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SAFE WORKPLACE DISABILITY INCLUSION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Gaza Society for Sustainable Agriculture and Friendly Environment (SAFE) recognizes that inclusion of persons with disabilities is not only a legal obligation under the Palestinian Disability Law (No. 4 of 2000) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), but also vital to our mission. SAFE commits to building a work environment in which barriers—physical, digital, procedural, and attitudinal—are systematically identified and removed, so that every team member can contribute fully, safely, and with dignity.

2. SCOPE

Applies to all SAFE employees, interns, volunteers, contractors and visitors at all offices, field sites and events. Covers every stage of employment life-cycle: recruitment, onboarding, performance management, career development, retention, separation, and emergency response.

3. PRINCIPLES & COMMITMENTS

- A. **Dignity and Respect:** We honor each person's worth and autonomy. Accessibility is not charity: it is our collective responsibility.
- B. **Full Participation & Empowerment:** Staff with disabilities will co-design accommodations, policies, and capacity-building activities.
- C. **Intersectionality & Equity:** We acknowledge that disability intersects with gender, age, socioeconomic status and conflict-related trauma—requiring tailored support.
- D. **Transparency & Accountability:** Senior management will report annually on disability inclusion targets, budget spent on accommodations, and feedback from staff.

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Disability** (CRPD): Long-term impairments which, interacting with barriers, hinder equal societal participation.
- **Barriers:** Physical (e.g. broken ramps), digital (unreadable PDFs), attitudinal (harassment), procedural (inflexible schedules), communication (no sign language).

5. GOVERNANCE & OVERSIGHT

- **Executive Sponsor:** SAFE Director ensures policy prioritization, resource allocation, and Executive Team endorsement.
- **Disability Inclusion Committee (DIC):** Cross-departmental group including at least two staff with disabilities, meets quarterly to review accommodations, conduct accessibility audits, and escalate systemic issues.
- **HR Focal Point:** Coordinates individual requests, maintains confidential records, and produces bi-annual inclusion reports for DIC.

6. RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING

- A. **Inclusive Job Design:** Every vacancy advert must include a “SAFE welcomes applications from persons with disabilities” statement; list essential vs. non-essential functions.
- B. **Accessible Application:** Online forms in Arabic and English; available upon request in large-print, Braille, or audio; telephone/video applications possible for those without reliable internet.
- C. **Interview Accommodations:** Offer sign-language interpreters, additional breaks for fatigue management, flexible scheduling around medical appointments, or remote interviews where travel poses barriers.
- D. **Onboarding Assessment:** Within 30 days of joining, HR conducts an Accessibility Needs Assessment with the new hire to identify workspace, technology, transport, or PPE adaptations required.

7. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

- A. **Request Submission:** Employee completes a simple Accommodation Request Form (annexed) and meets privately with HR.
- B. **Assessment & Plan:** DIC and line manager jointly evaluate feasibility, cost, and timeline; develop a written Accommodation Plan with clear responsibilities and deadlines.
- C. **Implementation:** Facilities/M&E teams execute physical adaptations (e.g. repaired ramp, accessible restroom signage), IT team configures assistive software (screen-reader, voice-to-text).
- D. **Monitoring & Adjustment:** Quarterly check-ins for first year, then bi-annual reviews; plans updated as job duties change or new needs arise.

- E. **Appeal:** If an employee feels their request was unjustly denied, they may appeal directly to the Executive Sponsor; a response is due within 15 working days.

8. ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS & AUDITS

- **Physical Environment:** All SAFE offices and field posts must meet universal design guidelines—smooth ramps, handrails, wide doorways (minimum 90 cm), tactile signage in Arabic, safe evacuation routes for mobility-impaired staff.
- **Digital Platforms:** Websites, intranet, and shared documents must comply with WCAG 2.1 Level AA (e.g. alt text on images, keyboard navigation).
- **Quarterly Audits:** Conducted by DIC with external expert (local NGO partner specializing in disability rights) to score accessibility and track remediation progress. Audit reports are published internally and inform annual planning.

9. CAREER DEVELOPMENT & PERFORMANCE

- **Individual Development Plans:** All employees have IDPs; for those with disabilities, IDPs explicitly address accommodation needs for training (e.g. sign-language in workshops), career goals, and mentoring arrangements.
- **Promotion & Succession:** SAFE tracks the percentage of staff with disabilities in leadership pipelines; sets aspirational targets (e.g. 10 % of middle-management roles by 2027).
- **Performance Appraisals:** Managers evaluate both job performance and adherence to inclusion practices (e.g. supporting team members with disabilities).

10. TRAINING & AWARENESS

- A. **Orientation Module:** Mandatory for all new hires, covering SAFE's disability policy, local disability law, and respectful communication protocols.
- B. **Annual Refresher:** Interactive sessions (in-person or remote) including case studies drawn from Gaza context (e.g. field visits during movement restrictions).
- C. **Specialized Workshops:** For HR/Facilities/IT teams on technical accommodations, accessible document design, and trauma-informed approaches.

11. RETENTION, WELL-BEING & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- **Early Dialogue:** If an employee acquires a new disability (e.g. conflict-related injury), HR initiates a Retention Review within 10 days to explore continuity in role or redeployment options.

- **Peer Support:** Establish a “SAFE Allies” network where staff with and without disabilities meet monthly to share experiences and best practices.
- **Counselling Services:** Confidential access to a local psychologist trained in disability-related trauma; transport support provided when needed.

12. HARASSMENT, GRIEVANCE & INVESTIGATIONS

- **Zero Tolerance:** Any harassing conduct—jokes, exclusion, intimidation—triggers immediate investigation.
- **Confidential Reporting Channels:** Multiple channels (anonymous hotline, designated DIC members, direct email to Executive Sponsor).
- **Investigation Timeline:** Preliminary review within 5 working days; full resolution within 30 days.
- **Protection Against Retaliation:** Whistle-blowers and complainants are protected; violations lead to disciplinary actions up to termination.

13. INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- **Evacuation Plans:** Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for staff with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments.
- **Alert Systems:** Multi-modal alerts (audible sirens, SMS blasts, visual signals) to ensure that emergency warnings reach everyone.
- **Drills & Training:** Bi-annual drills including scenario for staff who require assistance; drills scheduled outside peak travel times given Gaza’s checkpoints and curfews.

14. PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Local Disability NGOs:** SAFE partners with the Palestinian Union of Persons with Disabilities to co-deliver training, share expertise, and refer candidates for employment.
- **Government Liaison:** Regular coordination with Ministry of Social Development to align SAFE’s workplace practices with evolving legislation and to tap into national disability support schemes.

15. MONITORING, REPORTING & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Percentage of roles advertised with inclusive language.

- Number and type of accommodations provided.
 - Employee satisfaction scores from staff with disabilities.
- **Annual Inclusion Report:** Publicly shared internally, summarizing achievements, challenges, and next year's action plan.
- **Budget Allocation:** SAFE commits at least 1 % of annual operating budget to disability inclusion measures (accommodations, training, audits).

16. CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION

- Medical and disability-related information is stored separately in encrypted HR files.
- Access limited to HR, DIC, and Executive Sponsor, strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- All records are retained and destroyed in compliance with Palestinian data protection guidelines.

17. REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be formally reviewed every 12 months by the Disability Inclusion Committee, incorporating feedback from staff surveys, audit findings, and changes in the legislative or security environment.