



Comments from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development on the DEval Evaluation Report: **Evaluation of the BMZ Action Plan for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**

The BMZ welcomes the report presented by DEval evaluating the Ministry's action plan for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in German development cooperation. The evaluation provides important pointers for the further development of a new strategy for inclusion, particularly as regards the systematic mainstreaming of inclusion in German development cooperation. Coordination processes and procedures for relations between the BMZ and external partners, especially developing countries, other donors and international organisations, are an important aspect here. Another equally important factor is creating the right enabling environment in the BMZ itself, which means barrier-free access, an inclusive human resources policy, in-house awareness-raising and involving self-advocacy and disabled people's organisations in strategic and operational processes in a timely fashion.

The inclusion of people with disabilities in German development policy is a topic which is receiving increased attention from both national and international policymakers. Germany was a pioneer as regards inclusion, having already ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – which is binding under international law – back in 2009. This UN Convention highlights in its preamble the importance of international cooperation. Furthermore, it obligates donor countries as States Parties to the Convention to explicitly include people with disabilities in international development programmes and design them so as to be accessible for people with disabilities (Article 32). In 2011, a Cabinet decision was

taken to adopt the National Action Plan to Implement the CRPD. Two years later the BMZ put into operation its Action Plan for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Policies and strategies in international cooperation that take into account the rights of people with disabilities support the realisation of the purpose and objectives of the Convention, which is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by all persons with disabilities (Article 32 UN-CRPD).

The aim of the evaluation was to examine how successful the Action Plan had been in advancing the systematic mainstreaming of inclusion in German development cooperation. Important operational guide rails were laid down in the BMZ Action Plan. This was done with a view to providing a boost for a process to push forward the inclusion of people with disabilities in German development policy. The guide rails were also meant to send a signal regarding the engagement of German development cooperation with the requirements of the CRPD.

The evaluation notes that the realisation of the rights of people with disabilities is a highly relevant development policy issue. According to WHO figures, roughly 15 per cent of all the people in the world – more than one billion individuals – have some kind of disability. In development cooperation partner countries the prevalence of disabilities is particularly high. People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

underlines with its fundamental principle of “leave no one behind” and its specific mention of people with disabilities as a target group the importance of including people with disabilities in development cooperation.

DEval finds that the pragmatic approach for the inclusive design of development cooperation projects within the framework of the Action Plan makes good sense. However, the team of evaluators makes it clear in this report that there is scope for improvement as regards the actual implementation of the necessary consideration of inclusion in political strategies, processes and programmes as part of the BMZ’s planning and management, and notes that, for most of the actors in German development cooperation, inclusion is not (yet) a cross-cutting issue which is already firmly mainstreamed and followed up in central processes. There is also competition between cross-cutting issues within development cooperation. As a result there is a lack of fundamental awareness regarding the multitude of different barriers that this target group of development cooperation face and that prevent them from claiming their rights. There is a lack of strategic concepts and practical recommendations for action. A lack of mechanisms which would ensure a de facto binding obligation to take inclusion into account during the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects is cited as a considerable weakness when it comes to mainstreaming the rights of people with disabilities in German development cooperation in a systematic and sustainable way. In the BMZ and for implementing organisations and partners this makes it more difficult both to position the topic and also to mainstream it in a sustainable way in strategies, programmes and projects.

DEval notes that the BMZ is on the right track to achieve its goal of establishing exemplary structures and practices within its own organisation. There is, however, potential for improvement, especially as regards in-house

sensitisation and awareness-raising, and reducing physical and institutional barriers. Financial incentives and the provision of resources overall for ongoing and new inclusive measures in the partner countries need to increase. The national and international efforts to begin setting up a recording and monitoring system in order to be able to systematically list inclusive projects and demonstrate progress made in this area (transparency and accountability) should show results as soon as possible. So far, however, nothing has been done to give other units within the BMZ any responsibility for mainstreaming the inclusion of people with disabilities in the BMZ’s international policy dialogue.

So far no systematic impacts have been achieved in terms of promoting civil society involvement or in the context of cooperation with the private sector.

It is particularly important for the future direction of the BMZ’s multilateral activities that donor cooperation on the inclusion of people with disabilities is stepped up (inter alia in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

The key conclusions drawn by the BMZ from this evaluation and its recommendations are:

1. The BMZ will meet the obligations arising from the German government’s National Action Plan (NAP 2.0) and will draw up a **follow-on strategy** for mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in German development cooperation **by mid-2018**. The goal and the approach for this strategy will be to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities. The BMZ is determined to **strengthen its own pioneering role and function** and actively set a good example for others as it works to become an

inclusive organisation. This means formulating concrete goals at various levels within the organisation, developing approaches and concepts for mainstreaming inclusion in the BMZ, and translating them into the practical implementation of inclusion in the daily work of all units within the ministry. This includes, for example, **actively reducing barriers and making appropriate arrangements for ministry staff with disabilities**. This also means engaging in dialogue with the BMZ's implementing organisations and partners about making a **voluntary commitment** to the internal implementation of inclusion.

2. The BMZ is serious about following the recommendation of the pertinent UN committee and **making additional financial and human resources available** for mainstreaming the inclusion of people with disabilities in **German development cooperation projects** and for developing the inclusion competence of officials working for the German development ministry with a view to implementing the future strategy.
3. The BMZ and its implementing organisations will examine the feasibility of human-rights-based **target group analyses** for projects being carried out under Technical and Financial Cooperation. The pertinent efficient instruments should be capable of being attached to existing structures and processes (for analysing target groups and stakeholders). The BMZ divisions responsible for these issues will **follow up on the implementation of inclusion**, for example within the framework of meetings to sound out ideas for new or follow-up measures.
4. Awareness of human rights aspects and the transfer of related practice-oriented knowledge will be consistently mainstreamed in **relevant training modules offered by the BMZ and its implementing organisations**.
5. Experts with disabilities and their organisations will increasingly **be included** by the BMZ and its implementing organisations in planning, decision-making and implementation processes. This applies to activities taking place in Germany and activities in other countries. This is already being done in the context of the development of the new strategy for inclusion.
6. The BMZ supports the **introduction of an OECD DAC "disability inclusion marker"**. A marker will play a crucial role in advancing the disaggregation of data on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda demanded by the international community, since it is the only way to systematically capture measures for the inclusion of people with disabilities.
7. In line with the commitment laid down in NAP 2.0, the BMZ will play an active role **in international development policy negotiation processes and donor bodies** as an advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
8. The BMZ will work to ensure that the inclusion of people with disabilities is fostered and promoted in the **development, revision and implementation of the development strategies of multilateral organisations** (UN organisations and development banks). This applies especially in the case of activities that are co-financed by the BMZ.

9. The BMZ supports the recommendation made by DEval that fostering inclusion should be **taken consistently into account in the projects of private agencies**. A first step in this direction is for staff to attend awareness-raising and training sessions. The BMZ will work to ensure that inclusion is mainstreamed in the support criteria for private executing agencies.

10. The BMZ equally supports the recommendation made by DEval that the inclusion of people with disabilities be promoted more rigorously in the context of **cooperation with and measures to foster the private sector**. Therefore, as part of the process of drafting a follow-on strategy for mainstreaming the rights of people with disabilities, ways will be sought to ensure that inclusion is consistently taken into account in the various instruments.

11. The recommendation made by DEval that an **internal managerial structure be created** which will give some of the responsibility for inclusion to divisions other than the lead division will be discussed as part of the drafting of a follow-on strategy for mainstreaming the rights of people with disabilities.