Country Profile on Disability
Republic of South Sudan

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEPO	Community Empowerment Progress Organization
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EiE	Education in Emergencies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IFHV	Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSUPD	South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities
SSWEN	South Sudan Women with Disabilities Network
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict
RJMEC	Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
RTGoNU	Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSCDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators[1]

Gross Domestic Product[2] per capita	USD 1080.1	2015

Government Expenditures by Sector

Healthcare (% of GDP)	11.6 %	2023
Education (% of GDP)	1.6 %	2016
Social protection (% of GDP)	N/A	

Population

Total population	11,943,408	2024
Male (% of total population)	49.2 %	
Female (% of total population)	50.8 %	
Urban population (% of total population)	21.4 %	
Rural population (% of total population)	78.6 %	
Life expectancy at birth (total)	57.7 years	2024
Male	54.8 years	
Female	60.7 years	

Health

Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	22.3 %	2023
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	71.9	2024

Education

Education System[3]		
Primary Education	8 years	
Compulsory education	8 years	
Literacy rate (% of ages 15 and above)	26.8 %	2008
Adult male	34.8 %	
Adult female	19.2 %	

[1] Based on the World Bank Database（https://data.worldbank.org/indicator (Accessed: 18 April 2026)）

[2] Hereinafter referred to as "GDP."

[3] General Education Act, 2012, https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/general_education_act_2012.pdf (Accessed: April 18 2026)

School enrollment		
Primary (% gross) (total)	98.4 %	2024
Male	107.7 %	
Female	88.9 %	
Secondary (% gross) (total)	122.1 %	2024
Male	133.6 %	
Female	110.4 %	
Tertiary (% gross) (total)	N/A	
Male	N/A	
Female	N/A	

Employment

Unemployment (total)	12.4 %	2023
Male (% of male labour force)	11.2 %	
Female (% of female labour force)	13.6 %	

1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability

The Republic of South Sudan (hereinafter referred to as "South Sudan") gained independence from Sudan in 2011. According to a 2023 report by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (hereinafter referred to as "UNMISS")[4], the country is still in the process of building state institutions, and UNMISS has played a complementary role in maintaining security and protecting civilians. From 2013 to 2018, political disputes escalated into armed conflict, resulting in widespread violence and human rights violations. More than half of the population was affected, and the number of internally displaced persons reached 1.3 million[5]. A large number of civilians sought refuge within UNMISS facilities, leading to the establishment of a system in which the United Nations provided direct protection in lieu of the state. In 2020, a unified government was established, and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict (hereinafter referred to as "R-ARCSS") serves as a framework governing institutional arrangements for transitional governance, constitution-making, and the conduct of elections. The Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (hereinafter referred to as "RTGoNU") is responsible for implementing the R-ARCSS. However, mistrust and divisions among political factions persist, and the RTGoNU's governance cannot be described as stable. Issues such as widespread poverty, unequal distribution of resource

[4] UNMISS (2023) *Letter dated 4 December 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2023/955.

[5] World Bank（2026）*Macro Poverty Outlook: South Sudan*.

revenues, and corruption have been highlighted, and state functions remain limited and incomplete[6].

The economy of South Sudan relies on exports of its abundant oil resources. The country exports approximately 110,000 barrels of oil per day, which accounts for most of the revenue. South Sudan's oil exports depend on Sudan's pipelines since the extracted oil is exported via the Red Sea through neighboring Sudan. Due to the impact of the conflict in Sudan that began in 2023, the pipeline has been shut down, leading to a significant decline in oil production and severe damage to South Sudan's economy[7].

1-2-1. Definition of Disability

Against this backdrop, the legal framework remains inadequate. According to the country report in the African Disability Rights Yearbook (2019)[8], South Sudan lacks specific legislation to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The National Disability Action Plan 2020, issued by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare, is based on the definition of disability set forth in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "CRPD"), namely, "those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." (CRPD Article 1).

1-2-2. Indicators on Disability

According to the 2008 census conducted prior to independence, South Sudan had 421,285 people with disabilities, representing 5.1% of the population[9]. However, a 2016 household survey found that 15% of surveyed households reported having at least one person with a disability. No census has been conducted since independence, and disability statistics following the civil war are unclear, but Human Rights Watch estimates the number to be over 1.2 million[10].

According to the 2008 census, the breakdown of disability types is as follows: physical disability 28.4%, visual impairment 23.5%, total blindness 7.8%, mental disability 15.3%, hearing impairment 10.3%, speech impairment 4%, mutism 2.2%, upper limb amputation

[6] https://www.radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/sudan-orders-oil-shutdown-south-sudan-exports-at-risk(Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[7] https://www.radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/sudan-orders-oil-shutdown-south-sudan-exports-at-risk(Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[8] https://www.adry.up.ac.za/country-reports-2019/south-sudan (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[9] Mgijima-Konopi, I., Odaudu, T., & Mapokgol, R. (2019) *Country report: South Sudan. African Disability Rights Yearbook*., MGCSW (2020) *Action Plan2020*.
[10] https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/31/south-sudan-people-disabilities-older-people-face-danger(Accessed: 18 April 2026)

1.7%, and lower limb amputation 3.6%[11]. The National Disability Action Plan 2020 estimates that the actual number of people with disabilities is higher than these figures, as many internally displaced persons due to the civil war suffer functional impairments caused by illness, malnutrition, injuries, gunshot wounds, landmines, and other factors. It also reports that civil war and past conflicts account for 21% of the causes of disability. Other causes cited include poverty, lack of medical services, polio, mental illness, congenital disabilities, accidents, animal/snake bites, physical violence and abuse, eye infections, hypertension, and HIV/AIDS.

[11] Mgijima-Konopi et al. (2019)

2. Administration and Policy on Disability

2-1. Administration on Disability

<Central government>

Entities responsible for disability issues

Table 1 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in South Sudan

No.	Name	Overview
1	Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW)[12]	・Protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities ・Developing social welfare, social protection, and disability policies and programs ・Responsible for mainstreaming disability issues in public and private institutions
2	Ministry of Health	Improve the health of citizens and ensure quality healthcare, particularly for the most vulnerable
3	Ministry of General Education and Instruction	・Formulate national policies on inclusive education to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the domestic education system ・Lead the development of new curricula that take into account the needs of learners

Source: Prepared by the study team based on Mgijima-Konopi et al. (2019)

Status of Coordination Mechanism

The Government of South Sudan ratified the CRPD in 2024, but there is no specialized agency to monitor its implementation. The responsibility for legislation and policies concerning persons with disabilities lies with the MGCSW[13]. The National Action Plan on Disability 2020 stipulates the establishment of a national council to support the representation of persons with disabilities following the ratification of the CRPD. The plan states that the gender divisions of the State Ministry establish a state-level forum for persons with disabilities to improve the implementation of disability programs within the state in collaboration with the central government.

2-2. Laws and Policies on Disability

According to RJMEC (2025), the Council of Ministers has approved the national budget and is advancing judicial and fiscal reforms under the RTGoNU, while the Transitional National Legislature is convening sessions and proceeding with legislative procedures, including the National Security Act. As noted in Section 1-2-1, at the time of this study, South Sudan had not enacted comprehensive domestic legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities.

[12] Mgijima-Konopi et al. (2019)
[13] MGCSW (2020)

However, some media reports that a disability bill has been developed and validated[14].

Disability Policies

Title	National Disability Action Plan 2020 (NDAP) 2020-2024[15]
Year implemented	2020
Overview	This action plan implements the "National Disability & Inclusive Policy 2013," which upholds the principles of "non-discrimination," "the indivisibility of human rights," and "disability mainstreaming," and provides a framework for rolling out concrete measures to mainstream disability across various sectors. It identifies several key intervention areas that cut across the disability sector, including data management, health care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, education, socioeconomic inclusion, and legal systems, and sets specific goals, activities, indicators, and implementing entities for each. It adopts a structure for policy implementation based on multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving not only the central government but also state governments, relevant ministries and agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (hereinafter referred to as "NGO"), and organizations of persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "OPD") and others, and adopts a structure for policy implementation based on multi-stakeholder collaboration. It is a five-year plan extending through 2024. This study was unable to confirm an action plan for 2025 and beyond to follow this plan.

Title	National Social Protection Policy Framework[16]
Year implemented	2016
Overview	Social protection is defined as public/private mechanisms that protect individuals and households from deteriorating living conditions caused by shocks and stresses, and persons with disabilities are considered one

[14] https://www.partos.nl/en/news/impact-story-1-6-persons-with-disabilities-are-shaping-south-sudans-future/(Accessed: 21 April 2026)
[15] MGCSW (2020) *National Disability Action Plan 2020*.
[16] MGCSW (2021) *National Social Protection Policy Framework Annual Report 2020*.

	of the primary target groups. Alongside women, children, and the elderly, social assistance programs, such as unconditional cash transfers and food aid, are central to supporting households headed by persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses. For vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, initiatives such as Cash for Work, which provides cash in exchange for temporary labor, as well as livelihood support and skills training, aim to achieve both short-term livelihood security and the strengthening of medium- to long-term resilience.

Title	National Inclusive Education Policy[17]
Year implemented	2021
Overview	This policy aims to ensure equal access to education for all learners and to transform the entire education system into an inclusive one. Particular emphasis is placed on supporting children who are at risk of exclusion, such as those with disabilities or living in poverty, and education is recognized as a fundamental human right. A twin-track approach is adopted, advancing improvements to the overall educational environment alongside individualized support, with a focus on removing social barriers. Key measures include early identification and support, strengthening teachers' capabilities, providing supplementary materials and reasonable accommodations, and promoting multisectoral collaboration. Furthermore, the policy establishes that learning in regular classrooms is the principle, and no new special schools will be established. Inclusion Support Resource Centers have been established as a cross-school support agency, serving as a base of operations for resource teachers, itinerant teachers, and multidisciplinary teams. It is responsible for supporting both individual support and school improvement.

2-3. Measures on Disability[18]

1) Healthcare

The civil war in South Sudan has had severe economic and social impacts, with 42% of the

[17] Ministry of General Education and Instruction (2021) *The National Inclusive Education Policy Framework*.

[18] This information is based on the Government of South Sudan's Voluntary National Review (VNR) report (2024) on the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as "SDGs"). When information is based on other sources, this will be noted where relevant.

population (approximately 6 million people) facing food shortages[19]. These conditions have led to an increase in the proportion of persons with disabilities, further marginalizing them and resulting in their exclusion from society. While a certain policy framework exists in the health sector for persons with disabilities in South Sudan, access to services remains extremely limited in practice. The "National Disability and Inclusion Policy 2015" identifies equal access to health services for all persons with disabilities and the provision of comprehensive rehabilitation services as priority interventions. In addition, institutional measures for war casualties and others, such as the establishment of rehabilitation facilities are in place to some extent[20].

According to Rohwerder (2018)[21], persons with disabilities are unable to access healthcare services and assistive devices due to cost and a lack of facilities, and they are also at high risk of malnutrition. A protection analysis by the Protection Cluster (2023) points out that persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing basic services, including health services, due to "institutional, environmental, and attitudinal barriers." In many cases, displaced persons and the elderly are unable to access medical services due to mobility difficulties[22]. There are also reports of situations where people whose mobility is restricted by the effects of conflict are left behind, further limiting their access to medical care. Against this backdrop, in areas where roads were impassable due to flooding, mass drug administration campaigns for trachoma prevention were conducted using boats[23].

2) Education

In education, efforts are underway to promote inclusive education. National policy explicitly calls for improving educational access for children with disabilities. In addition, teacher training in sign language and Braille is being conducted to strengthen teachers' capabilities for inclusive education[24].

Educational access for children with disabilities, however, remains extremely limited. According to the 2012 Annual School Survey, children with disabilities accounted for 1.37% (22,896 students) of all enrolled students in primary and secondary education. This figure has decreased to 1.08% by 2021[25]. Educational opportunities are almost nonexistent in rural areas,

[19] World Bank（2026）
[20] MGCSW, Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (2013) *South Sudan National Disability and Inclusion Policy (Final Draft)*.
[21] Rohwerder, B. (2018) *Disability in South Sudan*.
[22] Protection Cluster (2023) *South Sudan Protection Analysis Update*.
[23] Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) (2023) *Advancing Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Programming and Coordination in South Sudan*.
[24] https://mogei.gov.ss/news_details?title=13(Accessed: 21 April 2026)
[25] The VNR Report (2024) also states that 3,079 (51%) of the 6,009 schools surveyed had students with disabilities enrolled, according to the 2023 Annual School Survey.

and girls and children with severe disabilities are considered to be even more vulnerable to exclusion[26]. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), while special schools are operated for children with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and severe intellectual disabilities, inclusive support within regular classrooms has not been sufficiently developed[27]. The need for the inclusion of persons with disabilities is highlighted within the framework of Education in Emergencies (EiE)[28]. Additionally, physical accessibility of schools, a lack of teacher expertise, and negative attitudes are cited as barriers[29]. Across the education sector as a whole, data gaps exist due to conflicts and the presence of hard-to-reach areas, resulting in a significant disconnect between institutional frameworks and actual conditions.

The VNR Report (2024) outlines the need for the following initiatives:

- Ensure that the education information management system collects data on children with disabilities, categorized by gender, age, region of residence, and type of disability.
- Strengthen inclusive education, expand it to all regions, and provide education in Braille and sign language.
- Conduct awareness campaigns target families to encourage them to send children with disabilities, particularly girls, to school.
- Develop guidelines for facilities and schools serving children with disabilities.
- Implement capacity-building programs to address capacity needs in facilities and schools catering to children with disabilities.

3) Gender

The intersecting vulnerabilities of disability and gender are particularly pronounced. According to the Protection Cluster (2023), women with disabilities face greater disadvantages than other groups in accessing education and social services. Survey results indicate that 92% are illiterate. The VNR report states that women with disabilities are not only severely marginalized due to limited access to assistive devices but also face additional prejudice. Because they are often hidden or isolated within the home, they are less likely to attend school and are exposed to more severe violence. 84% of all persons with disabilities are at risk of violence or abuse, and women with disabilities, in particular, are at high risk of gender-based violence (hereinafter referred to as "GBV"). Thus, while institutional responses do exist, the response to the intersection of gender and disability remains insufficient[30].

[26] Rohwerder, B. (2018)
[27] UNICEF (2023) Mapping and Recommendations on Disability-Inclusive Education in Eastern and Southern Africa.
[28] UNESCO(2022)*Strengthening MoGEI Engagement and Leadership in Rapid EiE Responses in South Sudan*.
[29] Protection Cluster (2023)
[30] *Ibid.*

4) Vocational Training and Employment

According to World Bank statistics, agriculture accounts for more than 60% of total employment in South Sudan[31]. Much of this consists of low-productive farming that is self-sufficient and relies on family labor. As a result, stable wage employment is extremely limited. The majority of the labor market is dominated by the informal economy, centered on small-scale commerce, personal services, and family-run businesses. Formal employment opportunities are scarce, and many people earn their livelihoods in the informal sector[32]. The private sector is extremely fragile. Although the oil sector is the main industry, it is capital-intensive and has low employment absorption capacity, failing to lead to widespread job creation[33]. Moreover, it has been noted that prolonged conflict and political instability significantly constrain the expansion of employment opportunities, and they have a severe impact on livelihoods in general[34].

National policy identifies "improving livelihoods and economic independence" as a key pillar, prioritizing the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities through vocational training and expanding employment opportunities. According to the VNR report (2024), the proportion of employees in vulnerable employment[35] remains high. According to 2022 estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the employment rate in vulnerable employment in South Sudan stands at 87.7% (81.1% for men and 94.2% for women). Under these circumstances, employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are extremely limited; most are unemployed, with a lack of workplace accessibility and employer bias serving as major barriers[36]. The Protection Cluster (2023) also reports that persons with disabilities face restricted access to income-generating opportunities and vocational training.

Consequently, while there is a policy direction regarding employment for persons with disabilities in South Sudan, a lack of implementation capacity and institutional frameworks has prevented the creation of meaningful employment opportunities. In its Voluntary National Review (VNR) report (2024), the government identified affirmative action measures, such as establishing employment quotas for leadership positions in government agencies and the private sector, as areas for improvement.

[31] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=SS(Accessed: 22 April 2026)
[32] https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-12/Labor%20Market%20Assessment_0.pdf(Accessed: 21 April 2026)
[33] World Bank (2021) South Sudan Economic Update: Pathways to Sustainable Food Security.
[34] https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/South%20Sudan%20ARR%202024.pdf (Accessed: 18 April 2026)
[35] Vulnerable employment refers to self-employed individuals and unpaid family workers. https://webapps.ilo.org/static/english/intserv/working-papers/wp005/index.html (Accessed: 21 April 2026)
[36] Rohwerder (2018)

5) Social Security, Social Service for Persons with Disabilities

The lack of institutional development is also striking in the social security and welfare sectors. While national policies advocate for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and the provision of services, according to Rohwerder (2018), South Sudan has virtually no social security system or safety net for persons with disabilities. The government's implementation capacity is limited, and addressing the needs of persons with disabilities relies heavily on support from international NGOs and other organizations. While organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) do exist, their activities are constrained by a lack of funding and government support. Thus, there is a significant disconnect between the institutional framework and the implementation structure.

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

National policy explicitly identifies ensuring accessibility as a priority area. Only 2% of roads are paved, and electricity is available to just 5% of all households[37]; the lack of transportation and infrastructure poses a significant barrier. The lack of transportation infrastructure and high costs hinder access to services for people with disabilities[38]. In addition, public facilities and telecommunications infrastructure are not accessible, contributing to social exclusion. Even in the context of humanitarian aid, reports indicate that persons with disabilities are often left behind when roads are cut off by floods or conflicts, limiting their means of transportation[39].

7) Information Accessibility

Communication methods and information provision do not take persons with disabilities into account, creating a major barrier to social participation[40]. While some progress has been made in the field of education, such as the introduction of sign language and Braille instruction, these efforts remain limited, and information accessibility across society as a whole remains inadequate.

According to the African Sign Language Resource Center, South Sudanese Sign Language (SSSL) is used in South Sudan[41]. Named upon the country's independence in 2011, it is the newest sign language. It is based on Sudanese Sign Language, and an official dictionary was published in 2016[42].

[37] World Bank（2026）
[38] Rohwerder, B. (2018)
[39] Protection Cluster (2023)
[40] Rohwerder, B. (2018), Protection Cluster (2023)
[41] https://africansignlanguagesresourcecenter.com/south-sudan/(Accessed: 23 April 2026)
[42] https://www.light-for-the-world.org/news/south-sudan-sign-language-as-a-game-changer/(Accessed: 23 April 2026)

8) Disaster risk management

Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to being left behind during conflicts and natural disasters. Evacuation is difficult for them, and they are often left behind during conflicts; their limited mobility is believed to increase their risk of violence and lack of support[43]. In addition to the humanitarian crisis caused by the civil war, floods, the most severe type of natural disaster, have occurred repeatedly. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 1 million people were affected by flooding in 2025, causing widespread damage across multiple states[44]. UNICEF notes that 750,000 to 1 million people are affected by flooding in the country each year, forcing many residents to evacuate[45]. These floods are not isolated incidents; they have occurred continuously since 2019, causing severe impacts on the entire socio-economic landscape, including loss of livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of education and health services[46].

In the context of humanitarian response under these conditions, disability inclusion has not been sufficiently mainstreamed, and challenges in coordination and program design have been identified[47].

[43] *Ibid.*
[44] https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-floods-snapshot-30-october-2025 (Accessed: 23 April 2026)
[45] https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/what-we-do/climate-change-and-flooding (Accessed: 23 April 2026)
[46] https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-04/Flood%20Assessment%20in%20South%20Sudan%202022%20RRC.pdf (Accessed: 23 April 2026)
[47] IFHV (2023)

3. International Treaties and International Cooperation

South Sudan is a new nation that gained independence in 2011 and has acceded to a limited number of international treaties.

3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD[48]

The Government of South Sudan accessed to the CRPD on February 5, 2024[49]. The deadline for submitting the government's initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is May 5, 2026. As of April 2026, no parallel report has been submitted by civil society organizations. Following a constructive dialogue, the Committee is scheduled to adopt its concluding observations in August 2032.

3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty

As of April 2026, the Government of South Sudan has not ratified the Marrakesh Treaty (Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled), which guarantees access to literary and artistic works for persons with visual impairments and others[50].

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

In 2024, the Government of South Sudan submitted a Voluntary National Review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum, detailing the country's progress toward achieving the SDGs and the status of its related policies. The VNR report (2024) was reviewed through a three-stage process. In the first stage, SDGs focal points from various ministries, the Juba City Council, state councils, state coordination offices, R-TNLA, and UN agencies scrutinized the draft report and shared their comments with the drafters. Additionally, the initial draft report was shared and discussed by SDG focal points from various ministries during a pre-review workshop. In the third stage, all key stakeholders, including representatives from civil society organizations, youth groups, women's groups, OPD, the private sector, and donors, were invited to a validation workshop, and the feedback received there was incorporated into the final document.

The VNR report identifies as an area for improvement the fact that no statistical surveys on persons with disabilities have been conducted, making it difficult for OPD to carry out evidence-based advocacy activities, particularly those related to access to services.

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[48] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=LAO&Lang=EN（Accessed: 16 April 2026）

[49] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=133&Lang=EN（Accessed: 13 April 2026）

[50] https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/treaties/ShowResults?search_what=C&treaty_id=843（Accessed: 13 April 2026）

In addition, according to the SDG Indicator Database, for indicator 1.3.1, "Proportion of the population covered by social protection systems," the proportion of low-income individuals receiving benefits decreased from 10.9% in 2019 to 0.0% in 2023, and the proportion of vulnerable individuals receiving benefits decreased from 16.4% in 2019 to 0.0% in 2023. As of 2023, the proportion of persons with severe disabilities receiving disability benefits is 0.0%[51].

3-4. Ratification of and Initiatives regarding Other International Treaties related to Disabilities and Development

The Government of South Sudan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2015. The most recent concluding observations were issued in 2021, noting the lack of access to education, social protection, and support services for marginalized women, including women with disabilities, and recommending the development of disaggregated data and the strengthening of inclusive policies.

The Government of South Sudan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2015. The most recent concluding observations were issued in 2022, noting the strong link between poverty, ethnic origin, and disability; the social stigma faced by children with disabilities; the lack of statistical data; and the weakness of early support systems, and recommending the development of an inclusive education system.

In addition, the Government of South Sudan has not ratified ILO Convention No. 159[52], an international treaty calls on countries to formulate and implement national policies to ensure that persons with disabilities receive appropriate vocational rehabilitation and have equal access to employment opportunities.

3-5. International Cooperation on Disability[53]

• The Government of Japan[54]

Since South Sudan's independence, the Government of Japan has supported the country's nation-building efforts through JICA and international organizations in areas such as infrastructure development, the promotion of alternative industries, the improvement of basic human needs, and the strengthening of governance. Since the deterioration of the security situation, the Government of Japan has been working through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional organization in East Africa, to help consolidate

[51] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/（Accessed: 13 April 2026）

[52] Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention), entered into force in1985.

[53] 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.

[54] https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2019/html/topics/04.html, https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/2021/05/new_hope_for_south_sudan.html（Accessed: 13 April 2026）

peace in South Sudan. In addition to financial assistance, this includes support for human resource development in areas such as public financial management, strengthening police capabilities, and building the capacity of customs officials, as well as humanitarian aid, including food assistance.

Since 2016, South Sudan's Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports has been organizing "National Unity Day" sports events with the aim of supporting peace and social cohesion among citizens. JICA supports the planning and operation of these sports events. For the 4th National Unity Day Sports Event in 2019, with support, including funding and the procurement of supplies, from 12 countries, agencies, and organizations that share the event's vision, such as UN agencies, foreign governments, and private companies, a wide range of competitions, including wheelchair basketball, were held.

- Other donors

<International organization>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNICEF)

・Global Partnership for Education-Transforming Education in South Sudan（GPE-TESS）（around 2020-）[55]

World Food Programme (WFP)

・ Empowering people with disabilities in South Sudan (around 2020)[56]

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: UNESCO

・ Inclusive economic empowerment[57]

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

・United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights（2023-2025）[58]

<Bilateral cooperation>

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

・Education for All South Sudan (2026-)[59]

The Government of Norway

・Together for Inclusion (TOFI) (2019-2024)[60]

A multi-country consortium project in which OPD and international NGOs collaborate to

[55] Strengthening inclusive education resource center.https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2025-02-gpe-bod-decisions-non-objection-rev1.pdf(Accessed: 15 April 2026)

[56] Collaborate with H&I. https://www.wfp.org/stories/empowering-people-disabilities-south-sudan（Accessed: 15 April 2026)

[57] https://www.light-for-the-world.org/our-work/project-countries/southsudan(Accessed: 15 April 2026)

[58] A/HRC/61/75

[59] https://impactfunding.substack.com/p/education-human-rights-and-inclusion-d68(Accessed: 15 April 2026)

[60] https://tofiso.org/(Accessed: 13 April 2026)

promote disability inclusion in several African countries, including South Sudan

<International NGO>

Light for the World

- Inclusive Education & Disability Inclusion Programme[61]

[61] https://www.light-for-the-world.org/our-work/project-countries/southsudan（Accessed: 13 April 2026）

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

Name of Organization	Overview
South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities (SSUPD)[62]	Established in 2012. This is an umbrella organization bringing together the following OPDs. ・South Sudan Women with Disabilities Network (SSWEN) ・South Sudan Association of Visually Impaired ・South Sudan Association of the Deaf ・Jubek State Union of the Physically Disabled ・Equatoria State Association of the Deaf ・Jubek State Association of People Affected with Leprosy ・South Sudan Wheelchair Basketball Association ・Jubek State Union of the Visually Impaired It was officially registered in 2020. It is a member organization of the African Disability Forum. Its participation is also noted in the VNR preparation process.

4-2. Disability Support Organizations

Name of Organization	Overview
Light for the World[63]	An Austrian NGO dedicated to safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities and promoting their social inclusion. It began providing support in South Sudan in 2007, with a particular focus on inclusivity in humanitarian response.
Community Empowerment Progress Organization（CEPO）[64]	This South Sudan-based NGO focuses primarily on strengthening civil society, advocating for human rights, and promoting peacebuilding. It is also involved in advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The organization's roles include policy advocacy, supporting collaboration among civil society organizations, including OPD, and conducting

[62] Light for the World (2024) *Speaking with one voice: The genesis of the South Sudanese umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities, 2015 – 2023*. https://www.facebook.com/p/South-Sudan-Union-of-persons-with-Disabilities-100082516060954/?paipv=0&eav=AfaEHccjOQ5E4wC4YVjtblFe3PW06X_sXyf08hWx3sdcTrXAqFZ88q3jByuwccYCoU8&_rdr（Accessed: 23 April 2026）

[63] https://www.light-for-the-world.org/our-work/project-countries/southsudan（Accessed: 23 April 2026）

[64] https://cepo-southsudan.org/（Accessed: 23 April 2026）

	awareness-raising activities on human rights and inclusion.
Humanity & Inclusion[65]	Since its inception in 2006, the organization has been promoting disability inclusion in humanitarian aid, including rehabilitation and medical support, strengthening OPD capacity, and providing training to NGOs, governments, and UN agencies, as well as in areas such as water and sanitation, food, health, and data collection.

[65] https://www.hi-deutschland-projekte.de/lnob/project-countries/south-sudan（Accessed: 23 April 2026）

5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities

This chapter is based on a 2024 report submitted by Light for the World, an organization that has supported OPD since before the independence of South Sudan. Other sources are cited in the footnotes.

5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services

Since gaining independence, South Sudan has faced a complex humanitarian crisis resulting from civil war, natural disasters, and the impact of COVID-19, with access to basic services severely restricted. In this context, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected and face complex health needs, including physical injuries and psychological trauma. Health care services are compromised by institutional weaknesses, inadequate infrastructure, and the impact of climate-related disasters, making it difficult to provide continuous and comprehensive healthcare. In this context, persons with disabilities are prone to facing restrictions not only in physical access but also in access to information, assistive devices, and rehabilitation. In addition, due to insufficient OPD capacity and the fragmentation of activities caused by the civil war, the needs of persons with disabilities in the health sector have not been sufficiently identified or reflected in policy. Consequently, there is a structural challenge whereby healthcare needs exist but are not easily reflected within the system.

5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education

Due to the circumstances described in the previous section, access to education for children with disabilities and the promotion of inclusive education remain limited, and the education system is not adapted to the diverse needs of these children. Only about 22% of children with disabilities are currently attending school. Prejudice against disability, a lack of assistive devices, and long commutes to school pose significant barriers to their education[66]. The Education Cluster, a collaborative framework for coordinating and integrating support in the education sector among multiple agencies in South Sudan's humanitarian response, points out that school facilities are not designed to accommodate children with disabilities, and situations where they are physically inaccessible are widespread. As a result, children with disabilities are easily excluded from educational opportunities altogether, a trend that is particularly pronounced in rural areas and conflict-affected regions[67].

Even when children with disabilities are able to access schools, insufficient educational content and support remain major challenges. The report clearly states that accommodations

[66] https://www.windle.org.uk/impact-stories/supporting-children-with-disabilities-in-south-sudan（Accessed: 25 April 2026）

[67] Education Cluster (2019) *South Sudan Education Cluster Strategy 2019*.

for children with disabilities are primarily limited to improving the physical accessibility of facilities, and that this alone is insufficient. In other words, simply providing "accessible classrooms" does not guarantee the participation and understanding of children with disabilities; it is necessary to continuously monitor and adjust how education is actually delivered and utilized. This study did not identify any information providing detailed reports on the lack of educational support tailored to these individual educational needs.

Furthermore, psychosocial needs are also critical. In South Sudan, many children, including those with disabilities, are suffering from trauma as a result of the prolonged conflict, and UNHCR has highlighted the urgent need for psychological support and protection, particularly for children among refugees and internally displaced persons[68].

5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment

Employment needs are closely linked to the country's economic vulnerability. As previously noted, South Sudan's economy relies on exports of its abundant oil resources and is highly vulnerable to the effects of conflict and external shocks, resulting in limited employment opportunities. This situation is even more severe for persons with disabilities, contributing to their economic exclusion. Increased displacement and migration due to conflict and disasters have led to the loss of livelihoods, making securing a livelihood and economic empowerment top priorities for persons with disabilities.

5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation

Mobility needs are deeply intertwined with South Sudan's geographical and humanitarian conditions. Conflict and natural disasters have created large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees in the country, making mobility itself a daily challenge.

In such an environment, the mobility of persons with disabilities is further restricted by the destruction and lack of infrastructure. Particularly in rural areas and settlements for internally displaced persons, there are virtually no transportation options, and mobility often depends on support from family and the local community[69]. Additionally, an analysis by Humanity & Inclusion indicates that physical and environmental barriers (steps, unpaved roads, inaccessible facilities) are one of the primary factors preventing persons with disabilities from accessing services in South Sudan[70]. Mobility aids such as wheelchairs, canes, and prosthetics play a crucial role, but there are significant constraints on their acquisition and maintenance. In South Sudan, these devices are primarily provided through support from international

[68] UNHCR (2024) *Annual Results Report: South Sudan*.
[69] IASC, *Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*, 2019
[70] https://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/_APMBC-DOCUMENTS/Meetings/2022/IM22-Observations-VA-SouthSudan.pdf（Accessed: 25 April 2026）

NGOs and the Red Cross, and a national supply system is underdeveloped[71].

Persons with disabilities report that "even if we receive a wheelchair or cane, there are no funds or services available for repairs or replacements, so once it breaks, we have no choice but to rely on others again[72]." Furthermore, it has been reported that in some areas, there are no facilities to repair assistive devices at all, meaning that the impact of aid tends to be short-lived[73].

The impact of humanitarian crises such as floods and conflicts is further exacerbating mobility needs. Although wheelchairs and other devices are distributed as part of emergency responses, this is intermittent and does not achieve nationwide coverage[74]. As a result, many persons with disabilities are unable to secure freedom of movement and are placed in a situation where they are easily excluded from education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access

Systems for ensuring access to information tailored to specific disabilities are largely nonexistent. Since there is virtually no provision of information in audio or Braille formats for persons with visual impairments, they are often forced to rely on family members or those around them, or frequently receive information late. Reports also indicate that persons with hearing impairments face difficulties in receiving critical information (such as regarding food distribution, medical care, and evacuation)[75].

In addition, the penetration rates of the internet and mobile communications are low (15.7% as of 2025[76]), and digital and information and communications infrastructure remains underdeveloped. Accessibility features such as screen reader support and closed captioning are also considered to be extremely limited.

5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender

Women with disabilities face an even higher risk of being excluded from education due to both disability and gender factors, with early marriage and domestic labor further limiting their educational opportunities.

SSWEN, an organization representing women with disabilities, reports that women with disabilities are at a significantly higher risk of gender-based violence (GBV), including

[71] *ibid.*
[72] IFHV (2023)
[73] *ibid.*
[74] https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/call-protect-people-disabilities-unprecedented-floods-hit-south-sudan（Accessed: 23 April 2026）
[75] IFHV (2023)
[76] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-south-sudan（Accessed: 23 April 2026）

domestic and sexual violence, compared to women without disabilities, and that they are often in situations where it is difficult to escape, report incidents, or testify[77]. All victims of GBV, including women with disabilities, have access to only extremely limited judicial remedies. It is evident that the vast majority of victims cannot access legal remedies due to the dysfunction of the legal system, a lack of resources, insufficient capacity of the police and courts, and the influence of customary law, which tends to be male-dominated, downplays women's complaints, and often condones GBV or treats perpetrators leniently. For example, rape cases reported by women are typically handled by community elders, who do not consider intimate partner violence to be punishable. This is because customary law tends to stipulate that men have the authority to discipline women within certain limits. Marital rape is not considered a form of GBV. At the community level, there is a prevailing social norm that forced sexual intercourse is acceptable because, after the "bride price[78]" has been paid, the woman is considered the husband's property. In some communities, this view is supported by religious beliefs that refuse to have sex is a sin.

Furthermore, significant challenges exist in the areas of healthcare and psychosocial support. Healthcare services and psychosocial support for victims of GBV are insufficient in both quantity and quality, and are virtually nonexistent, particularly in rural areas. In addition, poor service quality, distance to access services, and financial burdens pose major barriers. For women with disabilities, these challenges are compounded by mobility and communication constraints, making the expansion of disability-sensitive medical and counseling services a critical need.

Stigma, shame, and fear of retaliation have been identified as barriers to accessing support services. Many victims do not seek help for fear of social condemnation or isolation, resulting in a tendency for the abuse to remain invisible. Therefore, it is essential to establish a counseling and support system for women with disabilities that ensures safety and anonymity.

[77] SSWEN (2021) *Initial Assessment and Mapping: Reducing Inequality and Gender-Based Violence in South Sudan*.

[78] A payment of goods, money, livestock, or other items made by the groom's family to the bride's family upon marriage. In South Sudan, this is often paid in cattle. https://peacerep.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Bring-Enough-Cows-to-Marry-BridePrice-Conflict-and-Gender-Relations-in-South-Sudan-DIGITAL.pdf（Accessed: 25 April 2026）

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