

For Immediate Release

CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability Calls on Regional Governments to Ensure Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Fight against COVID-19

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The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Special Rapporteur on Disability, Senator Dr. Floyd Morris is calling on regional governments to ensure that special measures are put in place to protect persons with disabilities against the Corona Virus. According to Senator Dr. Floyd Morris: "It is incumbent for governments within the region to ensure that persons with disabilities who are among the most vulnerable group in Caribbean societies, be included and given special protection and support in all the fight against the Corona Virus."

Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable because of their socio-economic status and the fact that a large segment of this population are poor and therefore less able to make adjustments to their circumstances and daily routine to help prevent contracting this highly contagious and deadly virus. They are more likely to have the kind of chronic medical conditions which make the virus especially dangerous, and are less able to afford medical care should they need it. Based on this existential situation, Senator Dr. Morris says: "Governments within the region have a duty to ensure that in offering support to their citizens, due consideration and support must be given to the most vulnerable, inclusive of persons with disabilities." "We are living in abnormal times and this is where our true character as a region must be revealed and this will be best demonstrated in protecting and caring for persons with disabilities in these moments" says Senator Dr. Floyd Morris.

The CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability is also imploring governments to ensure that due consideration is given to their communication strategy for persons with disabilities. Senator Dr. Floyd Morris stated: "Special attention must be given to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the communication strategies for COVID-19. In particular, Sign Language must be provided at all press conferences so that persons who are deaf can access vital information on this global pandemic." "Also, special attention must be given to persons with intellectual disabilities and therefore easy-to-read materials should be provided for these individuals" says the CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability.

"One of the most significant arsenal in the fight against this disease is credible information and we must ensure that all persons with disabilities, including the deaf and persons with intellectual disabilities; have access to consistent and reliable information" says Senator Dr. Floyd Morris.

The CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability was appointed in October 2018 and has the responsibility for promoting a more inclusive and participatory society for persons with disabilities across the region.

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