

International Disability Alliance (IDA)

Disabled Peoples' International, Down Syndrome International, Inclusion International,
International Federation of Hard of Hearing People,
Rehabilitation International, World Blind Union,
World Federation of the Deaf, World Federation of the DeafBlind,
World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry,
Arab Organization of Disabled People, European Disability Forum,
Red Latinoamericana de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Personas con
Discapacidad y sus familias (RIADIS)

Suggestions for disability-relevant recommendations to be included in the Concluding Observations of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 47th Session (4-22 October 2010)

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) has prepared the following suggestions for the Concluding Observations, based on references to persons with disabilities to be found in the CEDAW Committee's 47th Session state report.

BAHAMAS

The Bahamas has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

State Report

References to persons with disabilities in the state report and list of issues:

67. The Government keeps under review the reform and enhancement of existing legislation and the enactment of new laws so as to remain in the forefront of countries advocating the advancement of human rights practices internationally. The Government of The Bahamas has under active review legislation to improve the provisions of law relating to: the administration of justice, protection and guardianship of children, education, health insurance, **improved protection for the handicapped**, emergency relief assistance, land and estate administration, industrial relations, and immigration.

132. The Government of The Bahamas along with its respective ministries and organizations has continued to work towards the development and advancement of women in The Bahamas. Women have continued to advance meaningfully in areas such as: politics, public life, education and employment. However, one significant failure for The Bahamas has been that not all women are advancing at the same pace. Those specially disadvantaged are women in the lower socio-economic classes, some women in the Family Islands (Rural women) and migrant Haitian women; who need special attention as they are the most marginalized group of women in the country. In addition, **women with disabilities** are also in need of more attention from the Government of The Bahamas, NGO's and local entities, due to the tremendous shortfalls in addressing **disabilities** in The Bahamas.

271. The Ministry of Education has also compiled a list of the most common reasons given for absenteeism in Primary, Junior High and Special Schools. (...).

274. In Special Schools, the most common reasons for absenteeism were: parents keeping their children at home because they were embarrassed by them or believed that their children could not accomplish anything because of the **child's disabilities**. Collecting

sex disaggregated data, would help to determine the specific education needs of girls and boys who are **disabled** or challenged.

336. There has been an increased number of polyclinics as well as the construction, renovation, and expansion of other health care facilities. This has included the **mental hospital** and a geriatric hospital located on New Providence as well as a general hospital with comprehensive essential obstetric care capability located on Grand Bahama. With expanded polyclinics, maternal and child health clinics, and satellite clinics distributed at strategic locations throughout the islands, access to health care has improved.

Written replies to List of Issues

23. Please provide information on the access to mental health services for women and girls, including those in remote and rural areas. Please also describe services provided by the State party to elderly women.

There are a number of facilities that provide access to **mental health services for women and girls**. These include:-

- i. Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) that has four clinics (male, female, children and adolescents) at the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH).
- ii. SRC also offers a large community based out-patient facility- the Community Counselling and Assessment Centre (CCAC).
- iii. Adolescent Health, Department of Public Health.
- iv. The Diah Ward (based at the Rand Memorial Hospital) and community health clinics in Grand Bahama. Mobile psychiatric teams visit Abaco and Bimini.
- v. In rural areas access is through community clinics, where persons are seen and treated by resident physician/nurse and referred to CCAC or SRC if necessary. Psychiatric teams from SRC also make regular visits to Long Island and Exuma.

Services are also provided for elderly women, who are able to access the same services, in most cases, like the general population. There are no specific services for elderly females. Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) conducts a Gerontology clinic every Thursday morning at an inner city (Ann's Town Clinic), once per week and once per month at the Eastern District of New Providence (Fox Hill Clinic).

If there is any **mental health issue, appropriate referral is made to the psychiatric team at one of their outpatient clinics**. The same is the method for Family Islands; contact is made with the community clinics and appropriate referrals made. Also, the Government operates a day care centre and residential care centres for the elderly. Private day care and residential care centres are also available for a fee.

Recommendations from IDA :

- To collect adequate data on women and girls with disabilities and use disaggregated data and results of studies to develop policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for them in society.
- To raise awareness and provide more information about women and girls with disabilities, who often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, especially with regard to access to education, employment, access to health care and violence.
- To adopt targeted measures for the media and education system to promote positive images of women with disabilities.
- To consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.