information is understood and that privacy is protected[151].

On the economic aspect, public subsidies for the purchase and repair of prosthetics, orthotics and wheelchairs are limited, and many persons with disabilities are seen to depend

[146] Government of DRC (2024)
[147] *Ibid*.
[148] Childhood Education International, https://ceinternational1892.org/disability-inclusion-in-congo/ (Accessed: 8 April 2026)
[149] Government of DRC (2024)
[150] Humanity & Inclusion, Democratic Republic of Congo, https://www.hi-us.org/en/country/democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 1 April 2026)
[151] Government of DRC (2024)

on support from international NGOs and others[152]. In this way, persons with disabilities face multilayered physical, institutional, economic and communication barriers.

In the eastern region (North Kivu and South Kivu provinces), persons with disabilities displaced by conflict face serious difficulties in daily life. With basic medical support lacking, deaths have occurred—particularly among persons with severe disabilities—underscoring the need to strengthen emergency humanitarian assistance[153].

5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education

In the DRC, many children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to accessing schooling. Existing studies point not only to the limited availability of special needs education, but also to the insufficient development of the institutional framework, resources and social awareness needed to advance inclusive education[154].

From the perspective of systems and service provision, the number of special schools remains limited. Special needs education is reported to be available in only 22 of the country's 30 education provinces, and out of a total of 51,377 schools nationwide, only around 109 are estimated to be special schools[155]. In addition, the legal and policy framework for inclusive education, as well as stable financing, teaching and learning materials, information and communication technologies, and human resources, remain insufficiently developed, underscoring the need to strengthen the capacity of mainstream schools to accommodate children with disabilities[156].

In terms of human resources, teachers reportedly have only limited opportunities to receive specialized training in the education of children with disabilities, and large class sizes further constrain their ability to provide instruction tailored to individual needs[157].

According to the State Party's Report, progress in making school infrastructure accessible remains slow, and basic infrastructure, including assistive devices and rehabilitation facilities, remains inadequate. Physical and informational accessibility is also constrained by the limited availability of Braille materials and teaching materials adapted for sign language users[158].

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[152] Humanity & Inclusion, Democratic Republic of Congo, https://www.hi-us.org/en/country/democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 1 April 2026).

[153] https://www.radiookapi.net/2026/04/25/actualite/societe/les-personnes-vivant-avec-handicap-au-nord-et-sud-kivu-appellent-laide (Accessed: 30 April 2026).

[154] Tshiunza et al. (2018) *Inclusive Education in DR Congo: Legal Foundations, State, Challenges and Perspectives*; Upolwun & Bambanota (2018) *Education of people with disabilities in the Democratic Republic of Congo from 1960 to 2016: What to do?*

[155] Upolwun & Bambanota (2018)

[156] Tshiunza et al. (2018)

[157] *Ibid.*; Upolwun & Bambanota (2018); Genovesi et al. (2021) *Stakeholder experiences, attitudes and perspectives on inclusive education for children with developmental disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review of qualitative studies.*

[158] https://ceinternational.org/disability-inclusion-in-congo/ (Accessed: 28 April 2026)

Moreover, social stigma and low expectations regarding the abilities of children with disabilities continue to affect school enrolment and sustained participation in learning[159]. For example, cases have been reported in which, when a child with a disability is born, the mother is divorced by her partner and publicly blamed[160], and in which children with disabilities are kept at home and have little opportunity to go out or attend school[161]. Such situations can also lead to an increased risk of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation[162].

Taken together, these findings suggest that children with disabilities face multiple and intersecting institutional, physical, human and social barriers. There is therefore a need to strengthen the policy and institutional framework for inclusive education and to expand its implementation nationwide, while also enhancing teacher training and support systems, improving the availability of adapted learning materials and assistive devices, and promoting more positive social attitudes. Building support networks that include families and local communities is also considered essential to sustaining school attendance over time[163].

5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment

As noted in 2-3, notwithstanding recent legal progress relating to the employment of persons with disabilities, their rights to work and employment continue to be undermined by prejudice and persistent underestimation of their capacities, resulting in continued marginalization in the labor market. The main barriers identified include discrimination in hiring, including refusal to recruit on the grounds of disability, reliance on the informal sector, limited access to vocational training, and inadequate social protection. According to the State Party's Report, many persons with disabilities are engaged in informal activities, including small-scale trade, as a means of subsistence. However, such activities remain unstable and carry a high risk of failure owing to weak support systems and limited partner support. As a result, some persons with disabilities in urban areas are reportedly compelled to rely on begging, despite the fact that this is prohibited by law[164].

The income of wage earners with disabilities is reported to be 61 % lower than that of workers without disabilities. Persons with disabilities also reportedly experience unemployment spells that are more than 30 % longer than those of persons without

[159] Tshiunza et al. (2018); Genovesi et al. (2021)
[160] https://www.dia-network.org/blog/working-to-fight-discrimination-against-disability-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo (Accessed: 18 April 2026)
[161] *Ibid*.
[162] https://mics.unicef.org/sites/mics/files/Congo%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the%2C%202017-18%20MICS%20Snapshots_French.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026)
[163] Upolwun & Bambanota (2018); Genovesi et al. (2021)
[164] UNPRPD (2022)

disabilities, while overall unemployment levels remain very high. In addition, coverage by social protection schemes remains low[165].

Limited access to education further contributes to difficulties in securing white-collar employment, including because of low literacy levels and insufficient information technology skills[166]. According to the National Fund for the Support of Autonomy and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (FONA-PVH), many recruitment examinations in the country still fail to provide adequate accommodation for persons with disabilities, and the current situation continues to present major challenges, requiring further awareness-raising and sustained action[167]. In addition, while self-employment constitutes an important livelihood strategy, limited access to microfinance and insufficient support for entrepreneurship remain significant constraints. The need for support measures, including tax incentives for companies employing persons with disabilities, has also been highlighted[168].

5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation

Persons with disabilities face serious constraints on mobility. In public transport, accessibility remains inadequate, including because buses and similar vehicles are generally not equipped with ramps. Urban infrastructure also poses major challenges, as the prevalence of unpaved roads makes movement extremely difficult for wheelchair users[169]. This situation is reported to be particularly acute in the capital, Kinshasa, where many public buses, commonly known as Esprit de Vie, are high-floor vehicles, making independent boarding and disembarkation by wheelchair users virtually impossible[170].

Against this backdrop, the need has been highlighted for infrastructure improvements, including the introduction of low-floor buses, the levelling of sidewalks, and the installation of tactile paving[171].

5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access [172]

Persons with disabilities in the DRC face numerous barriers in relation to access to information. In addition to the shortage of sign-language interpreters and the limited availability of Braille materials, access to information and communication technologies that

[165] Government of DRC (2023) *Rapport d'Examen National Volontaire de la RDC 2023*.
[166] *Ibid*., and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (2014) D*isability Rights in Democratic Republic of Congo*.
[167] https://magazinelaguardia.info/2025/12/04/rdc-malgre-la-loi-linclusion-sociale-de-pvh-demeure-faible/ (Accessed: 16 April 2026)
[168] UNPRPD (2022)
[169] *Ibid*., and Lobe, P. O. (2019) *Revised Country Report: Democratic Republic of Congo*.
[170] UNPRPD (2022)
[171] *Ibid*.
[172] UNPRPD (2022)

support intellectual and communication-related activities, such as adapted computers, specialized mobile phones and Braille printers, remains insufficiently developed. The use of sign language interpretation in television broadcasting remains limited, and the provision of public information in Braille is also still inadequate.

Furthermore, many government websites are not compatible with screen readers, which constrains independent access to information for persons with visual impairments and often requires them to rely on assistants in order to complete administrative procedures.

In addition, even in emergency situations, including disasters and infectious disease outbreaks, the provision of sign language interpretation is not institutionally guaranteed, creating serious barriers to access to information. Against this backdrop, there have been calls to make sign language interpretation mandatory in the dissemination of emergency information[173].

The State Party's Report likewise notes shortcomings in the availability of accessible teaching and learning materials and accessible information provision, particularly in the fields of education and access to information. The current implementation framework remains limited, and the provision of accessible publications continues to depend largely on international NGOs[174].

5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender

The State Party's Report and existing research point to the multiple and intersecting barriers faced by women with disabilities, including domestic violence, social exclusion, restricted access to education and employment opportunities, and limited access to health services.

First, women with disabilities are reported to face heightened risks of violence and exclusion within family and partner relationships. A study conducted in North Kivu indicates that women with disabilities are at increased risk of physical and sexual intimate partner violence[175]. In Kinshasa, cases have also been reported in which women with disabilities are neglected or rejected by family members and in-laws, with resulting constraints on access to education and employment, ultimately leading in some cases to extreme poverty and street homelessness[176]. In the context of marriage and partner relationships, women with disabilities

173 *Ibid*.
174 Government of DRC (2024).
175 Scolese et al. (2020) "Disability status and violence against women in the home in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo."
176 Coster et al. (2016) "Beadwork and the Plasticity of Disability: (Un)Making Bodily Difference, Gender and Apprenticeship in Kinshasa, DR Congo."

are also reported to be more likely to experience instability, including cases in which relationships are terminated following pregnancy[177].

Second, clear disparities are evident with regard to education, employment and participation in decision-making. According to the Sixth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6), conducted by UNICEF between 2017 and 2018, 42% of women with disabilities had not completed primary education, compared with 33% of women without disabilities[178]. Participation by women and persons with disabilities in higher education remains limited, reportedly owing in part to prevailing gender norms and structural factors[179]. In addition, the proportion of women with disabilities who reported feeling discriminated against or persecuted stood at 31%, nearly twice the level recorded among women without disabilities (16%). Similarly, the proportion reporting that they felt happy was 30% among women with disabilities, compared with 45% among women without disabilities[180]. In a context in which social norms tend to undervalue investment in girls' education, women with disabilities are considered to face even greater constraints in access to employment opportunities[181].

In addition, gender-specific barriers are also evident in relation to sexual and reproductive health. Research conducted in Goma found that women may be required to obtain the consent of a husband or household head in order to access health services, a practice that constitutes a barrier particularly for unmarried women and survivors of sexual violence. Women with disabilities are additionally more likely to be affected by stigma associated with disability and by limited understanding among health-care providers, further restricting their access to sexual and reproductive health services[182].

Taken together, these findings point to the need for strengthened measures to protect and support women with disabilities in relation to gender-based violence[183], to promote their educational attainment and economic empowerment [184], to strengthen institutional frameworks that integrate both gender and disability perspectives; and to improve social attitudes and awareness[185].

[177] *Ibid.*
[178] UNICEF (2017)
[179] Muyo (2023) *Factors limiting the diversity and inclusion of gender, disabled people and indigenous populations in the DR Congo academic settings.*
[180] Muyo (2023)
[181] *Ibid.*
[182] Lambert & Mbeva (2020) *Women and access to health care in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Barriers related to gender.*
[183] Scolese et al. (2020)
[184] Muyo (2023)
[185] Coster et al. (2016)

In conflict-affected areas, including eastern Ituri Province, particularly grave reports indicate that women with disabilities, who may be unable to flee, are especially vulnerable to sexual violence[186].

Overall, women with disabilities face barriers across multiple domains, underscoring the need for a comprehensive response aimed at preventing violence, expanding access to education and employment opportunities, improving access to health services, and promoting social inclusion.

[186] UNPRPD (2022)

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