

Policy influencing 2025 annual summary

Key achievements in East, Central and
Southern Africa

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Introduction

This report is a summary of the key successes in policy influencing achieved across the East, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) region in 2024, led by the country offices in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with support from the Policy and Global Advocacy team, Campaigns team, Global Technical Leads and other teams. The report aims to provide an overview of the most significant achievements, although it is not exhaustive and there are many other examples of progress made towards Sightsavers' policy influencing goals which have not been included in the interests of keeping the summary at a manageable length. Sightsavers recognises that policy change requires long-term investment from multiple actors including government, civil society and

international NGO partners, and it is important to note that these achievements are not solely attributed to the input of Sightsavers. For a comprehensive overview of Sightsavers' work on policy influencing please refer to the [Policy influencing data hub](#).

Key achievements in 2025

- Approval of the Persons with Disabilities Act in Kenya
- Development and implementation of the national eye care strategy in Tanzania
- Finalisation of an inclusive Early Childhood Development policy in Malawi
- Revision to the labour law in Mozambique
- Enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act in Zimbabwe
- Revision to the Constituency Development Fund policy to cover assistive devices in Zambia

Kenya

Approval of the Persons with Disabilities Act

Following many years of advocacy and policy influencing work from Sightsavers and partner organisations, the Persons with Disabilities Act was approved by the President of Kenya in May 2025. Sightsavers collaborated with the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee to advocate for the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025, which repealed the outdated Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003. The new legislation aligns Kenya's legal framework with Article 54 of the Constitution and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). It places a clear obligation on the State to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities.

Domestication of disability inclusive policies in Homa Bay county

In 2025, through sustained advocacy and technical engagement, Sightsavers supported the development of a draft Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) policy in Homa Bay county, to domesticate the national level ECDE policy. Beyond this, a county disability bill was developed. These documents underwent public consultation, stakeholder validation, and consultations with county assembly leadership and the county executive with support from Sightsavers. The ECDE policy is now awaiting cabinet approval, while the disability bill is set to move to the county assembly for enactment. Once operational, these frameworks will deliver transformative benefits for children with disabilities and their families. Medical assessments necessary for registration with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities will become free of charge in government health facilities, removing a major financial barrier. Furthermore, assessment services will be decentralised to each of the 11 sub-county health facilities, replacing the previous system where only two facilities served

the entire county. In addition, therapy services for children with multisensory impairments will be provided free of charge in county government facilities, ensuring access to essential rehabilitation support. The policy also guarantees support for all children in public ECDE centres, with additional allocations for learners with disabilities, promoting equity in resource distribution.

Development and implementation of trachoma transition plans

In 2025, Sightsavers continued to advocate for the development and implementation of trachoma transition plans. Over the past years, 12 councils have developed trachoma transition plans, and in 2025, Sightsavers supported 1 additional council in developing a transition plan. Transition plans set out governmental commitments to resources for NTD elimination, providing a useful entry point for Sightsavers and partners to advocate for investment in water, hygiene and infrastructure, and full implementation of the S-A-F-E (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial Cleanliness, Environmental Improvements) strategy at county level. This includes access to trachoma diagnosis, management of incident trachoma trichiasis (TT) cases by certified TT surgeons, procurement of generic azithromycin and continuous reporting of trachoma cases management information system. To enable to the collection and reporting of NTD data, more than 1,500 Community Health Promoters (CHPs) were trained on the DHIS-2 platform between 2024 and 2025.

Malawi

Finalisation of an inclusive Early Childhood Development policy

The Early Childhood Development and Education policy was finalised in 2025. Sightsavers has been involved throughout the process, providing technical and financial assistance, facilitating the input of OPDs, and ensuring that the policy includes provisions for children with disabilities to access inclusive education.

Domestication of the African Disability Protocol

Following many years of advocacy from Sightsavers and partner organisations, Malawi ratified the African Disability Protocol (ADP) in 2023. In 2025, with funding from the European Union, Sightsavers advocated for the domestication of the African Disability Protocol. In preparation for the domestication, OPDs and allied CSOs were trained on advocacy and influencing so that they are able to promote inclusive policies. During a workshop facilitated by Sightsavers, a number of domestication pathways were discussed and agreed upon, including domestication through review of legislation, domestication through Acts of the Parliament, and domestication through other implementation measures such as policy reviews.

Mozambique

Revision to the labour law

A significant milestone was reached in 2025 with the revision of the Labour Law (Law No. 13/2023), which promotes fair conditions for all workers, including measures to protect and promote employment for people with disabilities. This legislation obliges companies to guarantee accessibility, non-discrimination, and training opportunities, aligning with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Beyond this, Sightsavers provided training on advocacy to the federation of OPDs (FAMOD), and provided technical assistance in the development of instruments for the implementation of the Disability Law, which came into force in early 2025. Sightsavers engaged with government stakeholders to highlight the need for a robust guideline and facilitated the input of persons with disabilities in the drafting process.

Tanzania

Development and implementation of the national eye care strategy

Tanzania made substantial progress in strengthening the policy environment for eye health through the development and launch of the National Eye Health Strategic Plan (NEHSP) IV 2024–2026, which was officially completed and launched in mid-2025. The new plan was developed following an evaluation of NEHSP III (2018–2022) and addresses gaps in leadership, financing, data systems, service delivery, and human resources in the eye health sector. The plan aligns with national health sector reforms and global eye health targets, providing a clear framework for implementation across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Sightsavers was involved throughout the development process, providing technical and financial support. Sightsavers played a central role in convening national advocacy and planning meetings, providing evidence from regional budget analyses, and supporting government stakeholders to recognise persistent gaps in funding, supply chain systems, and primary eye care integration.

Development of the National Disability Policy

While the National Disability Policy has yet been formally adopted, significant progress was made in 2025. The National Disability Policy has reached its final stage and is awaiting formal sign-off, marking a critical milestone that demonstrates strong national commitment to disability inclusion and sets the foundation for transformative change once endorsed. Sightsavers played a key role by providing technical expertise, financial support, and ensuring the participation of people with disabilities, while consistently advocating for the integration of initiatives such as health equity, inclusive education, inclusive health, and components of the African Disability Protocol. Partners including OPDs, WHO, UNICEF, and ministries led by the Prime Minister's Office for Youth, Labour, Employment and Persons

with Disabilities (PMO-LYED) were instrumental in taking forward the development of the policy. Formal adoption was delayed due to the 2025 elections, which shifted government priorities, but the focus for 2026 will be on securing final approval, strengthening collaboration with stakeholders, and supporting effective implementation of the policy.

Integration of NTDs within Council Comprehensive Health Plans

Progress was made towards integrating Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) into district health planning and budgeting. The Ministry of Health, together with the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), issued a circular directing districts to allocate specific funding for NTD interventions, especially in areas where these diseases are most prevalent. This is a significant achievement as it embeds NTD services into district health budgets, paving the way for sustainable financing and stronger service delivery. Sightsavers contributed by supporting partners' planning sessions with district NTD coordinators, helping them understand budgeting processes and identify opportunities to cover NTDs within the Council Comprehensive Health Plans (CCHP). In 2026, the focus will be on monitoring how districts implement the circular and continuing advocacy to ensure NTDs remain a priority in both district and national health strategies.

Uganda

Development of guidelines for reasonable accommodation in the workplace

In its efforts to promote economic empowerment for persons with disabilities, Sightsavers is advocating for the development of guidelines to ensure reasonable accommodation in the workplace. As there is already a Persons with Disabilities Act, this will be an instrument to ensure its operationalisation. Working with the National Union for Persons with Disabilities in Uganda (NUDIPU), Sightsavers helped to identify gaps in reasonable accommodation. In some, employers view this as an extra cost, such as the provision of personal assistants for staff with disabilities. Sightsavers is playing a role in developing advocacy strategies to address the concerns of employers and providing technical and financial assistance to NUDIPU. The design of the guidelines will continue in 2026, as well as engagement with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, to encourage its support.

Representation of youth with disabilities on Parish Development Committees

In 2025, Sightsavers continued to provide capacity building to OPDs and to advocate for the representation of youth with disabilities on parish development committees (PDCs). These committees were introduced under the third National Development Plan, as the lowest level of government, to oversee the delivery of services at parish level. Previously, services were delivered at district level, but government funding is now targeted at parish level, with parish development committees overseeing the budget. There are quotas on committees, with 30%

of seats reserved for women, 30% for youth, as well as allocations for other special interest groups. Youth with disabilities are represented on several PDCs, and in 2025, the youth wings managed to influence the change in the disability representation on the PDCs and participated in the local government budget conferences.

Zambia

Revision to the Constituency Development Fund policy to cover assistive devices

In 2025, Sightsavers engaged with local councils to identify funding mechanisms to promote inclusive education for children with disabilities. Some councils had been unaware of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), which can be allocated for a range of purposes. Following advocacy from Sightsavers and OPD partners, the policy for the disbursement of the CDF was revised, so that it can be used for the provision of assistive devices for learners with disabilities. Sightsavers also supported the formation of an association of organisations for persons with disabilities at provincial level, to advocate for the provision of inclusive education at local level. The association successfully applied for scholarships for 18 learners with disabilities through the CDF.

Zimbabwe

Enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Bill

The Persons with Disabilities Act in Zimbabwe was passed in November 2025 and is a landmark piece of legislation designed to protect the rights of people with disabilities. It outlaws discrimination, guarantees access to public spaces and services, and replaces the outdated 1992 Disabled Persons Act, aligning with international standards like the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities. Sightsavers has been advocating for the bill to be passed for many years and has been involved throughout the process, facilitating input from OPDs and providing technical assistance.

Validation of the Constitution of the Parliamentary Disability Caucus

In 2025, Sightsavers continued to provide technical assistance to the parliamentary caucus on disability and supported the validation of the caucus' constitution. A meeting convened 37 Members of Parliament, including the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Disability Caucus, Senators representing persons with disabilities in the Upper House, and members from both the National Assembly and Senate with a shared interest in disability inclusion. Representatives from OPD partners under the Equal Zimbabwe Campaign also participated, reflecting strong multi-stakeholder collaboration and commitment to inclusive governance. Key agenda items included the presentation and review of the draft Constitution of the Parliamentary Disability Caucus, plenary discussions to validate proposed provisions, and

reflections on Parliament's role in promoting disability-inclusive legislation, oversight, and representation. The Constitution was formally validated by consensus, and participants commended the inclusive and participatory nature of the process. Members reaffirmed their commitment to advancing disability rights and inclusion in national policy and legislative frameworks, and the meeting further strengthened collaboration between parliament, OPDs, and civil society partners.

Domestication of the African Disability Protocol

Zimbabwe ratified the African Disability Protocol (ADP) in 2024. In 2025, Sightsavers continued to advocate for the implementation of the ADP, which will involve revisions to other legislation. Sightsavers provided technical assistance in policy analysis, to assess how instruments such as the Health Act and the National Disability Policy would need to be revised in line with the ADP. Beyond this, Sightsavers supported OPDs, including the umbrella bodies National Association for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) and Federation of OPDs in Zimbabwe (FODPZ) in developing requests to the government through targeted messaging on the implementation of the ADP.