

## From the Chairperson's desk

As the Chairperson of the Disability Rights and Empowerment Trust (DRET), it is my distinct honour to welcome you to our platform. Our organization was founded on the fundamental principle that justice begins where inequality ends. We operate under the firm conviction that a just, inclusive, and barrier-free society is not merely an aspiration but a necessity for the realization of human potential

At DRET, we recognize that disability is frequently misunderstood through the restrictive lens of impairment, rather than being viewed as a matter of human rights. This systemic misperception often leads to profound stigma, exclusion, and the denial of essential services. To combat these barriers, our work is anchored in four strategic pillars: ensuring robust Access to Justice, fostering Capacity Building and Advocacy, promoting holistic Health and Well-being, and strengthening our Organizational Development to better serve our community.

The transition from the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003 to the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2025 represents a fundamental shift in Kenya's legal philosophy, moving from a charity-based model to a rights-based framework. While the 2003 Act provided a foundational legal basis, it was frequently criticized for being aspirational rather than enforceable, often failing to translate its provisions into tangible improvements for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The 2025 Act is explicitly designed to give effect to Article 54 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and mandates that employers with 20 or more employees reserve 5% of positions for PWDs, backed by clear reporting requirements to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD).

Furthermore, the 2025 Act broadens the definition of disability to include a wider range of physical, sensory, and mental impairments, ensuring that a larger segment of the population qualifies for legal protections. Accessibility is no longer treated as an optional consideration; the new law mandates specific accessibility standards for public infrastructure, digital platforms, and media, including requirements for closed captioning and accessible government information.

Our mission is to promote, enhance, and defend the rights and dignity of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), with a particular focus on the most vulnerable among us, including women and children. As we strive to challenge the structural and systemic barriers that hinder the realization of human rights, we invite you to join us in this vital journey. Whether you are a potential partner, a dedicated volunteer, or a well-wisher, your support is the catalyst that allows us to provide life-changing services, advocacy, and hope. We invite you to collaborate with us, contribute to our initiatives, and help us build a society that truly values justice and human dignity for all.

*Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is a success!*

*CHRP(K) Bernice Nasimiyu Kasaya*

