



International
Labour
Organization

► SKILL-UP Ethiopia project and GPSL3

People with Disabilities (PwDs)

A photograph of a young Black man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a red, white, and blue checkered button-down shirt. He is sitting in a black wheelchair, looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building. A large red diagonal shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

► **Sector-wide strategy and
action plan for the employment
of persons with disabilities in the
Ethiopian Garment and Textile Sector**

October 2020
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SKILLUP
Upgrading skills for the changing world of work

Sector-wide strategy and action plan for the employment of persons with disabilities in the Ethiopian Garment and Textile Sector

SUBMITTED TO:

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO), ETHIOPIA OFFICE

CONSULTANT

THISABILITY CONSULTING - ETHIOPIA



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October 2020 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Officially registered in Ethiopia since January 2014, THISAbility Consulting™ is a multidisciplinary consulting firm led by consultants with over fifteen years of national, continental and international expertise on disability rights, inclusive development research, accessibility auditing, project supervision, training, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.

December 2019
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Foreword

Persons with disabilities are said to be among the economically most disadvantaged groups of society. A plethora of studies have confirmed that there is strong and evident relationship between disability and poverty in such a way that disability leads to poverty and vice versa. The World Report on Disability (WHO, World Bank, 2011) estimates that persons with disabilities constitute at least 17.6 percent of the Ethiopian population. According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), as many as 95 percent of all persons with disabilities in the country live in poverty, and about 85 percent of those live in rural areas with infinitesimal or no access to basic amenities such as education, health, employment, livelihood and an enabling environment. Barriers which prevent persons with disabilities from seeking, obtaining and maintaining work include legal and policy constraints, infrastructural and, above all, deep-rooted systemic societal stereotypes, blatant disability-based discrimination and ableism (ILO, 2010).

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has shown commitment at different times to advance and promote the rights of persons with disabilities by signing and ratifying various international treaties, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which became part of Ethiopian laws since the country ratified the Convention in July 2010. The Government has also adopted specific domestic laws and policies that address disability rights, in general, and the employment rights of persons with disabilities, in particular. Proclamation 568/2008 on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Ethiopia is a milestone instance in this regard. Nevertheless, despite such efforts by the government, there are still various reports indicating that citizens with disabilities across Ethiopia continue to be significantly excluded from mainstream development processes and the labour market. The obvious adverse impact of these exclusions is not only on persons with disabilities, their families and acquaintances, but on the nation's economy as a whole. A 2009 study by the ILO assessing several low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs), including Ethiopia, established that the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market costs countries as much as 3 to 5 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

With the above facts in mind and in due cognizance that the garment sector is one of the largest employers in Ethiopia, the ILO SKILL-UP Project developed this Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan for Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Ethiopian Garment Sector. The Sector-Wide Strategy was informed by a comprehensive baseline assessment, again conducted by the SKILL-UP Project, looking into the employability of persons with disabilities in the Ethiopian garment/textile sector by selecting four major industrial parks; namely, Hawasa Industrial Park (Sidama Region, Southern Ethiopia), Mekelle Industrial Park (Tigray Region, Northern Ethiopia), Kombolcha Industrial Park (Amhara Region, Northern

Ethiopia) and the Bole-Lemi Industrial Park at the Capital Addis Ababa. Furthermore, the background study assessed the appropriateness of universities for students with disabilities and investigated the university-industry linkage by sampling four universities in cities where the aforementioned industrial parks were located. These universities were Mekelle University, Wollo University, Hawassa University and the Addis Ababa University. Primary data was gathered from different participants from the industrial parks, universities, relevant government sectors and Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs) selected using purposive sampling taking into account the knowledge, experience and familiarity of the respondents with issues of disability, employment and pertinent policy and legal frameworks. It is hoped that the Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan for Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Ethiopian Garment Sector helps provide tangible, evidence-based guidance for policy makers, employers, DPOs and persons with disabilities themselves, training institutions and other relevant stakeholders on crosscutting interventions aimed at ensuring that the sector promotes practices of meaningful inclusion of employees with disabilities.

Acronyms

BoLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
CSO	Civil society organization
DPO	Disabled Persons' Organization
ECDD	Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development
EWDNA	Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association
FENAPD	Federation of Ethiopian National Associations of Persons with Disabilities
HR	Human resources
ILO	The International Labour Organization
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations
IP	Industrial park
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RDM	Reasonable disability mainstreaming
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNCRPD/CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade or so, the Ethiopian Government has demonstrated an increasing commitment to advancing and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities (PwDs) by, inter alia, signing and ratifying various international instruments and adopting specific domestic laws/policies that address disability issues. Despite such efforts, however, there are still frequent reports of PwDs in the country being significantly excluded from mainstream development processes in general and the labour market in particular. According to a baseline survey ¹ conducted in Ethiopia in 1995, sixty per cent of PwDs in Ethiopia were unemployed. Similarly, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that 60 per cent of PwDs of working age in Ethiopia were unemployed, making them the largest group of people disproportionately excluded from the labour market (ILO, 2004). The ILO data supplement estimates that the “unemployment rate among persons with disabilities in the developing world is an overwhelming problem and up to 80 per cent in some countries”.² This may be causing economic losses for countries of up to 7 per cent of GDP. Thus, institutional structures for disability, coupled with clear and well-designed monitoring strategies, are required for the effective implementation of disability laws and policies in Ethiopia.

This Sector-Wide Strategic Plan has been drawn up under the auspices of the ILO’s SKILL-UP Ethiopia Project for the successful transition of PwDs into the workforce, with the main focus on the nation’s garment sector. The Strategic Plan will be implemented throughout the country, where the garment/textile industry has been preparing for this development since 2020. It will also facilitate increased employment opportunities for PwDs in the sector, at the same time promoting workplaces that create an environment which encourages the employment of PwDs.

¹ Baseline Survey on Disabilities in Ethiopia, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University, 1995.

² United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. An initial treaty-specific report on the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, submitted to the UN Committee on the CRDP by the Ethiopian Government, Part Two, 2012, 60-68.

2. Employment of persons with disabilities in the Ethiopian garment/textile sector: Facilitating factors and barriers

▶ 2.1. Facilitating factors (strengths and opportunities)

As indicated above, the Ethiopian Government has increasingly shown concern and the political will to advance disability rights in general and the employment rights of PwDs in particular since the country signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, and ratified it in 2010. The Government has also ratified international conventions pertaining to the employment rights of PwDs³ and has adopted domestic policies and laws such as the National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (2012-2021), the National Employment Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia (2009), the Proclamation on the Rights to Employment for Persons with Disabilities, No. 568/2008, the Building Proclamation, No. 624/2009, the Federal Civil Servants Proclamation (2017), and Articles 9(4) and 13(2) of the FDRE Constitution (1995).

All these are helpful, especially Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). At the same time, public attitudes to and awareness of the capabilities of PwDs, though still far from satisfactory, has shown some slight improvement. Employers' interest in hiring PwDs in the garment/textile sector has also grown in recent years. This reflects, among other factors, increased understanding of the issue among employers themselves, particularly in companies run by expatriates, and awareness-raising efforts by disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) and line ministries, notably the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). This, in turn, presents

Employers in Ethiopia are gradually acknowledging the benefits of including persons with disabilities in their workforce. International research shows, in unambiguous terms, that despite the underlying pessimistic views and prejudices of employers, persons with disabilities demonstrate steady commitment, efficiency and effectiveness in their duties, as compared to their non-disabled colleagues.

³ E.g. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention No. 159, ratified by Ethiopia in 1991, and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention No. 111, ratified by Ethiopia as far back as 1966.

opportunities to build on the - albeit few - success stories, thereby creating an environment where every employee is valued regardless of their disability and/or other status.

Global research shows in unambiguous terms that, despite the underlying pessimistic views and prejudices of employers, PwDs do demonstrate steady commitment, efficiency and effectiveness in their duties, as compared to their non-disabled colleagues, and that the presence of an employee with a disability not only sets a replicable example, but also motivates others.⁴

- ▶ With all its limitations, the current policy and legal framework in Ethiopia presents an unprecedented opportunity to protect and promote the rights of PwDs in the labour market. It is also encouraging to see more and more DPOs taking advantage of these policies and laws. Some DPOs are reported to have filed lawsuits in cases of disability-based discrimination. Free (pro bono) legal aid is offered to PwDs in various parts of the country, though mainly in urban areas.
- ▶ We are also beginning to see the mainstreaming of disability across government departments, ministries and organizations – a leap forward, even if there are still shortcomings in implementation. Article 10(4) of the Definition of Powers and Duties of Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 1097/2018 stipulates, under “Common Powers and Duties of Ministries” that that all ministries, as well as the MoLSA, must create, within the purview of their authority, conditions whereby PwDs and other vulnerable social groups “benefit from equal opportunities and full participation”.⁵

▶ 2.2. Barriers (weaknesses and threats)

One of the gaps in enforcement of the well-articulated policies and legal framework is the lack of adequate knowledge of the rights and needs of PwDs among the different stakeholders. This dearth of awareness among policymakers, employers, civil society and PwDs themselves remains a serious hurdle and, given the magnitude of the problem, efforts to overcome it are inadequate. Moreover, most of the policies, proclamations, guidelines and other documents were not prepared in a way accessible to PwDs. An encouraging development in this regard is that Proclamation No. 568/2008, which deals exclusively with the employment of PwDs, has been made available in both audio and Braille versions, but most other documentation is not available in such formats. Victims of disability-based discrimination at the time of recruitment could have taken their cases to the courts and/or other authorities if they had been informed of these rights.

⁴ Bonaccio, Silvia, et al. (2019). The Participation of People with Disabilities in the Workforce Across the Employment Cycle: Employer Concerns and Research Evidence. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, pp. 1-24. Accessed 10 November 2019 at www.link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10869-018-9602-5

⁵ Proclamation No.1097/2018. Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 10(4). Available at <https://chilot.me/wpcontent/uploads/2019/08/Proclamation-No.1097-2018-DEFINITION-OF-THE-POWERS-AND-DUTIES-OF-THE-EXECUTIVE-ORANGS.pdf>

Discriminatory social attitudes rooted in cultural beliefs and superstitions have had, and continue to have, a multi-faceted adverse impact on the participation of PwDs in all sectors of employment, the garment sector being no exception. There are still beliefs associating disability with acts of god, witchcraft and the laying of curses.

The effect of the criteria set by employers for recruiting workers has been to discourage PwDs from applying for jobs, rather than encouraging them to do so. Most, if not all, companies do not have clearly written policies encouraging applications from PwDs. Poor access to employment-related information, such as vacancy announcements, is another barrier, making it difficult, if not impossible, for PwDs to get the right information at the right time. PwDs, such as those with visual impairments are therefore thrown on the charity of others to inform them of job vacancies. Garment company employers do not consider the suitability of vacancy announcements for PwDs: they simply post announcements on notice boards, assuming that anyone can access them since they are displayed in a public place. Most often, the working environment is not suitable for persons with visual impairments, in terms of accessibility and because of a lack of assistive devices and special support to help them do their work effectively.

The training and academic performance of students with disabilities in universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions has a direct impact on their future employment and careers. Reports show that the academic performance of PwDs is affected by factors such as the non-conduciveness of campuses, the inaccessibility of facilities, and the unsuitability of teaching methods and instructional materials. The interplay between education/training and industry is another important factor determining the employability of graduates with disabilities in the labour market.

A preliminary assessment in preparation for this Sector-Wide Strategic Plan showed, in no uncertain terms, that most companies have barely anything to report when it comes to their track records of hiring employees with one type of disability or another. A large majority of them have no relationships with organizations working in the fields of disability and/or related issues. A good number of them in fact thought

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One of the fundamental contributors to the dearth of awareness among persons with disabilities and other stakeholders in the Ethiopian disability sector of the rights enshrined in existing laws and policies is the unavailability of such instruments in disability-friendly, accessible formats.

that employing PwDs might result in their incurring additional costs for the provision of reasonable accommodation. Consequently, PwDs risk not being recruited for jobs, even if they fulfil all the job-specific criteria.

Employers are not currently receiving enough information/training concerning the concept of “reasonable accommodation” and its application. The denial of reasonable accommodation for PwDs might well be taken as a form of indirect discrimination in the workplace in its own right. Companies do not have formal employment policies, directives and/or guidelines for PwDs or plans for the provision of reasonable accommodation. In many countries, governments share the cost of reasonable accommodation in the form of tax incentives. In Ethiopia, there is no practice of this sort, although there is a taxation-related incentive, introduced as part of the Value Added Tax (VAT) Proclamation. Under this law, employers are entitled to a tax reduction if more than 60 per cent of their employees are PwDs. But as the Chair of the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) noted, it is unimaginable that a private business, or even a government enterprise, would employ so large a proportion of PwDs as part of its total workforce; the tax concession is therefore irrelevant and meaningless.

The inaccessibility of workplaces is another serious barrier to the participation of PwDs in the labour market, to the extent of forcing employees with disabilities to leave their hard-won jobs. External structural problems of this kind may even result in the victims themselves being blamed for such outcomes. It is common to hear from PwDs, including those interviewed in preparation for this Sector-Wide Strategic Plan, that their employers blamed them for ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the workplace, whereas the real reason for their underperformance was directly linked to the lack of reasonable accommodations.

There are no clearly defined strategies in place for the implementation of national policies and proclamations. Those that are available are not properly shared with, or known to, the respective stakeholders. The lack of a structured and responsible government body responsible for implementing these legal provisions has proved time and again to be a stumbling block. The current institutional set-up for addressing disability issues nationwide is ambiguous at best, with no clear mandate delegated to a body entrusted with disability affairs. The MoLSA, whose capacities are under severe strain, is the ministry deemed to cover disability, as well as a multitude of other responsibilities in the social sector with complex and competing priorities. This accounts for the inadequate monitoring and enforcement of existing disability laws and policies, and for the ineffective sanctioning of outlawed acts of disability-based discrimination in the employment arena.

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3. Vision, mission and values of the proposed strategy

- ▶ **Vision:** Envision PwDs to have access to work and employment without discrimination.
- ▶ **Mission:** Promote employability, career development and job retention of PwDs in the Ethiopian garment sector.
- ▶ **Values:** Adhere to and apply principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination and decent work on the part of the Ethiopian garment sector.

4. Stakeholder analysis

The Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan calls, on the one hand, for cooperation among the government ministries and agencies that should be working in synergy for the effective implementation of disability-inclusive employment. These are, *inter alia*, the Ministry of Education (with focus on the technical and vocational education and training (TEVT) stream), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource Development, the Office of the Attorney General (formerly the Ministry of Justice) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. On the other hand, non-governmental and civil society organizations,

notably DPOs and their partner organizations, are identified as indispensable in the process of disability-inclusive development in general and disability-inclusive employment efforts in particular. The major DPOs include, but are not limited to, the Federation of Ethiopian National Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD) and its member associations, i.e. the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf, the Ethiopian National Association of Persons Affected by Leprosy, the Ethiopian National Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf-Blind, the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind, and the Ethiopian National Association of the Physically Handicapped. Given their coordinated work on non-discrimination, awareness-raising and, where necessary, class action (litigation before the courts), DPOs can be instrumental in promoting the equalization of employment opportunities for PwDs nationwide. However, there is currently a lack of working partnerships between, for example, DPOs and employers' and employees' associations. This is a fundamental lacuna. It is also worth mentioning other organizations that are currently working to raise awareness and facilitate the employment of PwDs, in the garment/textile sector in particular. A notable example is the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development (ECDD), which is currently implementing a project for the employment of PwDs in industrial parks, with pilots under way in Hawassa, Kombolicha and Mekelle. The ECDD is also working with the Ethiopian National Business and Disability Network, which encourages private-sector organizations to promote disability-inclusive employment.

The Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan calls for collaboration and coordination between government ministries/agencies and non-governmental organizations, notably organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs). However, there is currently a lack of working partnerships between, for example, DPOs and employers' and employees' associations, which is a fundamental lacuna.

5. Goals, strategies and actions

The Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan breaks down into five main goals: a) implementation of disability laws and policies, b) capacity-building and transition into work, c) the recruitment and selection process, d) disability-inclusive workplaces, and e) retention and career progression. These goals are further consolidated by setting practical strategic objectives, as elaborated below. Note that the timeframes (short, medium and long-term) associated with each goal and strategic objective are to be determined by the implementers, taking into account their respective plans and resources.

► 5.1. Goal 1: Promote the implementation of disability laws and policies

5.1.1. Strategic objective 1: Enhance the commitment of leaders to enforcing existing legislative provisions on the employment of PwDs

Actions

- Regulate and coordinate the implementation of national proclamations on the inclusion of PwDs in the workplace by institutionalizing the practice in the garment sector. This can be done by adopting various context-specific approaches, such as the preparation and distribution of working guidelines, regular meetings and discussions, and training and experience-sharing events.
- Audit corporate policies and employment support services and ensure that they are available for PwDs
- Promote career opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Provide technical support for employers to enhance their commitment as leaders to employing PwDs.
- Provide managerial and technical support to DPOs to capacitate them to operate, advocate and, where necessary, litigate meaningfully for the rights of PwDs.
- Provide relevant training for concerned stakeholders in order to strengthen the National UNCRPD Implementation Committee.
- Support the formulation of a comprehensive National/Federal Disability Act.

The Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan breaks down into five main goals: 1) implementation of disability laws and policies; 2) capacity-building and work transition; 3) the recruitment and selection process; 4) disability-inclusive workplaces, and 5) retention and career progression. These goals are further consolidated by setting detailed practical strategic objectives.

5.1.2. Strategic objective 2: Promote and facilitate the mainstreaming of disability employment services in the garment sector.

Actions

- ▶ Strengthen best practices such as reasonable disability mainstreaming (RDM), which has been established at regional level (e.g. in Tigray). This means compulsarily mainstreaming disability as a cross-cutting issue in all key programmes and services (education, health, social services, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), etc.) to ensure that the employment of PwDs is equitable and non-discriminatory, and does not reinforce barriers.
- ▶ Organize a technical team drawn from national and international non-governmental/ civil-society organizations dedicated mainly, if not solely, to addressing disability issues.
- ▶ Organize training for HR personnel to help those most directly concerned become well-versed in disability issues, e.g. in the context of industrial parks and other garment-factory locations.

5.1.3. Strategic objective 3: Combat negative employment-related myths and stereotypes concerning PwDs

Actions

- ▶ Extend ongoing awareness-raising activities initiated by NGOs, such as the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development (ECDD), regarding the merits of employing PwDs. This serves to dismantle negative stereotypes and mobilizes the skills and capacities of PwDs, thereby providing an inclusive, accessible and safe working environment that allows them to work in fair conditions and enjoy equal opportunities.
- ▶ Provide continuous training (together with subsequent follow-up) to employers' and employees' associations as a way of gaining recognition of the untapped potential of PwDs.
- ▶ Provide continuous training and supervision to raise awareness among potential employers of the pragmatic benefits of a diverse, inclusive workforce, in contrast to the real drawbacks of exclusion.
- ▶ Provide training to raise the awareness of non-disabled employees concerning disability inclusion and thereby help to create a positive and healthy work environment for PwDs.

Best practice, such as the reasonable disability mainstreaming (RDM) system established at regional level (e.g. in the Tigray Region), consists in the compulsory mainstreaming of disability as a cross-cutting issue in all key programmes and services (education, health, social services, SMEs, etc.).

► 5.2. Goal 2: Progress is made in capacity-building and the transition into work

5.2.1. Strategic objective 1: Strengthen stakeholder partnerships and coordinate the transition of PwDs from TVET colleges, universities and other training institutes to the garment sector

Actions

- Strengthen regional Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSAs) to ensure implementation of the various legal provisions concerning the needs and rights of PwDs in the garment sector.
- Linkages, referrals and collaboration among TVET institutions, DPOs and BoLSAs should be fostered by clearly delineating areas for collaboration. TVET institutions should train PwDs who are interested in working in the garment and textile industries.
- Support companies in reserving jobs for persons with different degrees and types of disability. This entails urgent calls for the amendment of the current unrealistic tax incentives offered by the Government to the private sector.

Encourage synergies between the garment sector and DPOs.

- Provide technical support to TVET institutions on how to design disability-specific training courses which would increase the employability of students with disabilities in the garment sector.

5.2.2. Strategic objective 2: Build the capacity of employers and raise their confidence in the benefits of hiring PwDs

Actions

- Build and strengthen working relationships between industrial parks and disability-focused NGOs.
- Provide a safe and supportive work environment in which staff members with disabilities feel confident to talk about their disabilities with colleagues.
- Provide training, support and coaching for managers to consider PwDs as assets rather than liabilities when formulating job descriptions and the responsibilities of employees.
- Engage the relevant Kebele and Woreda administrators and social workers in grassroots government structures.
- Encourage employers to take up the financial incentives offered by the Ethiopian Government to make work spaces accessible, for example tax deductions, which can compensate for the expense involved in providing reasonable accommodation. (Companies in Hawassa are already benefiting from these incentives).

5.2.3. Strategic objective 3: Acknowledge, encourage and provide incentives to employers who succeed in employing PwDs

Actions

Widely share the best practices observed in some industrial parks (e.g. Hawasa), where customers insist on a company employing workers with disabilities before becoming clients or establishing business affiliations.

Recognize/reward companies that have made their workplaces welcoming and accessible to employees with disabilities.

Cooperate with the Ethiopian National Business and Disability Network, which organizes an annual event to recognize and give awards to deserving employers.

The success stories observed in some industrial parks, e.g. in Hawassa, where customers insist on a company employing workers with disabilities before becoming clients or establishing business affiliations, should be shared widely.

► 5.3. Goal 3: Facilitate recruitment and selection processes

5.3.1. Strategic objective 1: Promote a disability-inclusive recruitment process and a disability-inclusive working environment in garment/textile companies

Actions

- Influence employers to consider PwDs when recruiting and selecting staff, including for internships.
- Train HR personnel to support PwDs throughout the recruitment process.
- Develop and establish partnerships with TVET and other training centres and encourage them to put forward suitably skilled and available candidates with disabilities.
- Audit recruitment processes to ensure that practices do not discriminate against or disadvantage PwDs, whether advertently or inadvertently.
- Support HR personnel in reviewing recruitment policies, formalities and templates in order to remove barriers and ensure accessibility.
- Ensure that jobs are advertised in a non-discriminatory manner by including a statement that promotes diversity in employment and encourages applications from candidates with disabilities.
- Make it possible for job applicants with disabilities who fulfil the basic selection criteria to automatically proceed to the interview stage, and ensure that interviews are conducted in a non-discriminatory, accessible and disability-friendly manner.

- ▶ Reward employers/companies that are proactive in recruiting PwDs and creating a disability-inclusive working environment. This is unfortunately not yet the case in any of the industrial parks in Ethiopia.

5.3.2. Strategic objective 2: Encourage the HR or labour departments in industrial parks and other garment/textile companies to place PwDs in jobs appropriate to them

Actions

- ▶ Provide online disability-inclusive employment advisory services for employers (e.g. the Hahu.job.net website, which is active in the Hawasa and Mekelle Industrial Parks), telephone hotlines and SMS services.
- ▶ Design a recruitment support model for PwDs and make it available to companies in industrial parks.
- ▶ The relevant government offices – BoLSAs, in particular – and DPOs should have a readily available database of qualified jobseekers in the garment sector, which could also be replicated in other sectors.

▶ 5.4. Goal 4: Promote disability-inclusive workplaces

5.4.1. Strategic objective 1: Facilitate reasonable workplace adjustments for PwDs

Actions

- ▶ Support employers in introducing reasonable accommodation into company policy as a mandatory inclusive practice.
- ▶ Develop a guide for employers on how to make adjustments to the workplace.
- ▶ Reorganize workstations to ensure that PwDs can work effectively and efficiently, for example by adjusting work schedules, if necessary.
- ▶ Modify training and assessment materials and processes, e.g. by providing training materials on request in electronic format, Braille or sign language.

Strategic objective 2: Promote the accessibility of physical infrastructure, transport and information for workers with disabilities

5.4.2. Actions

- ▶ Encourage disability-focused and international NGOs, in collaboration with government, DPOs and other stakeholders, to mobilize resources to enhance the accessibility of workplaces (both software and hardware components).

- ▶ Encourage employers to take up the tax concessions and duty-free privileges offered by the Government when they employ PwDs, and to make their physical infrastructure accessible.
- ▶ Encourage and assist the MoLSA, in collaboration with DPOs, in conducting accessibility audits.

▶ 5.5. Goal 5: Facilitate retention and career progression

- ▶ **Strategic objective 1: Support job retention and promote opportunities for career development for PwDs in the garment sector.**

5.5.1. Actions

- ▶ Advocate for a campaign to promote disability employment retention services in the sector.
- ▶ Encourage DPOs to assist workers with disabilities in developing successful career paths.
- ▶ Enhance the capacity of DPOs and BoLSAs to influence and convince employers to have a constructive attitude towards the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities.
- ▶ Ensure that employees with disabilities who are integrated into the workplace are afforded the same access to training and career development opportunities as their non-disabled colleagues.
- ▶ Make every reasonable effort to accommodate the return to work of PwDs in cases of withdrawal (as seen, for example, in Mekelle Industrial Park).

6. Implementation strategy and action plan matrix

▶ 6.1. Implementation strategy

The ILO plans to establish strategic partnerships with institutions providing support for the employment of PwDs. This will involve regular meetings with DPOs, companies and government bureaus. Close networking with Government, particularly the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), is vital to implementing the Sector-Wide Strategy and Action Plan. The MoLSA is also responsible for mainstreaming the employment of PwDs and for emphasizing the corporate social responsibilities of companies, including those in the garment sector and Ethiopia's booming industrial parks. An action plan matrix for this purpose, together with the anticipated corporate strategic outcomes, is therefore presented in the following pages.

For meaningful implementation of the Sector-Wide Strategy, it is essential to emphasize and capitalize on the corporate social responsibilities of companies, including those in the garment sector and Ethiopia's booming industrial parks.

▶ 6.2. Employment action plan matrix and corporate strategic results/outcomes

► Outcome 1: Disability inclusion proclamations and legislation implemented and enforced			
Outcomes	Actions	Responsible Units/Stakeholders	Timeframe
Outcome 1.1: Existing legislative provisions applicable to PwDs are implemented and enforced.	- Regulate and coordinate the implementation of national legal standards on the inclusion of PwDs in the workplace. - Audit corporate policies and employment support services to ensure that they are available for PwDs. - Facilitate the establishment of partnerships between bureaus of labour social affairs (BoLSAs) and other stakeholders, such as DPOs, to promote career opportunities. - Reinforce political commitment to the employment of PwDs by providing technical support. - Capacitate DPOs to combat disability-based employment discrimination across the nation and, where necessary, engage in litigation. - Strengthen the National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Implementation Committee. - Support the introduction of a comprehensive National Disability Act with its own implementing agency – a Federal Disability Council (and regional disability councils).	MoLSA FENAPD and its member organizations Office of the Attorney General (formerly the Ministry of Justice) The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission MoLSA/NGOs/INGOs/CSOs Federal Disability Council (and regional disability councils).	
Outcome 1.2: Strategies for the employment of PwDs are mainstreamed into existing service sectors.	Strengthen best practices, such as the reasonable disability mainstreaming (RDM) system established in the Tigray Region, and mainstream disability as a cross-cutting issue in all key programmes and services (education, health, social services, SMEs, etc.) to ensure that the employment of PwDs is inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory, and does not create or reinforce barriers.	MoLSA/BolSA The Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia/HR departments/ Labour recruitment units NGOs/INGOs/CSOs MoLSA/BolSA/Investment committees at industrial parks MoLSA/BolSA/HR departments	

- Prepare an up-to-date, easy-to-access manual on the employment of PwDs and the sectorial mainstreaming of disability in Ethiopia.
- Form a technical team drawn from national and international organizations, such as the ILO, to advise and mobilize resources for the preparation of, and follow-up on, manuals of the kind proposed above.
- Assign a disability focal person to each government ministry, in line with Proclamation No. 1097/2018 – the Definition of Powers and Duties of Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
- Ensure that the HR departments of public and private companies, including those located in industrial parks, are well versed in disability-inclusive development and the employment rights of PwDs.
- Build on awareness-raising initiatives taken by disability-focused NGOs, such as the ECDD and INGOs, regarding the merits of employing PwDs, with a view to combating negative stereotypes and ensuring that the skills and capacities of PwDs are valued and used.
- Provide support and training to enable employers to recognize the benefits of creating a diversified workforce inclusive of PwDs, as opposed to the evident disadvantages of exclusive practices.
- Produce and disseminate a pocket-sized handbook based on research evidence outlining the benefits of employing PwDs, thereby addressing employers' biases and concerns.

Outcome 1.3: Employment-related negative myths and stereotypes concerning PwDs are dismantled

MolSA
FENAPD and its Member Organizations
NGOs/INGOs/CSOs

► Outcome 2: Progress is made in capacity-building and the transition into work

Outcomes	Actions	Responsible Units/Stakeholders	Timeframe
Outcome 2.1: <i>The transition of PwDs from TVET to the garment and textile sector is facilitated.</i>	- Strengthen BoLSAs to ensure implementation of the various legal provisions on the needs and rights of PwDs, including those applicable in the garment sector. - Linkages, referrals and collaboration between TVET colleges, DPOs and BoLSAs should be strengthened by identifying areas for cooperation. This should include the preparation of a database/register, at <i>Kebele</i> and <i>Woreda</i> (district and county) levels, of candidates with disabilities qualified for employment in the garment sector. - TVET institutions should train PwDs interested in and/or qualified to work in the garment and textile industries. - Support companies in reserving jobs for PwDs, taking into account different levels of disability. - Improve and expand training/curricula in TVET institutions concerned with the employability of students with disabilities.	MoLSA/BoLSAs IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia. Ministry of Education (TVETs)/FENAPD and member organizations Ministry of Education (TVETs) Ministry of Education (TVETs)	
Outcome 2.2: <i>The capacity and confidence of employers in hiring PwDs is raised.</i>	- Facilitate and strengthen working relationships between disability-focused NGOs, DPOs and industrial parks. - Provide a safe and supportive work environment in industrial parks, in which staff members with disabilities feel confident to talk about their disabilities with colleagues.	MoLSA IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia	

- Train, support and coach managers to consider PwDs when formulating job descriptions and the associated tasks and responsibilities.
- Build relationships with employers and facilitate the training of PwDs so that they have the skills required in industrial parks.
- Encourage employers to take up the financial incentives offered by the Ethiopian Government, even if they are insufficient, with a view to making workplaces accessible and compatible with the reasonable accommodation needs of PwDs. (Companies in Hawasa Industrial Park are already taking advantage of these incentives).

Outcome 2.3: *Employers who succeed in employing PwDs are rewarded and success stories are widely shared and disseminated.*

- Share existing best practices, e.g. the example of Hawasa Industrial Park, where some clients will not enter into working relationships with companies that do not employ PwDs.
- Officially acknowledge (and possibly give awards to) companies that are compliant with the requirements of accessibility and reasonable accommodation in recognition of their efforts to create an inclusive and diversified workforce.

MOLSA/ECDD
IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia
FENAPD and its member organizations
The Ethiopian Business and Disability Network (under the auspices of the ECDD)

► Outcome 3: The recruitment and selection process is facilitated			
Outcomes	Actions	Responsible Units/Stakeholders	Timeframe
Outcome 3.1: <i>Disability-inclusive recruitment is encouraged.</i>	• Influence employers to consider PwDs when recruiting employees, including for internships. • Coach and train to HR personnel to support persons with disabilities throughout the recruitment process. • Establish sustainable partnerships with TVET institutions and other training centres and encourage them to put forward suitably skilled candidates with disabilities for employment. • Audit recruitment processes to ensure that practices do not inadvertently or adversely discriminate against or disadvantage PwDs. • Support HR personnel in reviewing recruitment policies, formalities and templates in order to remove barriers and ensure accessibility. • Ensure that job advertisements are publicized in a non-discriminatory manner by including a statement that promotes diversity in employment and encourages applications from PwDs. • Make it possible for job applicants with disabilities who fulfil the basic selection criteria to automatically proceed to the interview stage, and ensure that interviews are conducted in a non-discriminatory, accessible and disability-friendly manner.	MolSA/BolSA IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia BoLSA/ Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia/BolSA	

	Reward employers/companies that are proactive in the recruitment of PwDs and create a disability-inclusive work environment. This is unfortunately not yet the case in any of the industrial parks in Ethiopia.	
Outcome 3.2: PwDs have obtained work placement opportunities.	- Provide an online disability-inclusive employment advisory service for employers, such as the Hahu.job.net website active in Hawasa and Mekelle Industrial Parks), as well as the Ethiojobs job advertising portal, telephone hotlines and SMS services. - Design a recruitment support model for PwDs that can be adopted by companies in industrial parks. - The relevant government offices – BoLSAs, in particular – and DPOs should have an easily accessible database of qualified jobseekers in the garment sector, which could also be replicated in other sectors.	MoLSA Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations NGOs/INGOs/CSOs BoLSA/ FENAPD and its member organizations

► Outcome 4: Disability-inclusive workplaces are promoted			
Outcomes	Actions	Responsible Units/Stakeholders	Timeframe
Outcome 4.1: Reasonable workplace adjustments are made.	- Support employers in introducing reasonable accommodation as a mandatory inclusive practice in their company policies. - Produce a guide for employers on how to make the necessary adjustments to the workplace. - Reorganize workstations to ensure that persons with disabilities can work effectively and efficiently, adjusting work schedules, if necessary. - Modify training and assessment materials and processes, e.g. by providing training materials on request in electronic format, Braille or sign language.	MoLSA IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations	
Outcome 4.2: Accessibility measures are introduced and/or enhanced.	- Encourage disability-focused and international NGOs, in collaboration with Government, DPOs and other stakeholders, to mobilize resources for enhancing workplace accessibility (both software and hardware components). - Encourage employers to make use of the tax concessions and duty-free privileges offered by the Government when they employ PwDs, with a view to making their physical infrastructure accessible. - Encourage and support the MoLSA, working in conjunction with DPOs, in conducting accessibility audits.	MoLSA IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia FENAPD and its member organizations NGOs/INGOs/CSOs FENAPD and its member organizations	

► Outcome 5: Facilitate retention and career progression			
Outcomes	Actions	Responsible Units/Stakeholders	Timeframe
Outcome 5.1: <i>Support is provided for retention and career development.</i>	- Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for PwDs in the garment sector. - Advocate for a campaign to promote disability employment retention services in the sector. - Support DPOs in assisting workers with disabilities to develop successful careers. - Enhance the capacity of DPOs and BoLSAs to influence and convince employers to adopt a constructive attitude where the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities is concerned. - Ensure that employees with disabilities who are integrated into the workplace are afforded the same access to training and career development opportunities as their non-disabled colleagues. - Make every reasonable effort to accommodate the return to work of PwDs in cases of withdrawal (as practised, for example, at Mekelle Industrial Park).	MoLSA/BoLSAs IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia/BoLSA Ministry of Education (TVETs) FENAPD and its member organizations NGOs/INGOs/CSOs IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia/BoLSA IPs and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation of Ethiopia/BoLSA	.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is a meticulous process of ongoing follow-up, whereby an organization obtains regular feedback on the execution of planned activities and progress in meeting its objectives and performance targets.⁶ Evaluation, on the other hand, is the rigorous assessment of completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving the stated objectives and contributing to decision-making. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) exercise is therefore a periodic assessment that necessarily entails process, cost-benefit and impact analysis. The intention is that the ILO will undertake M&E of this proposed Sector-wide Strategic Plan on the basis of quarterly or biannual performance reports emanating from the MoLSA/BoLSAs, DPOs, NGOs, TVETs and IPs.

▶ 7.1. Gender considerations

There is evident gender-related inequality in that women and girls with disabilities experience a complex, multi-layered situation of discrimination and disadvantage. It is therefore essential that, in the context of this Sector-Wide Strategic Plan, women and girls with disabilities are given at least the same, if not greater, priority than their male counterparts. This means that wherever M&E is undertaken to assess the implementation and efficacy of the proposed activities, it must take into account how and to what extent women with disabilities are included.

▶ 7.2. Cross-disability relevance

It should be emphasized that this Sector-Wide Strategic Plan takes into account the whole spectrum of disability and does not accord preference to certain disabilities over others. This emphasis stems from a human-rights approach to disability, which considers that every individual, whether non-disabled, moderately disabled or severely disabled, should have equal opportunities where employment is concerned.

▶ 7.3. Sustainability

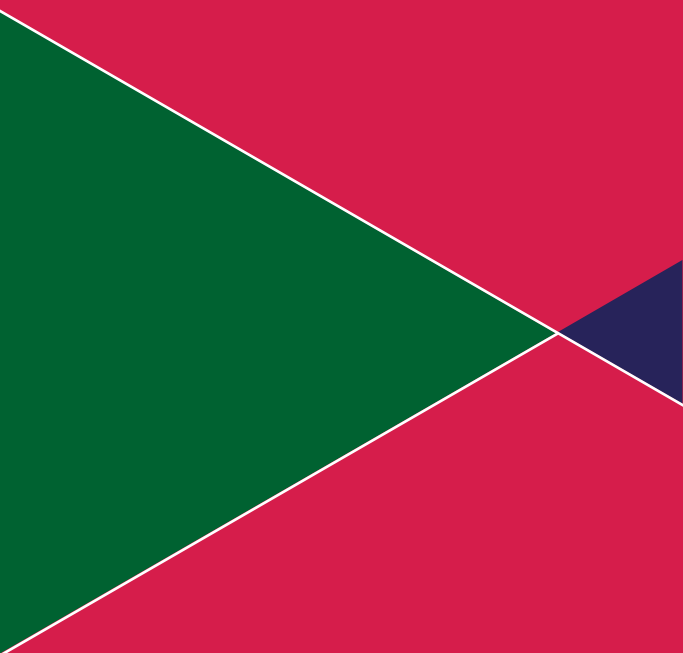
The impact of this Sector-Wide Strategic Plan can and will be sustained thanks to planning sessions at ministerial and senior-government levels. It is assumed that these sessions will take place periodically to plan (and if necessary reform) strategies and reasonable resource

⁶ United Nations Development Programme (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. UNDP, New York. Accessed 20 November 2019.

allocation. The practical recommendations made in this document will therefore be taken into account in deliberations to ensure that PwDs are included in employment and economic empowerment policies, in general, and in the garment and textile sector, in particular. In other words, the Sector-Wide Strategic Plan has the potential to leave a lasting imprint on the situation in Ethiopia where disability and inclusive-development is concerned.

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