2017 Palau Disability Report:

An analysis of 2015 Census of Population, Housing and Agriculture

FOREWORD

Persons with disabilities represent, according to the 2006 World Health Organization report, an estimated 15% of the world's population, and are amongst the most marginalized and excluded groups in society. Realizing their rights to healthcare, education, livelihoods and even survival is threatened by daily discrimination which comes in the form of negative attitudes, lack of adequate policies and inconsistant enforcement of exiting legislation.

Global recognition that persons with disabilities must enjoy all human rights and freedoms was solidified through the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which entered into force in 2008. This paradigm shift is also visible in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which explicitly includes disability in the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators supporting a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities.

In the Pacific, the ratification of the CRPD is almost universal and governments have taken positive steps at regional and national level, for example through the recent adoption of the 2016–2025 Pacific Regional Framework on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which strengthens regional commitment to improving programmes and service delivery that meets the needs of persons with disabilities.

To realize these commitments, Pacific governments like Palau recognize the need to strengthen the collection, analysis and use of reliable national-level disability data to enable policy formulation, evidence-based decision-making and the efficient and effective use of limited resources.

This report makes an important contribution to understanding the situation and needs of persons with disabilities in Palau. It also recognizes that due to the considerable proportion of persons with disabilities in Palau, policy, service and programmatic attention is required urgently particularly for children. Early identification and referral presents the best chance for children with disabilities to have an equal chance in life.

It is our sincere wish that this report is an accessible and widely used reference for all relevant stakeholders in Government, civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector as well as development partners and that it informs evidence-based policies and inclusive development activities that are of benefit to all people in Palau.

Elbuchel Sadang
Minister of Finance
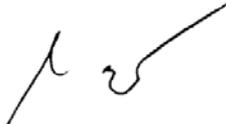
Sheldon Yett
UNICEF Pacific Representative

i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

ACRONYMS

CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSPro	Census and Survey Processing System
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
OPS	Office of Planning and Statistics
PFRPD	Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
PNCA	Palau National Code Annotated
RPPL	Republic of Palau Public Law
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPC	Pacific Community
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
IEP	Educational Plan

MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

Legend
- Conservation Areas
- Coral Reef
- Rivers & Lakes
- Mangroves
- Roads
- Compact Road

16 States
- Aimeliik
- Airai
- Angaur
- Hatohobei
- Kayangel
- Koror
- Melekeok
- Ngaraard
- Ngarchelong
- Ngardmau
- Ngaremlengui
- Ngatpang
- Ngchesar
- Ngiwal
- Peleliu
- Sonsorol

Scale 1:180,000

Southwest Islands

Fana
Dongosaro
SONSOROL
Pulo Anna
Merir

HATOHOBEI
Tobi
Hotsarihie
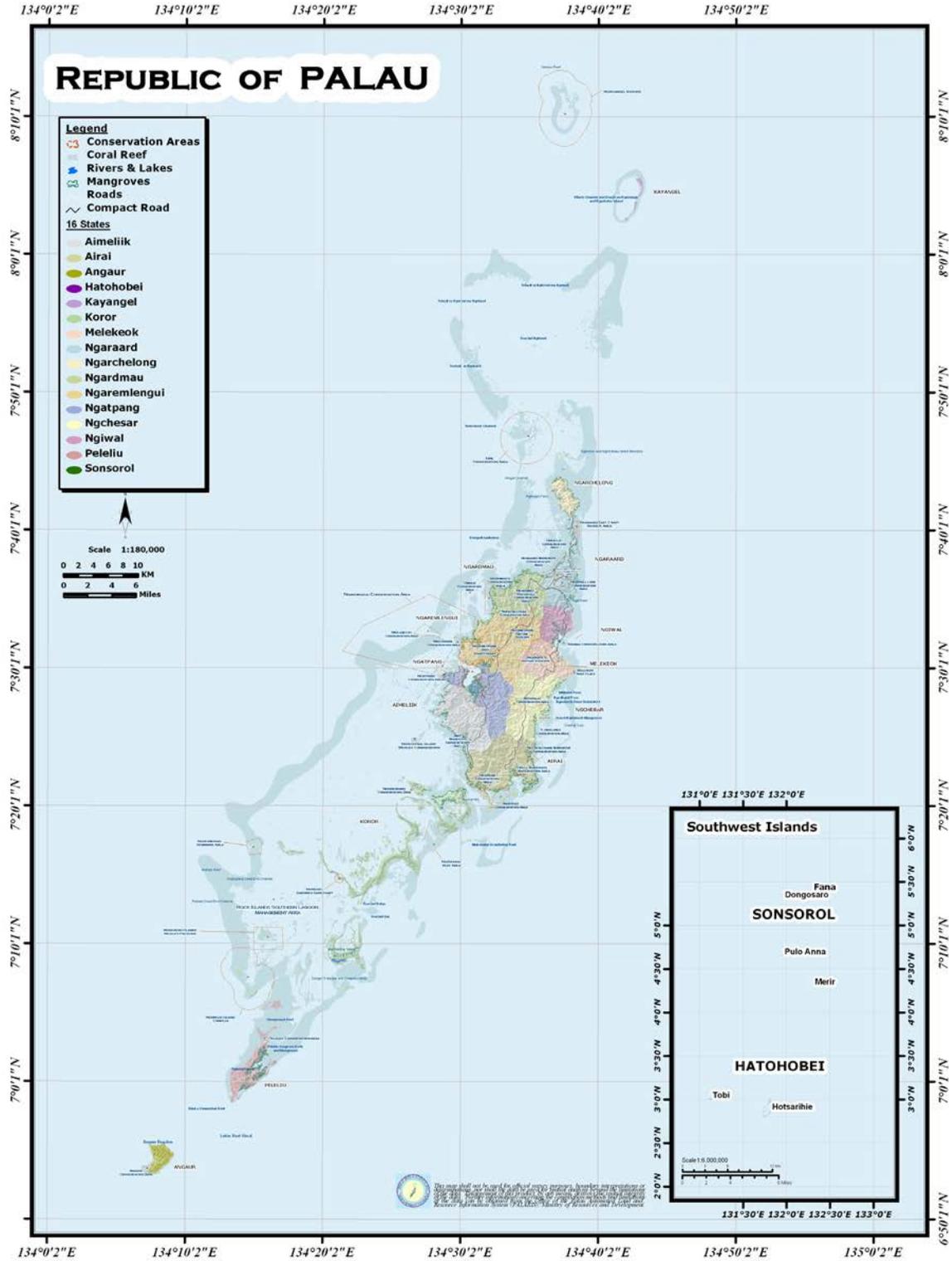
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are premised on the principle of 'leaving no one behind' and ushered in a new era of inclusive development. In many parts of the world, persons with disabilities are among the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized members of the society. They often do not have access to health care, education, employment and economic opportunities that is equal to those without disabilities. They are, as a result, more likely to suffer social exclusion, economic vulnerability and hardship.

The issue of disability and improving the availability of reliable disability statistics has become more prominent in the Pacific and a subject of discussion at recent high-level meetings. Most recently, in 2016, the Pacific leaders endorsed the 2016–2025 Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PFRPD), which was developed to support Pacific governments in promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. At the 47th Pacific Islands Forum, leaders reiterated that disability remains an issue of significance for the region. Goal 5 of the PFRPD focuses on strengthening disability research, statistics and analysis.

This report used data from the 2015 Census of Population, Housing and Agriculture. The Palau 2015 census was designed to better disaggregate data by gender as well as incorporating the Washington Group disability questions. The Short Set of questions included in the 2015 census includes six core functional domains– seeing, hearing, walking (mobility), cognition/memory, self-care and communication.

A total of 748 people reported facing some difficulties in seeing, 544 people reported facing some difficulties in mobility and 515 people reported facing some difficulties in memory. Across all domains, the female population are more likely to have difficulties compared to the male population. There are more females in Palau than males, particularly in the 50+ age group. By age group, the population above 50 years form the majority of those having difficulties across all domains. The degree of difficulty progresses with age across all domains, with those above 50 being the worst affected.

In this analysis, disability denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual's health condition and that individual's environment. Disability is conceptualised as a continuum, from minor functioning difficulties to severe difficulties which have major impacts on one's life. Cut-offs for disability in this continuum can therefore be determined depending on the purposes for use of the data. If the level of inclusion for disability is set at least some difficulty, about 7.8 percent (1,279) of the population aged 5 and over will be classified as having some disability. If the level of inclusion for disability is set at, at least a lot of difficulty, about 2.4 percent (397) of the population aged 5 and over will be classified as having some disability. If a very conservative cut-off level of cannot do it at all is chosen, the prevalence of disability is about 0.9 percent.

For further analysis, persons with disabilities were classified as anyone with at least one domain that is coded as "Yes, lots of difficulty" or "cannot do it at all". This is the classification recommended by the Washington Group.

Of the 2.4 per cent population with disabilities, the prevalence of disability is higher among the female population at 3.2 percent compared to the male population at 1.7 percent. The highest proportion of persons with disabilities are among the older population, aged 50 years and above (6.6 percent). The younger age group recorded a disability prevalence of less than 1 percent. East Babeldaob presents the highest prevalence of disability of 4.9 percent followed by Airai (2.8 percent) and West Babeldaob 2.4 percent. One possible explanation for this trend is that the highest proportion of persons above 50 years are found in East and West Babeldaob.

Further analysis was conducted to highlight disparities between persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities in living conditions, education, employment and health. Areas for further analysis were limited to the data collected in census of 2015. Key findings are as follows:

Living condition

There are no significant disparities between the living conditions of persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities. About 15.1 percent and 21.9 percent of persons with disabilities are found in poorest and poor households respectively compared to 13.8 percent and 17.8 percent without disabilities in poorest and poor households. Conversely, about 21.9 percent of persons with disabilities are found in the richest households compared to 26.7 percent without disabilities.

There is no difference in access to basic water and sanitation services. About 98.7 percent of the population with disabilities have access to basic water services compared to 99.3 percent of the population without disabilities. Similarly, 95.0 percent of the population with disabilities have access to basic sanitation services compared to 95.3 percent of the population without disabilities. The analysis could not ascertain the suitability and accessibility of the available water and sanitation facilities for persons with disabilities.

Education

Persons with disabilities are less likely to acquire education at the same level as their counterparts without disabilities. Results show that persons with disabilities are more likely to have no education at all compared to persons without disabilities. Persons with disabilities are also less likely to attain secondary education compared to persons without disabilities. The census data available show that only 30.7 percent of persons with disabilities reached secondary school compared to 41.7 percent of persons without disabilities. Persons with disabilities are over represented at the primary level with a higher proportion of 21.7 percent compared to 16.3 of persons without disabilities. This finding suggests that a bottleneck exists for the population with disabilities when transitioning to secondary and higher levels. This challenge is more visible in Outlying States which present the lowest literacy rate of 25 percent for persons with disabilities. While the average higher level education attainment is similar between persons with disabilities (34.3 percent) compared to persons without disabilities (36.8 percent), huge disparities exist for the age group 18 to 49 years. Only about 8.2 percent attained higher education among persons with disabilities aged 18 to 49 years compared to their counterparts without disabilities (45.2 percent).

When it comes to literacy, about only half of the population with disabilities are able to read and write compared to persons without disabilities. Only about 51 percent and 48 percent of persons with disabilities can read and write respectively compared to 98 percent of persons without disabilities.

Employment

Only one in ten persons with disabilities are economically active. The majority of persons with disabilities 15 years and above are not economically active (87 percent) where most of them are retired (42.2 percent) and unable to work (31.4 percent). In comparison to persons without disabilities, only 33 percent are not economically active indicating a wide disparity in the level of economic engagement for persons with disabilities.

For the few that are economically active, men with disabilities are also more likely to be self-employed than women as women with disabilities are more likely to be engaged in domestic work. Overall, only 18.7 percent of male and 9.5 percent of female population with disabilities are economically active compared to 74.5 percent and 58.1 percent respectively for male and females without disabilities.

Health

In health, indicators like children ever born and age at first birth are assessed for disparities. Women with disabilities tend to start child bearing earlier compared to women without disabilities. The median age of first birth is 20 for women with disabilities compared to 22 for women without disabilities aged 15 to 49 years.

On average, women with disabilities tend to have a higher average number of children ever born (3.0) compared to women without disabilities (2.4). More studies are required to unpack these results, with particular attention on disparities in contraceptive use.

As revealed in this report, a considerable proportion of the Palau population are living with disabilities. While the Government of Palau is committed to improving the welfare of persons with disabilities, existing disparities require policy attention. Measures currently implemented need to be reviewed to expand coverage to realize the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in education, employment and health.

While this is the first report of its kind in Palau, further studies are required to understand the disparities and barriers faced by persons with disabilities in the country. Such studies could utilize improved tools on collecting disability data on children. Specialized surveys on disability could help to provide an in depth understanding of the living conditions of persons with disabilities.

1 Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are premised on the principle of 'leaving no one behind' and ushered in a new era of inclusive development. In many parts of the world, persons with disabilities are among the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized members of the society. They often do not have access to health care, education, employment and economic opportunities that is equal to those without disabilities. They are, as a result, more likely to suffer social exclusion, economic vulnerability and hardship.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is one of the international treaties with specific focus on disability. The CRPD was adopted in 2006 and came into force in 2008. The Convention marked a paradigm shift in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are no longer viewed as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection but as "subjects" with rights, capable of claiming those rights and making decisions about their lives based on free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. The Convention gives universal recognition to the dignity of persons with disabilities.

The CRPD is both a development and a human rights instrument. It contains several articles that outline the commitment to and provide guidance on the inclusion of persons with disabilities across all sectors. Relevant to this report is Article 31, which requires governments to collect relevant disaggregated information to identify and address barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Palau is therefore one of the countries in the Pacific ahead of the curve, having adopted and started collecting data using internationally recognised tools for disability measurement.

Availability of reliable national-level disability data enables policy formulation, evidence-based decision-making and more efficient and effective use of limited resources. Moreover, reliable disability data can play a pivotal role in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of disability programmes. Since persons with disabilities are most at risk of 'being left behind', it is necessary to disaggregate data by disability status to inform policies that aim to equalize opportunities for all in Palau.

The issue of disability and improving the availability of reliable disability statistics has become more prominent in the Pacific and a subject of discussion at recent high-level meetings, including the following:

- Pacific leaders in 2016 endorsed the 2016–2025 Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PFRPD), which was developed to support Pacific governments in promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. At the 47th Pacific Islands Forum, leaders reiterated that disability remains an issue of significance for the region. Goal 5 of the PFRPD focuses on strengthening disability research, statistics and analysis.

- Member States of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific declared 2013–2022 as the "Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities" and adopted the Incheon strategy to 'Make the Right Real' for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. The strategy includes a specific goal to improve the reliability and comparability of disability data.

- The Fourth Regional Conference of Heads of Planning and Heads of Statistics hosted by the Pacific Community (SPC) in 2013 endorsed a proposal to reanalyse existing census and survey datasets to obtain richer information on disability, such as on 'equalization of opportunities', and to include disability as a theme in the SPC's online National Minimum Development Indicator Database.

1.1 Background on disability in Palau

The Republic of Palau became the sixth Pacific Island Country to ratify the CRPD having done so on the 11th of June, 2013 including the optional protocol to the CRPD. The Republic of Palau also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) in August of 1995. Since then the Government of Palau has been making strides towards the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities.

References to disability in a number of laws, policies and frameworks some of which were put in place before the ratification of the CRPD show the Government's commitment to creating an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities. Some examples of laws, policies and frameworks that make reference to disability are listed below:

- Disability Stipend Law (2011)

- National Policy on Disability (2011)

- RPPL 3-9 The Programs and Services for Handicapped Children Act of 1989

- RPPL 8-14 Palau Health Insurance System

- RPPL No. 6-26 Palau Severely Disabled Assistance Fund Act

- RPPL 1-42 Palau Health Care Certificate of Need

- RPPL 5-13 Access to Government Buildings for Persons with Disabilities

- RPPL 7-13 Sec 19 Health Sliding Fee Scale

- RPPL 7-32 754 Disability Insurance Benefit

- 22 PNCA 401 Handicapped Children Act

- 30 PNCA 501 LABOR Disabled Person's Anti-Discrimination Act

- 22 PNCA 171 Transportation of School Children

- 23 PNCA 1522 Voting Rights – Confined Persons

- 41 PNCA Social Security Act, 27

- 754 Disability Insurance Benefit

2015 marks the first time when disability data was collected nationally through a census using internationally recognised tools on disability measurement as developed by the Washington Group. Palau is one of the first countries to adopt these tools in a census survey.

1.2   Concepts and definitions

Disability is an evolving concept and over the past decade, a transformation occurred in how disability is viewed – from a problem that belongs to an individual to a societal problem (WHO 2007). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) classifies disability in three interrelated areas as follows:

- Impairments are loss or abnormality of a body part (i.e. structure) or body function (i.e. physiological function including mental functions).

- Activity limitations are difficulties an individual may have in executing activities.

- Participation restrictions are problems an individual may experience in life situations.

Disability refers to challenges faced in all three areas. Disability denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual's health condition and that individual's environmental or personal factors (WHO 2007).

Recognizing the complexity of measuring disability, in 2001, the United Nations Statistical Commission established the Washington Group on Disability Statistics – commonly known as the Washington Group – to develop measures of disability. With participation from national statistics offices from 123 countries and other key stakeholders, the Washington Group developed questions suitable for use in censuses, population surveys as well as specialized surveys.

The questions use the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health as a conceptual framework and as such do not focus on the impairment but rather focus on identifying limitations in functioning. The Short Set of Questions

includes six core functional domains – seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care and communication. The Washington Group also developed an extended set of survey items on functioning to be used as components of population surveys or as supplements to specialized surveys. These questions identify persons who are at a greater risk of experiencing restrictions in performing usual activities such as those undertaken in daily living or participating in roles if no accommodations are made (Washington Group, 2006). The questions were tested during several rounds of testing (see Miller et. al., 2011 for further information). UNICEF, in conjunction with the Washington Group, also developed tools appropriate for identifying children who are at a greater risk of experiencing restrictions in performing usual activities such as those required for daily living.

It has been recommended that countries use the Washington Group questions in censuses and other national surveys. The Short Set of Questions are recommended for use in censuses. When these questions are used, data can be utilized to compare levels of participation in education, employment and family life of persons with disabilities with levels of participation among persons without disabilities. The data can also be used to monitor prevalence and trends for persons with disabilities.

1.3   Organisation of this Report

This report is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction while Chapter 2 gives the details of the methodology employed. Chapter 3 gives the prevalence of disability while Chapters 4 to 7 are dedicated to specific topics aimed at highlighting the disparities between persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities. The report ends with Chapter 8 which draws key conclusions from the analysis and provides policy implications and recommendations for possible action by development partners and government.

2
Methodolgy

This section describes the data used for this report, the analysis that was performed and the limitations intrinsic to the analysis.

2.1 Population and Housing Census Survey

This report used data from the 2015 Census of Population, Housing and Agriculture. The 2015 Census is the third comprehensive data collection of population and housing characteristics which follows the 2012 mini census, 2005 and 2000 censuses. The 2015 census was designed to better disaggregate data by gender as well as incorporating the Washington Group disability questions.

The 2015 Census began on the 13th of April, 2015 and was conducted over a period of two to three weeks. Enumerators were trained to have a full grasp of the questionnaire and the respective instruction. The training included practical exercises to ensure enumerators were prepared. Supervisors were also deployed to provide support to the enumerations and also checked, verified and made sure all filled questions were correct and the questionnaire were completed as expected.

Data processing and cleaning was conducted with the support of SPC. Data were cleaned to remove duplications and errors before analysis. Data processing was conducted using Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) software.

2.2 Data analysis

Final data sets from the 2015 Census were used for the purposes of this report. Data was processed and analysed using CSPro and Stata 13.

The following questions were asked in the 2015 Census:

C27 - Does (name) have any difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?

C28 - Does (name) have any difficulty hearing, even if wearing hearing aid?

C29 - Does (name) have any difficulty walking or climbing steps?

C30 - Does (name) have any difficulty remembering or concentrating?

C31 - Does (name) have any difficulty washing all over or dressing?

C32 - Does (name) have any difficulty communicating, understanding or being understood?

Respondents had the following choice of responses to the questions:

1.   No, no difficulty.

2.   Yes, moderate.

3.   Yes, lots of difficulty.

4.   Cannot do at all.

The main variable for analysis was therefore derived from these questions for persons aged 5 years and above. Disability is conceptualised as a continuum, from minor functioning difficulties to severe difficulties which have major impacts on one's life. The answer categories are purposefully designed to reflect on this continuum. Cut offs for disability can therefore be determined on the purposes for use of the data. In this analysis, persons with disability were classified as anyone with at least one domain that is coded as "Yes, lots of difficulty" or "cannot do it at all". This classification is recommended by the Washington Group for international comparability (Washington Group, 2009).

Additional variables, including wealth quintile, were created for variables that were not directly available in the final census data. An analysis of principal components was performed using information data on the ownership of household goods and assets. Amenities or assets were weighted to obtain wealth scores for each household in the sample. The households were divided into five groups of equal size, from the poorest quintile to the richest quintile, based on the wealth scores. Household members were allocated to the respective category of households for which they live. The wealth index captures the underlying long-term wealth through information on the household assets and is intended to be used to rank households by wealth, from poorest to richest. The final index was tested against the income data collected as part of the census survey. The wealth index does not provide information on absolute poverty, current income or expenditure levels and the wealth scores calculated are applicable only for the data set on which they are based. Some variables were re-categorized to facilitate analysis on age categories, education variables and others.

SPC and UNICEF developed the analysis plan, including dummy tables. This analysis plan was shared with the Palau Office of Planning and Statistics (OPS). The analysis plan was revised in close collaboration with OPS. A first round of analysis to populate the tables was jointly conducted by SPC and UNICEF. A second round of analysis involved OPS staff who had intimate knowledge of the data set. Analysis was carried out in various stages, which meant that the results derived from analysis were cross-checked more than once. Tables produced from the analysis were verified against the published census report whenever possible. The results were interpreted and a report

written from the 9th to the 13th of October 2017 at a stakeholders' workshop in Palau. The workshop included representatives from line ministries and disabled persons' organizations.

2.3 Limitations of the disability data and analysis

This analysis is limited to the available data that was collected through the 2015 Census and as such only aspects of disability for which available data exists are explored in this report. While it is desirable to have information on all aspects of disability, this is not achievable from data provided from censuses or in surveys that are not dedicated to disability. This section puts forwards the limitations of the available data and analysis performed for the readers to interpret the results of the analysis accordingly.

The Washington Group Short Set of Disability Questions were designed to collect data on functioning for the adult population. Although certain questions may be suitable for child subpopulations (17 years and below), the questions were not developed with this group in mind. While they cover the six core domains of functioning, the questions are not fully equipped to identify children with disabilities. Questions that are best suited for children (17 years and below) were finalized in 2016 by the Washington Group and UNICEF and are now available for use by countries. (The questions are accessible at: https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-disability/module-on-child-functioning). The Washington Group also developed the extended set of questions which expands the short set to include additional domains of functioning (i.e upper body functioning, affect, pain and fatigue) and additional information per domain for use as components of populations surveys or supplements to specialised surveys (Available at: http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WG_Extended_Question_Set_on_Functioning.pdf).

3
Prevalence of Disability

This section describes the prevalence of "Yes, some difficulty", "lots of difficulty" and "cannot do at all" and disability ranking among people aged 5 and above across the various functional limitations. The six core domains assessed include vision, hearing, mobility (walking only), cognition, communication and hygiene/self-care. Functional limitations are also examined across socio-demographic characteristics: sex, age and State grouping. Some States were grouped to allow meaningful reporting of the small numbers. Kayangel, Angaur, Peleliu, Sonsorol and Hatohobei were grouped together and classified as Outlying States. East Babeldaob group of states includes Ngarchelong, Ngaraard, Ngiwal, Melekeok, and Ngchesar while West Babeldaob group include Aimeliik, Ngatpang, Ngardmau, Ngaremlengui, Koror and Airai, being the most populated States, were kept separately.

3.1 Prevalence of difficulties by domain

The six core domains assessed include vision, hearing, mobility (walking only), remembering (cognition), communication and hygiene (self-care). Figure 3.1 shows the prevalence rates of the six core domains by degree of difficulty. Difficulties in vision were the most common followed by mobility and cognition. Communication was the least prevalent. The prevalence of "some difficulties" in the vision domain was 4.5 percent while 0.8 percent suffered "lots of difficulties" in the vision domain and 0.2 percent could not see at all. These ratios were similar for the five other core functional domains. The domain of mobility is highest in at least lots of difficulty and cannot do at all.

Figure 3 1: Distribution of population aged 5 and above with disability by domain and degree of difficulty

	Seeing	Hearing	Mobility	Cognition	Self-care	Communication
At least some difficulties	4.5	2.1	3.3	3.1	1.5	1.4
At least lots of difficulties	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.9	0.7	0.6
Cannot do at all	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.2
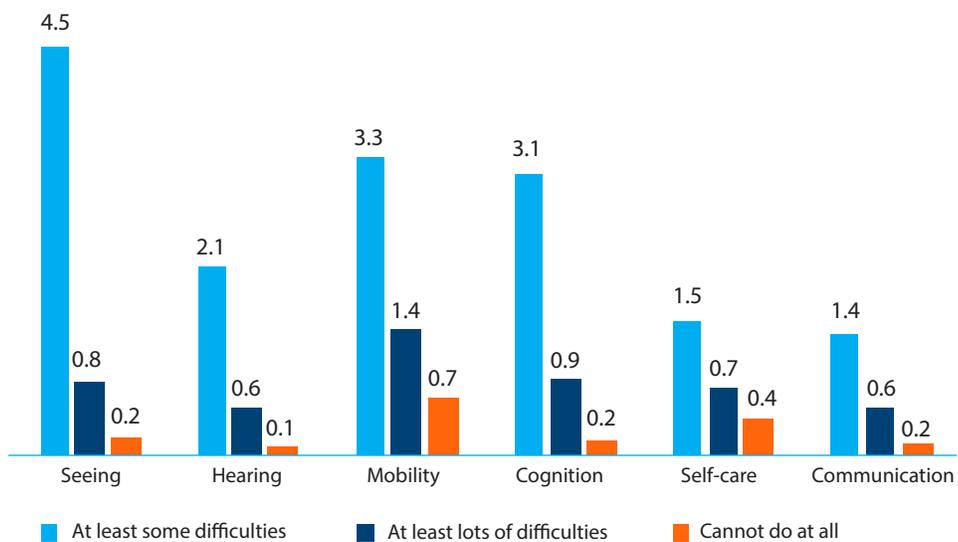
Table 3.1 shows population 5 years and above by functional domain, degree of difficulty by sex and age group.

Table 3.1 Population 5 years and above by functional domain,
degree of difficulty by sex and age group.

Functional domains	Degree of difficulty	Sex		Age group			Total
		Male	Female	5-17	18-49	50+	
Seeing	Yes some difficulty	43.2	56.8	2.0	24.7	73.3	611
	Yes lots of difficulty	34.0	66.0	5.8	11.7	82.5	103
	Cannot do at all	35.3	64.7	0.1	29.4	61.8	34
	Total	**41.6**	**58.4**	**2.8**	**23.1**	**74.1**	**748**
Hearing	Yes some difficulty	46.4	53.6	4.4	22.2	73.4	252
	Yes lots of difficulty	34.2	65.8	4.1	15.1	80.8	73
	Cannot do at all	19.0	81.0	23.8	19.0	57.1	21
	Total	**42.2**	**57.8**	**5.5**	**20.5**	**74.0**	**346**
Mobility	Yes some difficulty	36.7	63.3	1.0	12.5	86.5	311
	Yes lots of difficulty	40.8	59.2	1.6	12.0	86.4	125
	Cannot do at all	28.7	71.3	3.7	12.0	84.3	108
	Total	**36.0**	**64.0**	**1.7**	**12.3**	**86.0**	**544**
Remembering	Yes some difficulty	38.1	61.9	4.0	19.0	76.9	373
	Yes lots of difficulty	36.0	64.0	3.6	18.9	77.5	111
	Cannot do at all	45.2	54.8	12.9	22.6	64.5	31
	Total	**38.1**	**61.9**	**4.5**	**19.2**	**76.3**	**515**
Hygiene (self-care)	Yes some difficulty	42.1	57.9	2.4	19.0	78.6	126
	Yes lots of difficulty	45.1	54.9	2.0	21.6	76.5	51
	Cannot do at all	26.4	73.6	6.9	12.5	80.6	72
	Total	**38.2**	**61.8**	**3.6**	**17.7**	**78.7**	**249**
Communication	Yes some difficulty	44.8	55.2	5.2	30.6	64.2	134
	Yes lots of difficulty	51.6	48.4	6.3	31.3	62.5	64
	Cannot do at all	35.7	64.3	21.4	21.4	57.1	28
	Total	**45.6**	**54.4**	**7.5**	**29.6**	**62.8**	**226**

The results in Table 3.1 show that a total of 748 people reported facing some difficulties in the domain of seeing, compared to 544 people for mobility and 515 people reported facing some difficulties in the functional domain of remembering. Across all domains, the female population were more likely to have difficulties compared to the male population. There were more females in Palau than males, particularly in the 50+ age group. By age group, the population above 50 years form the majority of those having difficulties across all domains. The degree of difficulty progresses with age across all domains, with those above 50 years of age being the worst affected.

Table 3 2: Population 5 years and above by functional domain, degree of difficulty by State grouping

Functional domains	Degree of difficulty	States					Total
		Airai	Koror	Outlying States	East Babeldaob	West Babeldaob	
Seeing	Yes some difficulty	11.3	44.2	4.1	20.1	20.3	611
	Yes lots of difficulty	16.5	52.4	0.0	19.4	11.7	103
	Cannot do at all	20.6	44.1	11.8	23.5	0.0	34
	Total	**12.4**	**45.3**	**3.9**	**20.2**	**18.2**	**748**
Hearing	Yes some difficulty	12.3	53.6	6.3	15.9	11.9	252
	Yes lots of difficulty	26.0	41.1	2.7	21.9	8.2	73
	Cannot do at all	19.0	61.9	4.8	9.5	4.8	21
	Total	**15.6**	**51.4**	**5.5**	**16.8**	**10.7**	**346**
Mobility	Yes some difficulty	14.5	51.1	9.0	15.8	9.6	311
	Yes lots of difficulty	16.8	54.4	3.2	20.0	5.6	125
	Cannot do at all	12.0	57.4	2.8	22.2	5.6	108
	Total	**14.5**	**53.1**	**6.4**	**18.0**	**7.9**	**544**
Memory	Yes some difficulty	13.7	48.0	6.4	20.9	11.0	373
	Yes lots of difficulty	17.1	55.9	4.5	13.5	9.0	111
	Cannot do at all	22.6	45.2	6.5	22.6	3.2	31
	Total	**15.0**	**49.5**	**6.0**	**19.4**	**10.1**	**515**
Hygiene (self-care)	Yes some difficulty	9.5	64.3	8.7	13.5	4.0	126
	Yes lots of difficulty	7.8	62.7	3.9	19.6	5.9	51
	Cannot do at all	18.1	56.9	2.8	18.1	4.2	72
	Total	**11.6**	**61.8**	**6.0**	**16.1**	**4.4**	**249**
Communication	Yes some difficulty	13.4	51.5	9.0	17.9	8.2	134
	Yes lots of difficulty	9.4	50.0	4.7	26.6	9.4	64
	Cannot do at all	21.4	57.1	7.1	14.3	0.0	28
	Total	**13.3**	**51.8**	**7.5**	**19.9**	**7.5**	**226**

3.2 Prevalence of disability

Disability is conceptualised as a continuum, from minor functioning difficulties to severe difficulties which have major impacts on one's life. The answer categories are purposefully designed to reflect on this continuum. Cut-offs for disability can therefore be determined on the purposes for use of the data. Figure 3.2 shows the disability prevalence at various cut-off points. If the level of inclusion for disability is set at least some difficulty, about 7.8 percent (1,279) of the population aged 5 and over will be classified as having some disability. If the level of inclusion for disability is set at least at a lot of difficulty, about 2.4 percent (397) of the population aged 5 and over will be classified as having some disability. If a very conservative cut-off level of cannot do it at all is chosen, the prevalence of disability is about 0.9 percent. The various cut-off points for disability prevalence help to guide specific policy positions. For example, provision of assistive devices/technologies and cash transfer support could start with those who respond "cannot do at all".

Figure 3 2: Distribution of population aged 5 and above at different cut-off points
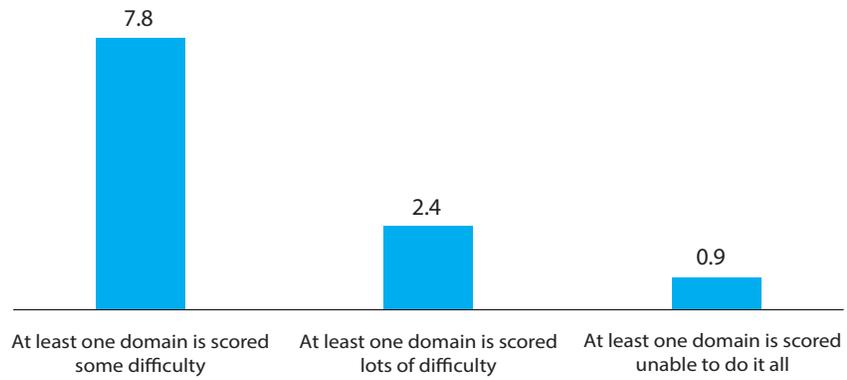
This report follows the Washington Group recommendation and uses the cut-off for disability at a lot of difficulty or those who cannot do it at all. A person who is defined as having a difficulty, as recommended by the Washington Group, someone with at least one domain coded as 'A lot of difficulty" or "cannot do at all".

Figure 3.3 shows disability prevalence by background characteristics. Out of the total population of 5 years and above, about 2.4 percent are classified as persons with disabilities. The prevalence of disability is higher among the female population at 3.2 percent compared to the male population at 1.7 percent. The highest proportion of persons with disabilities are among the older population, aged 50 years and above (6.6 percent). The younger age group recorded a disability prevalence of less than 1 percent. East Babeldaob presents the highest prevalence of disability of 4.9 percent followed by Airai (2.8 percent) and West Babeldaob (2.4 percent). One possible explanation for this trend is that the highest proportion of persons above 50 years are found in East and West Babeldaob.

Figure 3 3: Distribution of population aged 5 and above with disability by region, age group, and States
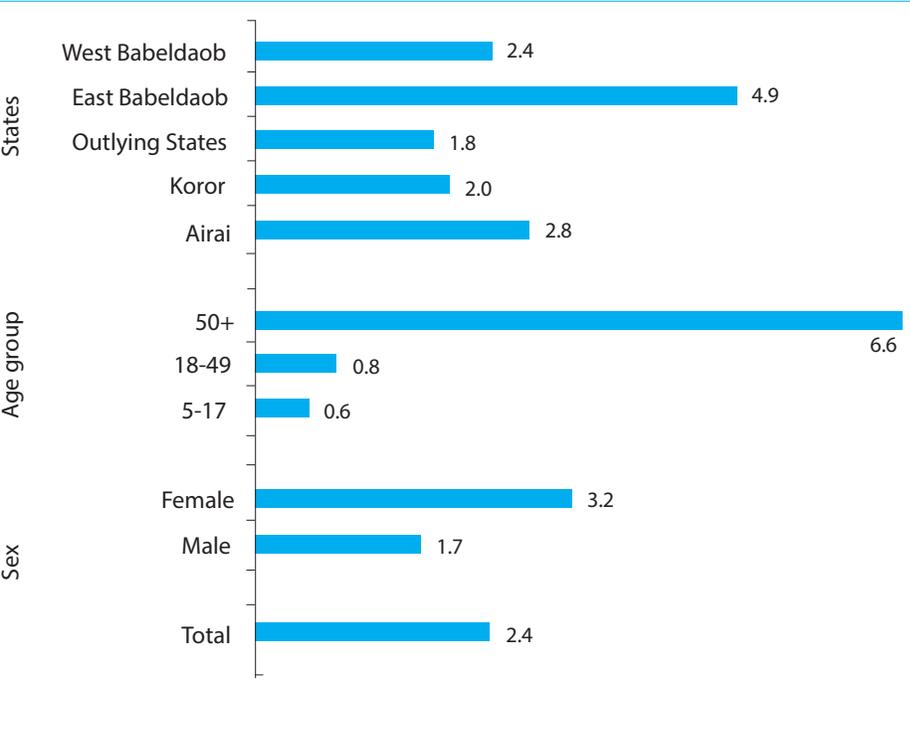
4

Living conditions of persons with disabilities

The living conditions of persons with disabilities are considered in this section. For the purposes of this section, persons with disabilities are those who report at least lots of difficulty in at least one of the six domains.

4.1 Disability by wealth quintiles

While there are no significant differences, the data suggest that persons with disabilities are more likely to be found in poor households compared to persons without disabilities. About 15.1 and 21.9 percent of persons with disabilities are found in poorest and poor households respectively compared to 13.8 and 17.8 without disabilities in poorest and poor households. A similar trend is observed for the richest households, data suggests that persons with disabilities are less likely to be found in the richest households. About 21.9 percent of persons with disabilities are found in richest households compared to 26.7 percent without disabilities. This could be a reflection of the more equal distribution of income in Palau. Palau has a Gini coefficient of 0.26 (2014 HIES poverty analysis provisional report). This puts Palau amongst countries like Finland and Sweden when it comes to income distribution.

Figure 4.1 Population aged 5 years and above, with and without disability by wealth status
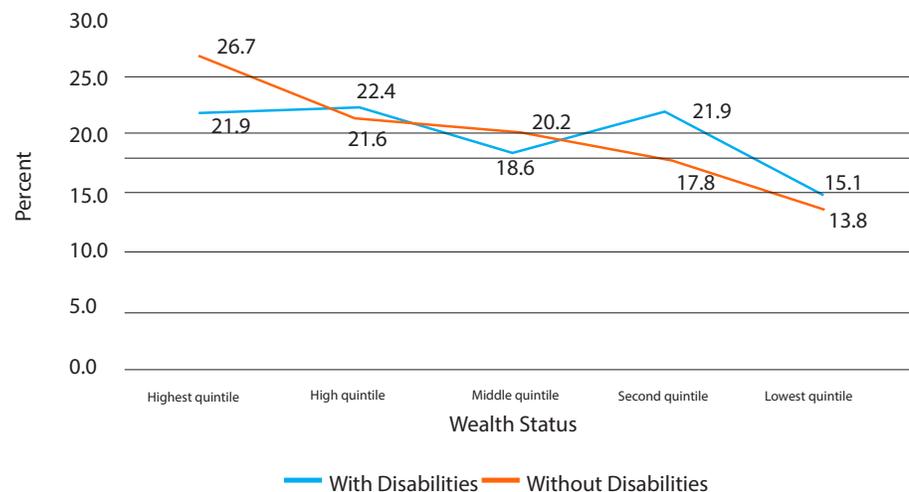
4.2 Water and sanitation

Access to safe and clean water and sanitation facilities are basic rights for all people, including persons with disabilities, and the denial of these basic rights can have serious implications on well-being. Results in Figure 4.2 show that there is equal access to basic water and sanitation services. About 98.7 percent of the population with disabilities have access to basic water services compared to 99.3 percent of the population without disabilities. Similarly, 95.3 percent of the population with disabilities have access to basic sanitation services compared to 95.0 percent of the population without disabilities. Detailed results in Table 4.1 show that about one in four persons in the Outlying States has no access to basic sanitation across disability status.

Figure 4.2 Population 5 years of age and over, by disability status, access to water and sanitation
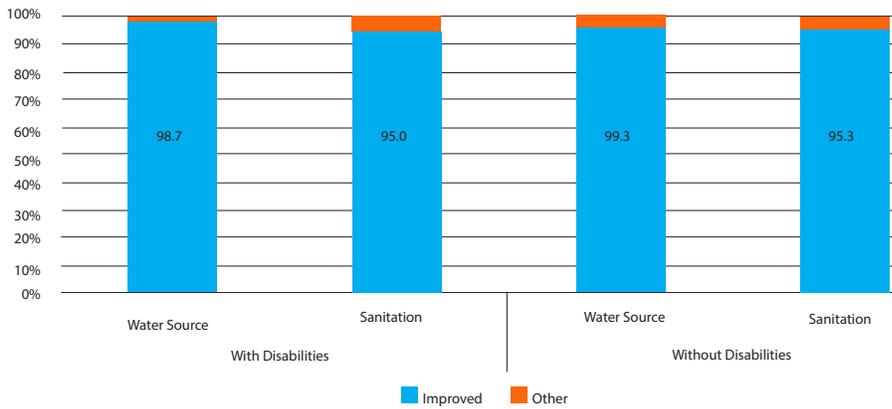
Table 4 1: Population 5 years of age and over, by disability status, access to water and sanitation

Background characteristics	Total	Water source						Sanitation			
		Improved water source					Unimproved sources - well or spring	Improved sanitation			Unimproved Sanitation
		Total	Public system	Public system and cistern	Cistern tank or drums	Public		Total improved	Public sewer	Septic tank	
With disability											
Total	**397**	**98.7**	**83.4**	**13.6**	**1.5**	**0.3**	**1.3**	**95.0**	**46.6**	**48.4**	**5.0**
Sex											
Male	148	98.6	85.1	12.8	0.0	0.7	1.4	92.6	47.3	45.3	7.4
Female	249	98.8	82.3	14.1	2.4	0.0	1.2	96.4	46.2	50.2	3.6
Age group											
5-17	18	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	88.9	38.9	50.0	11.1
18-49	73	98.6	82.2	15.1	1.4	0.0	1.4	93.2	56.2	37.0	6.8
50+	306	98.7	82.7	14.1	1.6	0.3	1.3	95.8	44.8	51.0	4.2
State											
Airai	65	96.9	95.4	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.1	90.8	1.5	89.2	9.2
Koror	219	99.1	86.3	11.9	0.9	0.0	0.9	98.2	78.1	20.1	1.8
Outlying States	12	100.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	75.0	25.0
East Babeldaob	75	100.0	73.3	22.7	4.0	0.0	0.0	97.3	17.3	80.0	2.7
West Babeldaob	26	96.2	73.1	15.4	3.8	3.8	3.8	80.8	0.0	80.8	19.2
Without disability											
Total	**16,064**	**99.3**	**89.0**	**8.2**	**1.9**	**0.1**	**0.7**	**95.3**	**53.5**	**41.8**	**4.7**
Sex											
Male	8,632	99.2	89.3	7.7	2.1	0.1	0.8	95.0	53.8	41.2	5.0
Female	7,432	99.3	88.6	8.7	1.8	0.2	0.7	95.7	53.2	42.6	4.3
Age group											
'5-17	3,141	99.2	87.3	9.7	2.0	0.2	0.8	94.2	48.2	46.0	5.8
18-49	8,606	99.3	90.2	7.3	1.8	0.1	0.7	96.1	57.8	38.3	3.9
50+	4,317	99.1	87.9	8.8	2.2	0.2	0.9	94.6	48.8	45.7	5.4
State grouping											
Airai	2,246	99.0	90.7	7.3	0.8	0.2	1.0	94.0	2.6	91.4	6.0
Koror	10,697	99.5	93.4	5.6	0.5	0.0	0.5	97.6	77.4	20.2	2.4
Outlying States	640	99.5	56.4	30.6	12.3	0.2	0.5	75.2	0.2	75.0	24.8
East Babeldaob	1,442	99.3	79.8	15.5	3.9	0.1	0.7	93.7	15.8	77.9	6.3
West Babeldaob	1,039	97.4	73.0	12.6	10.3	1.5	2.6	89.5	2.6	86.9	10.5

5
Education, literacy and disability status

Education is central to individual well-being and national development. This section explores educational attainment, literacy and school attendance across disability status with the intention of identifying differentials, if any, that exist between persons with disabilities compared with those without disabilities.

5.1 Education attainment and literacy

Compulsory education until the age of 17 or until graduation from secondary school is free in Palau. This policy position is being reflected in the very low proportion (overall 3 percent) of the population age 5 years and above who have never been to school. Figure 5.1 presents education attainment and literacy by disability status. Results show that persons with disabilities are more likely to have no education at all than persons without disabilities. Further, persons with disabilities are less likely to attain secondary education compared to persons without disabilities, where only 30.7 percent of persons with disabilities reached secondary school compared to 41.7 percent of persons without disabilities. Persons with disabilities are over represented at the primary level with higher proportion of 21.7 percent compared to 16.3 of persons without disabilities. This finding suggests a bottleneck exists for the population with disabilities on transition to secondary school level and higher. This is more so in Outlying States which presents the lowest literacy rates of 25 percent for persons with disabilities. The differentials in education attainment are reflected in the literacy rates. Only about 51 percent and 48 percent of persons with disabilities can read and write respectively compared to 98 percent of persons without disabilities who can read and write. Literacy is measured by the ability to read and write in any language, respondents were asked for their ability to read in any language and ability to write a letter in any language.

Figure 5 1: Population age 5 years and above with and without disability by educational attainment
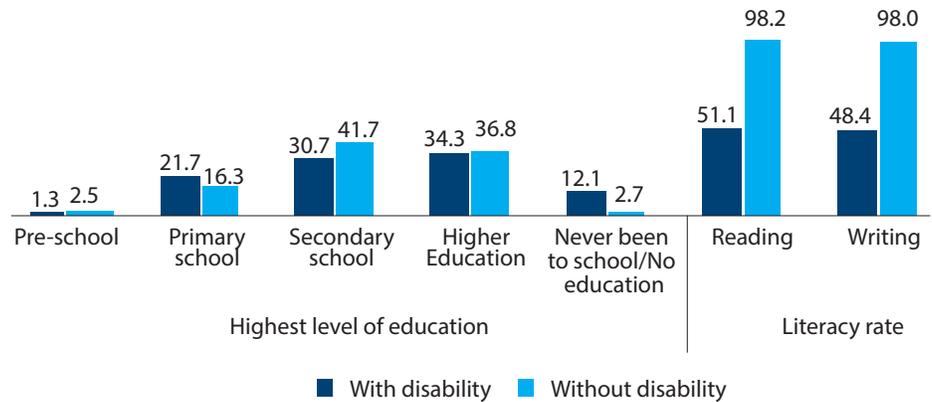
The differences are also observed when comparing education attainment between persons with disabilities and those without disabilities by background characteristics (Table 5.1). While the average higher level education attainment is similar between persons with disabilities (34.3 percent) compared to persons without disabilities (36.8 percent), huge disparities exist for the age group 18 to 49 years. Only about 8.2 percent attained higher education amongst persons with disabilities aged 18 to 49 years compared to their counterparts without disabilities (45.2 percent). Literacy rates among persons with disabilities increase by age from about 38.9 percent among persons aged 5-17 years to 52.6 percent for persons aged 50 years and above. This suggests that persons with disabilities lag behind in attaining reading and writing skills.

Furthermore, in Outlying States very few (25 percent) persons with disabilities have attained secondary education compared to about half (51.1 percent) of persons without disabilities. The trend suggests that persons with disabilities are limited to only primary education (at 42 percent). This could be partly explained by the fact that there are no secondary schools in Outlying States and to continue with education, students would need to move to Koror and other states where services are available. While about half of persons without disabilities are able to make it through this bridge, only a quarter of persons are only able to pass through.

While special education programmes have been established and implemented to support and provides education services for the children with disabilities in Palau, the result highlights that there are challenges and limitations that exist in the system that could be hindering better educational participation and performance of persons with disabilities. For instance, service provision for continuing education for students with Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) diploma is limited, leading to persons with disabilities failing to attain the same level of education compared to their counterparts without disabilities at higher level.

Table 5 1: Population age 5 years and above with and without disability by educational attainment and literacy

Background characteristics	Highest level completed					Literacy rate		Total
	Pre-school improved	Primary school	Secondary school	Higher education	Never been to school/No education	Reading	Writing	
With disability								
Total	**1.3**	**21.7**	**30.7**	**34.3**	**12.1**	**51.1**	**48.4**	**397**
Sex								
Male	2.0	21.0	31.8	31.1	14.2	50.0	43.9	148
Female	0.8	22.1	30.1	36.1	10.8	51.8	51.0	249
Age group								
5-17	11.1	61.1	11.1	0.0	16.7	38.9	38.9	18
18-49	1.4	20.6	46.6	8.2	23.3	48.0	48.0	73
50+	0.7	19.6	28.1	42.5	9.2	52.6	49.0	306
State								
Airai	3.1	16.9	32.3	40.0	7.7	44.6	41.5	65
Koror	0.9	19.6	31.5	35.6	12.3	54.8	53.4	219
Outlying States	8.3	41.7	25.0	8.3	16.7	25.0	25.0	12
East Babeldaob	0.0	24.0	28.0	33.3	14.7	48.0	42.7	75
West Babeldaob	0.0	34.6	30.8	23.1	11.5	57.7	50.0	26
Without disability								
Total	**2.5**	**16.3**	**41.7**	**36.8**	**2.7**	**98.2**	**98.0**	**16,064**
Sex								
Male	2.5	17.3	44.3	33.1	2.8	98.0	97.8	8,632
Female	2.6	15.0	38.7	41.1	2.6	98.4	98.2	7,432
Age group								
'5-17	12.9	61.1	18.0	0.0	8.0	98.7	98.8	3,141
18-49	0.0	4.7	48.8	45.2	1.3	98.6	98.6	8,606
50+	0.0	6.6	45.0	46.7	1.6	96.8	96.3	4,317
State grouping								
Airai	1.8	16.9	38.0	40.7	2.6	98.3	98.3	2,246
Koror	2.6	14.3	41.3	39.6	2.3	98.7	98.6	10,697
Outlying States	3.3	26.9	51.1	13.8	5.0	96.1	96.1	640
East Babeldaob	3.0	21.8	43.5	28.3	3.5	98.2	95.4	1,442
West Babeldaob	2.2	21.3	46.7	25.7	4.1	96.3	96.2	1,039

5.2 School attendance

Table 5.2 shows school attendance for persons age 5 to 24 years by disability status. A total of 26 persons with disabilities are in the age group 5-24 years. Of these, 24 persons (96 percent) have attended school at one point compared to 2 persons (7 percent) having not attended school at all. In comparison to persons without disabilities, 4627 people (96.4 percent) have ever attended school while 127 (3.6 percent) did not attend school. Of the 24 persons with disabilities who have attended school at one point, 21 were attending school at the time of the census while 3 had left school. Similarly, of the 4, 627 persons without disabilities aged 5 to 24 years who had attended school at one point, a total of 956 had left school at the time of the census.

Table 5 2: Population 5-24 years with and without disability by school attendance

School attendance	Disability Status			
	With disabilities		Without disabilities	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ever attended school				
Total	26	100.0	4,798	100.0
Attended school	24	92.3	4,627	96.4
Never attended	2	7.7	171	3.6
Currently attending school				
Total	24	100.0	4,627	100.0
Attended school	21	87.5	3,671	79.3
Never attended	3	12.5	956	20.7

Access to livelihoods for adults is crucial for both persons with and without disabilities to achieve self-reliance and ensure the well-being of their families. An analysis of data for economic activity reveals the extent to which persons with disabilities are socially and economically integrated compared with those without disabilities. The "economically active" population is defined as those that are available for work and are currently employed or actively seeking work. "Non-economically active" refers to those who are unable to work such as students and homemakers. The "unemployed" are those that are available to work and are actively looking for work.

6.1 Employment status

Figure 6.1 and table 6.1 presents the current economic activities for persons with and without disabilities by their background characteristics. The majority of persons with disabilities 15 years and above are not economically active (87 percent) with most of them retired (42.2 percent) and unable to work (31.4 percent). In comparison to their counterpart without disabilities, only 33 percent are not economically active indicating a wide gap exists in the level of economic engagement for persons with disabilities. Only 18.7 percent of persons with disabilities are economically active compared to 67 percent of persons without disabilities.

Figure 6 1: Employment status for population 15 years and above with and without disability
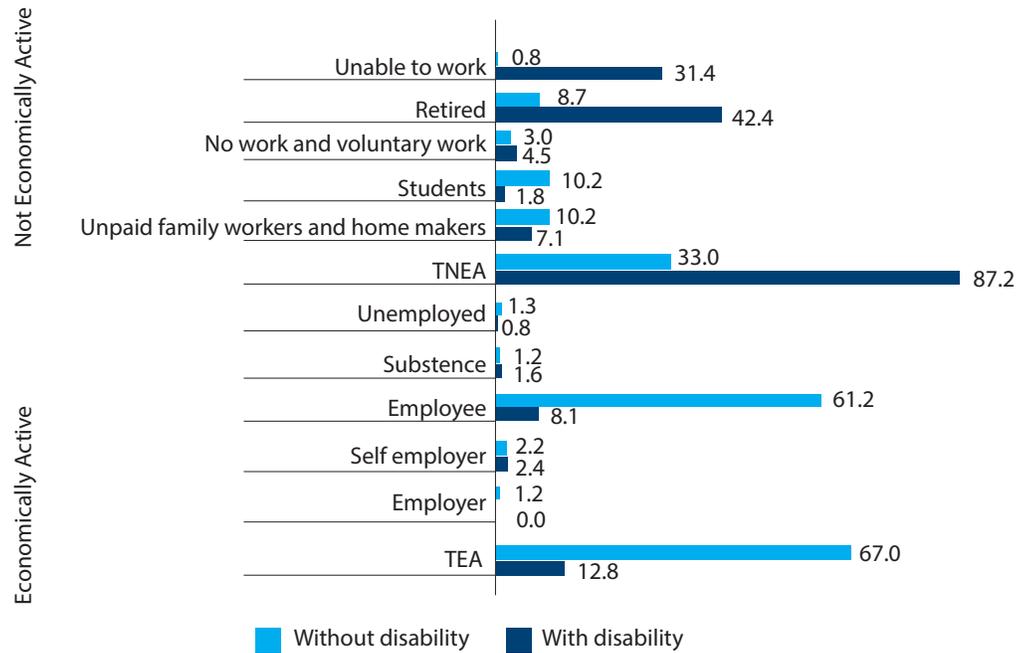
*TNEA - Total Not Ecnomically Active

*TEA - Total Economically Active

When looking at the participation in the labor market between persons with disabilities and those without disabilities, the data indicates that persons with disabilities are less likely to have equal participation and opportunities to engage in the labor market activities. Only 8.1 percent of persons with disabilities are employees compared to 61.2 percent of persons without disabilities. The results also show that persons with disabilities in the working age group of 18-49 are facing challenges and limitations to participate as compared to those without disabilities in the same age group. About one in four persons (23.3 percent) with disabilities in this age group is employed compared to seven in ten persons without disabilities (73.3 percent).

Furthermore, the differences in participation among men and women with disabilities by their background characteristics are also evidenced in the data. For instance, men with disabilities are more likely to be employed (12.9 percent) than women with disabilities (5.3 percent). Men with disabilities are also more likely to be self-employed than their women counterparts while women with disabilities are more engaged in domestic work. In total, for economically active, 18.7 percent of male and 9.5 percent of female population with disabilities are economically active as compared to 74.5 percent and 58.1 percent of the counterparts without disabilities respectively.

Table 6 1: Employment status for population 15 years and above with and without disability

Background characteristics	Total	Economically Active						Not Economically Active					
		Total	Employer	Self employed	Employee	Subsistence	Unemployed	Total	Unpaid family worker	Students	No work/ volunteer	Retired	Unable to work
With disability													
Total	**382**	**12.8**	**0.0**	**2.4**	**8.1**	**1.6**	**0.8**	**87.2**	**7.1**	**1.8**	**4.5**	**42.4**	**31.4**
Sex													
Male	139	18.7	0.0	3.6	12.9	1.4	0.8	81.3	2.9	1.4	5.0	36.0	36.0
Female	243	9.5	0.0	1.6	5.3	1.6	0.8	90.5	9.5	2.1	4.1	46.1	28.8
Age group													
5-17	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
18-49	73	27.4	0.0	2.7	23.3	0.0	1.4	72.6	2.7	6.8	4.1	0.0	58.9
50+	306	9.5	0.0	2.3	4.6	2.0	0.7	90.5	8.2	0.0	4.2	52.9	25.2
State													
Airai	62	14.5	0.0	6.5	6.5	1.6	0.0	85.5	11.3	1.6	6.5	37.1	29.0
Koror	210	11.9	0.0	1.9	8.1	0.5	1.4	88.1	5.2	2.4	4.3	46.2	30.0
Outlying States	12	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	83.3	8.3	0.0	0.0	8.3	66.7
East Babeldaob	73	13.7	0.0	1.4	6.8	5.5	0.0	86.3	6.8	0.0	4.1	42.5	32.9
West Babeldaob	25	12.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	88.0	12.0	4.0	4.0	40.0	28.0
Without disability													
Total	**13,651**	**67.0**	**1.2**	**2.2**	**61.2**	**1.2**	**1.3**	**33.0**	**10.2**	**10.2**	**3.0**	**8.7**	**0.8**
Sex													
Male	7,391	74.5	1.5	2.5	68.1	1.0	1.4	25.5	4.7	9.8	2.8	7.4	0.8
Female	6,260	58.1	0.9	1.8	53.1	1.3	1.1	41.9	16.8	10.8	3.3	10.2	0.8
Age group													
'5-17	728	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.1	98.4	2.6	94.2	1.4	0.0	0.1
18-49	8,606	77.6	1.1	1.5	72.9	0.6	1.5	22.4	10.1	8.3	3.3	0.1	0.6
50+	4,317	56.9	1.7	3.8	48.0	2.5	0.9	43.1	11.7	0.0	2.7	27.3	1.3
State grouping													
Airai	1,901	67.1	1.1	2.8	61.0	0.9	1.3	32.9	9.6	12.3	3.5	7.2	0.4
Koror	9,213	68.8	1.3	1.8	64.0	0.6	1.2	31.2	9.4	10.0	3.0	8.0	0.8
Outlying States	514	61.7	1.8	1.4	54.7	1.0	2.9	38.3	13.2	2.3	6.4	15.4	1.0
East Babeldaob	1,175	58.6	0.4	4.3	47.7	5.3	0.9	41.4	12.9	11.7	1.9	13.7	1.2
West Babeldaob	848	61.7	1.5	2.2	53.8	2.4	1.8	38.3	15.2	10.6	2.1	8.6	1.8

23

6.2 Employment status of household head

The census definition for a 'head of household' is someone responsible for decision making in the household including providing for the welfare of household members. However, during enumeration for cultural reasons some households identified the most elderly person in the household as the head.

Table 6.2 and Figure 6.2 summarises the employment status of the household head in Palau. Out of the 4955 total household heads in Palau, 154 (3 percent) are living with disabilities. The majority of household heads with disabilities are not economically active (84.4 percent) as compared to those without disabilities. The differences are more pronounced between household heads with disabilities and those without disabilities who are employed. Very few household heads with disabilities are employed accounting for 8.4 percent as compared to more than half the total household heads being employed (66.7 percent). The results also indicate that more household heads with disabilities are more likely to be retired, engaged in unpaid family work, domestic duties and also more likely to be unable to work.

Male household heads with disabilities are more likely to be engaged and have a higher level of economic participation compared to female heads of households with disabilities. By age group, household heads with disabilities in the age group of 18-49 are more likely to be employed and self-employed as compared to those group in the older age group of 50 years and above.

Figure 6 2: Employment status of head of households with and without disability


24

Table 6.2: Employment status of head of households with and without disability

Background characteristics	Total	Economically Active						Not Economically Active					
		Total	Employer	Self employed	Employee	Subsistence	Unemployed	Total	Unpaid family worker	Student	Retired	No work/ volunteer	Unable to work
With disability													
Total	154	15.6	0.0	3.9	8.4	2.6	0.6	84.4	7.1	0.0	58.4	3.2	15.6
Sex													
Male	65	29.2	0.0	7.7	18.5	1.5	1.5	70.8	1.5	0.0	53.8	3.1	12.3
Female	89	5.6	0.0	1.1	1.1	3.4	0.0	94.4	11.2	0.0	61.8	3.4	18.0
Age group													
15-17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-49	10	80.0	0.0	20.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
50+	144	11.1	0.0	2.8	4.9	2.8	0.7	88.9	7.6	0.0	62.5	3.5	15.3
Without disability													
Total	4,801	75.4	2.2	3.7	66.7	1.6	1.1	24.6	5.2	0.4	16.7	1.8	0.5
Sex													
Male	3,372	80.8	2.6	4.1	71.6	1.3	1.1	19.2	3.1	0.4	13.8	1.5	0.4
Female	1,429	62.8	1.3	2.9	55.1	2.3	1.1	37.2	10.0	0.4	23.6	2.7	0.6
Age group													
15-17	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
18-49	2,354	94.1	2.4	2.8	86.9	0.7	1.3	5.9	3.6	0.6	0.1	1.5	0.2
50+	2,441	57.6	2.0	4.7	47.4	2.5	0.9	42.4	6.8	0.0	32.8	2.1	0.7

7

Reproductive health and disability status

This section compares aspects of reproductive health for persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities. The section reviews marital status before exploring reproductive health indicators like children ever born and age at first birth.

7.1 Marital status

Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1 show the current marital status of all women and men in Palau aged 15 years and above by disability status and by other social demographic characteristics. Overall, the data shows that more than half the total population in Palau are married (53.5 percent) and 34.7 percent are never married. From a total of 382 persons with disabilities aged 15 years and above, the majority are widowed (39 percent) or married (31 percent). From the total of 13,651 persons without disabilities, 54.2 percent are married and 35 percent have never married.

The data shows the differences when comparing the marital status of persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities. For instance, the majority of those with disabilities are widowed (39 percent) in comparison to only 6.7 percent of those without disabilities. The proportion of those with disabilities in the divorce category is also a little higher than those without disabilities. The results further show that women with disabilities are also more likely to be widowed compared to their men counterpart as well as to women without disabilities. A higher proportion of older women and men in the age 50 and over with disabilities are widowed (48 percent) compared to those without disabilities (15.9 percent).

Figure 7 1: Population aged 15 years and above with and without disability by marital status
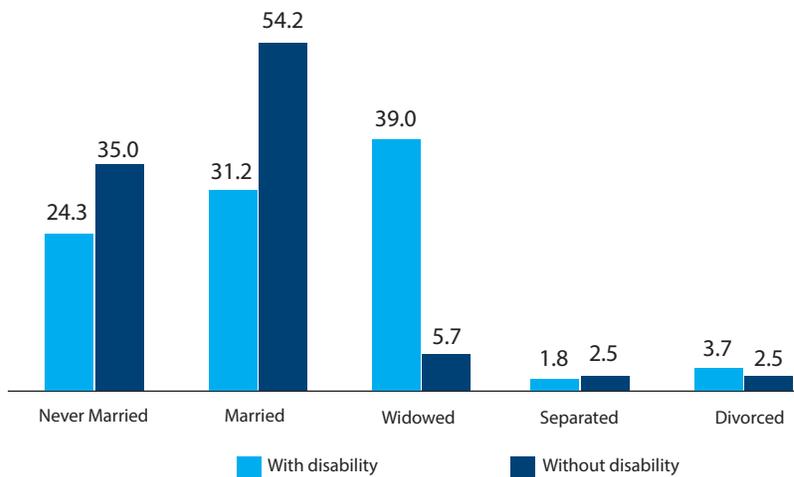

Table 7 1: Population aged 15 years and above with and without disability by marital status

Background characteristics	Total	Marital States				
		Never married	Married	Widowed	Separated	Divorced
Total	**14,033**	34.7	53.5	6.6	2.5	2.5
With disability						
Total	**382**	**24.3**	**31.2**	**39.0**	**1.8**	**3.7**
Sex						
Male	139	36.7	44.6	12.2	2.2	4.3
Female	243	17.3	23.5	54.3	1.6	3.3
Age group						
15 -17	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
18 - 49	73	63.0	30.1	2.7	2.7	1.4
50+	306	14.4	31.7	48.0	1.6	4.2
Without disability						
Total	**13,651**	**35.0**	**54.2**	**5.7**	**2.5**	**2.5**
Sex						
Male	7,391	38.1	55.9	2.0	2.3	1.7
Female	6,260	31.4	52.2	10.1	2.8	3.5
Age group						
15 -17	728	99.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
18 - 49	8,606	42.2	52.6	1.1	2.2	1.8
50+	4,317	10.0	66.2	15.9	3.6	4.3

7.2 Children ever born

Data on children ever born reveals that the total number of children to women over their entire reproductive lifespan has implications on a women's health and livelihoods. In Palau, reproductive health services are available free of charge. This section examines the total children ever born among women age 15 years and over by disability status.

There are 5,697 children ever born from a total of 2,363 female population 15 years and above in Palau which means an overall total average of 2.4 children ever born. Women with disabilities are having higher average number of children ever born (3.0) as compared to women without disabilities (2.4). Average births are more likely to be higher for women with disabilities in the age group 35-39 years.   Higher average of children ever born is particularly observed (Figure 7.2) among women with disabilities in the older age group compared to women without disabilities.

Figure 7 2: Female population aged 15 and older by number of children ever born (CEB) alive
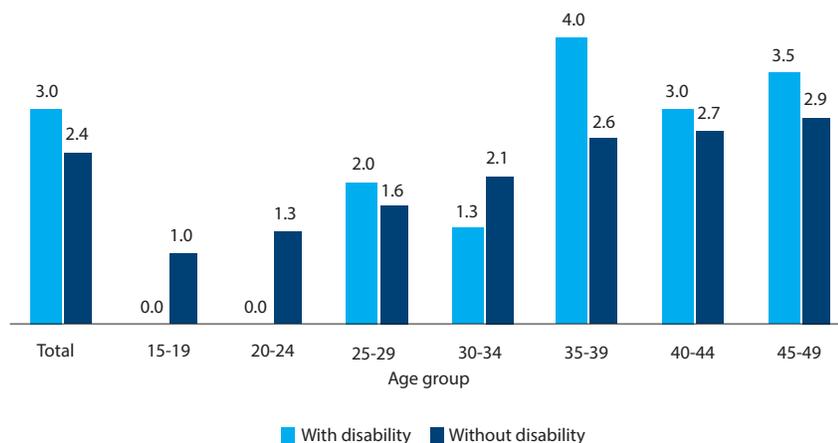
7.3 Age at first birth

The age at first birth has direct impact on the health of a woman. At a young age, risks of childbearing complications are high and is amongst the main causes of death in women. Data on age at first birth is examined across women with and without disabilities.

The results show that the median age at first birth in Palau is 22 years. Women with disabilities are more likely to have given birth earlier with a median age at first birth of 20. Given earlier results from section 7.2, women with disabilities start child bearing early and end up giving birth to more children on average compared to women without disabilities.

8
Conclusions

This is the first disability report for Palau. The results calls for policy, service and programmatic attention. The report shows critical evidence on the disparities and possible barriers affecting persons with disabilities.

Key finding are as follows:

Living condition

- There are no significant disparities between the living conditions of persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities.

- The analysis could not ascertain the accessibility of the available services for persons with disabilities i.e accessible water and sanitation facilities.

- The data suggest that persons with disabilities are more likely to be found in poor households.

Education

- Persons with disabilities are less likely to acquire education at the same level with their counterparts without disabilities.

- Persons with disabilities in the Outlying States attain primary school level and often fail to proceed to secondary school as access to services requires relocating to Koror.

- Differentials are apparent for the age group 18-49 years when it comes to higher education.

- About half of the population with disabilities are able to read and write compared to almost all persons without disabilities who can read and write.

Employment

- The lack of education opportunities is reflected in the lower labor force participation among persons with disabilities. Only one in ten persons with disabilities are economically active.

29

- The majority of persons with disabilities found in census of 2015 are not economically active. More than 4 in 10 persons with disabilities are retired while 3 in 10 are unable to work.

- Majority of heads of households with disabilities are not economical active.

Health

- Women with disabilities tend to start child bearing earlier than their counterparts without disabilities. The median age of first birth is 20 for women with disabilities compared to 22 for women without disabilities aged 15 to 49 years.

- On average, women with disabilities tend to have more children ever born.

8.1 Policy implications and recommendations

While this is the first report of its kind in Palau, further studies are required to understand the disparities and barriers faced by persons with disabilities in Palau. Such studies could utilize improved tools on collecting disability data on children. Specialized surveys on disability could help to provide an in depth understanding of the living conditions of persons with disabilities.

Key policy implications and recommendations that can be drawn from this analysis are as follows:

Living condition

- The Government of Palau is commended for having in place social assistance programmes to ensure the minimum standard of living for the most disadvantaged. These include: a Lifeline Electric, Water and Sewer subsidy for low income households (60 households) and No Income Assistance Programme (US$100, 4 households). Government is encouraged to continue reviewing the programmes and ensure the needy are benefiting.

Education

- A review of existing policies on special education is needed to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to education services. Specifically, inclusion of children experiencing difficulties in mobility and motor skills to access transportation and physiotherapy services as well as the provision of sign language interpreters people with hearing impairments and braille for children who are visually impaired.

- To provide more adequate services and opportunities for further education for students with IEP diplomas.

- While there is provision for free compulsory education for all, persons with disabilities have opportunity costs such as cost of transportation and related accommodation costs, particularly those in the Outlying States where there are hindrances in accessing their right to the free service. It is important to

put in place supportive and inclusive policies that will enable persons with disabilities to continue their education beyond primary school.

Employment

- Palau is commended for having career guidance from primary school. However, the Government is encouraged to put in place mechanisms to ensure opportunities are available for all to pursue their careers.

- Palau is also commended for having social assistance programmes for persons with disabilities who are unable to work to support themselves. In particular, the recent revision of the monthly stipends to US$100 for the homebound and US$70 for those using wheelchair or who cannot see at all.

- The Government is encouraged to harmonize the different social assistance programmes to ensure persons with disabilities are adequately covered by the various support services.

Health

- Further studies are required on reproductive health services such as access and education awareness to contraceptives for persons with disabilities

- The Government is commended for putting in place free health insurance support for citizens over 60 years old including those with disabilities. The Government is encouraged to continue improving access to health services including assistive technology.

References

Miller K, Mont D, Maitland A, Altman B, and Madans J., 'Results of a cross-national structured cognitive interviewing protocol to test measures of disability', *Quality and Quantity,* vol. 45, issue 4, June 2011, pp. 801–815.

Washington Group on Disability, 'The Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability', 2006. Accessible at: http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Washington-Group-Short-Set-of-Questions-on-Disability.pdf

Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 'Understanding and Interpreting Disability as Measured using the WG Short Set of Questions', 20 April 2009. Accessible at: http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/interpreting_disability.pdf.

World Health Organization, *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health Children and Youth Version*, WHO, Geneva, 2007. Accessible at: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/43737/1/9789241547321_eng.pdf.