women, youth & persons with disabilities
Department:
Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2030 NDP

MEDIA STATEMENT

Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Attention: Journalists and News Editors
Wednesday 06 May 2026.

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DWYPD RAISES CONCERN OVER SAFETY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AMID PERSISTENT INCLEMENT WEATHER

PRETORIA: The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) is increasingly concerned about the safety, dignity, and well-being of persons with disabilities as severe and persistent adverse weather conditions continue to affect parts of the country.

As the country continues to experience more frequent and severe climate-related eventsincluding floods and storms, it is evident that persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected due to existing social, economic, and infrastructural barriers.

Persons with disabilities face heightened risks during disasters, including limited mobility, lack of accessible transport, and exclusion from emergency planning processes. Early warning systems and disaster communication often remain inaccessible, leaving many without critical, life-saving information. an, extreme weather conditions worsen existing health challenges and disrupt access to essential healthcare and support services.

Heavy rains, flooding, and strong winds pose a disproportionate risk to persons with disabilities, many of whom face mobility challenges, limited access to emergency services, and barriers to timely information. These conditions heighten vulnerability, particularly for those in informal settlements, rural areas, and under-resourced communities.

The Department calls on all levels of government, emergency services, and community structures to prioritise inclusive disaster response measures.

This includes:

- Ensuring accessible early warning systems, including sign language interpretation.
- Accessible communication formats, prioritising evacuation support for persons with disabilities,
- Providing accessible temporary shelters and essential services, and
- Strengthening coordination with disability organisations on the ground.

DWYPD further urges families, caregivers, and communities to check on persons with disabilities during this period and to ensure that no one is left behind in emergency responses.

Minister Chikunga calls for a coordinated, inclusive response that recognises the specific needs of persons with disabilities and safeguards their rights and dignity at all times. Minister Chikunga reiterates that “Disaster situations must not deepen existing inequalities of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. The Department will continue to monitor the situation closely and work with relevant stakeholders to ensure that inclusive measures are implemented effectively.

END.

Media Enquiries Contact: Cassius Selala, Head of Communication, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities on **060 534 0672.**

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