



**Advocating for Rights &
Promoting Abilities of People
with Disabilities since 1999**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Ni-Vanuatu women with disability have their voice heard by United Nations working group

A submission to a United Nations working group says that a prejudicial community attitude is the biggest obstacle faced by women and girls with disability in Vanuatu.

Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association Vanuatu (DPA) has written the submission for a pre-session working group debating the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The DPA National Coordinator Mrs Nelly Caleb says that women with disability are considered to have different rights from everyone else, labelled by their impairments and seen in public places, often as strange people from another planet.

“It’s important that DPA highlights these issues to the United Nations so we can work together towards our vision for an all-inclusive society in Vanuatu,” Mrs Caleb said.

“DPA will be the only non-government organization representing Vanuatu to have their voice heard at the hearings in Geneva, Switzerland from July 27 to 31.”

The submission says the three main issues facing women with disability are:

- Negative stereotype, general prejudice and stigma attached to being a woman with disability.
- Violence against women.
- Poor educational and economic outcomes.

“Women and girls with disabilities were not part of the in-depth discussion of the cyclone Pam disaster assessment or in the disaster’s preparedness, response and recovery; and as a result their rights and interests were ignored.

“Data also shows they are at greater risk of violence at home and in the community.

“Often, those perpetrating the abuse are immediate family members, carers or in the position of power, which discourages women and girls with disabilities from reporting for fear they may be further victimised.

“The option for livelihood and opportunities for income generation are very limited. They have less educational opportunities because of their disability due to attitudes and accessibility which exclude them.

“DPA advocated for women with disability to be inserted in the Vanuatu draft gender policy but this was not included.

“The Department of Women’s Affairs should establish a budget specifically for the inclusion of women and girls with disability.”