

Joint Statement on Coordinating Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology as Part of a Humanitarian Response

As global member organisations officially representing professionals involved in rehabilitation, we uphold the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We respect international humanitarian law and the importance of rehabilitation and access to assistive technology for people affected by conflict.

Collectively we collaborate with:

- **WHO Sensory, Disability and Rehabilitation Unit, the Emergency Medical Teams initiative, and Access to Assistive Technology Team** as part of the humanitarian response to the conflict.
- **International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs)** for example Humanity & Inclusion (HI), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Momentum Wheels for Humanity.
- Our respective **Member Organisations** (where they exist) in affected and neighbouring countries.

Consistent with international best practice, we affirm the following key statements regarding rehabilitation and access to assistive technology within a humanitarian response:

- Individuals wishing to support the response should only travel as part of an established international organisation or as a member of an Emergency Medical Team (EMT).
- EMTs should include rehabilitation professionals, also dedicated rehabilitation teams. They are identified in the WHO classification and minimum standards as specialised teams and must register in advance with the WHO EMT Initiative.
- Those interested in responding to disasters must access appropriate clinical and humanitarian training, normally as part of their team.
- Training for health professionals in the affected countries should only be offered by those with experience with humanitarian response and/or working in affected countries.
- International responders should support and never undermine local professionals, who are the experts in their local context.
- Home and host country standards of clinical governance, scope of practice, assistive products procurement and quality assurance and research ethics continue to apply to international responders in disasters.
- Procured and donated equipment, including assistive products, should match clearly identified needs, be appropriate for the context, and their provision supported by trained personnel with service delivery mechanisms that include follow up, maintenance and repair.
- Responders must be accountable to the people they are trying to help, the hosting organisation, their team members and those from whom they have accepted resources.
- Responders must always consider the long-term needs of those with whom they work.

Further details can be found in the following resources:

- [Responding internationally to disasters: A do's and don'ts guide for rehabilitation professionals](#)
- [Medical device donations: Considerations for solicitation and provision](#)
- [Early rehabilitation in conflicts and disaster](#)

We are committed to working in collaboration to ensure that the current and future rehabilitation needs of people are coordinated and based on the identified needs of our professional colleagues and the communities in which they are working.

The International Association of Communication Sciences and Disorders, the International Spinal Cord Society, the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and World Physiotherapy, 23 March 2022

