

National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) says seeing a person with a disability, particularly someone who crawls for mobility, without a wheelchair represents a failure by local authorities or community members to report the need.

NCPD Executive Secretary Emmanuel Ndayisaba made the remarks Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2025, during a press briefing on preparations for the national Disability Week and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which will be marked Dec. 3 in Nyabihu District.

The weeklong activities will run from Nov. 26 to Dec. 3 and include the distribution of 372 wheelchairs and other assistive devices, including equipment for 272 students with disabilities. Ndayisaba said each district is expected to distribute at least 250 wheelchairs annually.

“If you see someone crawling who should have a wheelchair, that is negligence,” Ndayisaba said. “A U.S.-based partner has committed to provide all the wheelchairs the country needs. If someone lacks a wheelchair, it means someone failed to report the issue so we could find a solution.”

He said NCPD works with the Rwanda Biomedical Centre, district pharmacies, NUDOR, World Vision and Save the Children to ensure proper assessment before devices are issued.

Last year, the government allocated 53 billion Rwandan francs to support people with disabilities using community health insurance. The funds expanded coverage for cancer drugs, prosthetics, orthotics and other essential medicines.

Rwanda has 562,184 people with disabilities, according to NCPD data. Women account for 55.2 percent and men 44.5 percent. Another 0.3 percent lack complete socioeconomic information.

This year’s theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is **“Promoting an Inclusive Society for Persons with Disabilities to Enhance Well-being.”**

Ndayisaba also revealed that 34,800 Rwandans with disabilities over age 18 do not have national identification cards because many were never registered at birth. He attributed this to stigma and past beliefs that children born with disabilities could not contribute to society.

“We are working with NIDA to register them, and many have already begun the photo process,” he said.

Disability Week will feature education-focused discussions on Nov. 26–27 and employment-related dialogues on Nov. 28 aimed at encouraging public and private employers to hire people with disabilities. A national community service event is planned for Nov. 29, followed by a visit to Nyabihu School for the Deaf.

Emile Vuningabo of NUDOR said the visit is part of ongoing efforts to increase the number of interpreters serving people with complex disabilities, including those who are deafblind, especially outside Kigali.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities will conclude the week on Dec. 3 in Nyabihu District, where prosthetic and orthotic devices will be distributed. Rwanda’s 2022 census reported that 391,775 people — representing 3.4 percent of the population aged 5 and above — live with disabilities.