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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the  
Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of  
Disabled Persons, 2003-2012**

29 October-2 November 2012  
Incheon, Republic of Korea

**Reports and resolutions pertaining to the implementation  
of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons,  
2003-2012**

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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**  
Committee on Social Development

**Second session**

Bangkok, 19-21 October 2010

**Report of the Committee on Social Development on its  
second session, 19-21 October 2010**

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**I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to  
its attention**

**A. Recommendations**

**New decade**

1. The Committee recommends to the Commission, at its sixty-eighth session, that a new decade to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, 2013-2022, be proclaimed.

2. The Committee requests ESCAP to develop a proposal, in cooperation with member States, for the establishment of a regional multi-donor fund to broaden support for the implementation of a new decade.

### **Draft resolution on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP**

3. The Committee recommends that the draft resolution on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP be submitted to the secretariat for further consideration by the informal working group on draft resolutions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission prior to formal submission to the Commission, at its sixty-seventh session, for consideration.

### **Priorities for ESCAP follow-up**

4. The Committee strongly supports the regional campaign to “Make the Right Real” for accelerating the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup> in Asia and the Pacific and recommends that concerted efforts be made by ESCAP and all other stakeholders for the success of the campaign.

5. The Committee calls upon ESCAP to continue its work on analysing, documenting and disseminating good practices on social protection in Asia and the Pacific.

6. The Committee requests ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in protecting the rights of women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, and children.

7. The Committee calls upon ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in improving accessibility to the built environment, transportation, information and services for persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to improve access to information, services and facilities for persons with disabilities on the ESCAP premises. The Committee also requests ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in harmonizing national laws and policies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

8. Furthermore, the Committee requests ESCAP to strengthen efforts to address data gaps related to persons with disabilities and to analyse and promote greater awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities, including those with psycho-social disabilities, those residing in rural, remote and poverty-stricken areas, as well as women and children with disabilities.

9. The Committee endorses the outputs, as reflected under section E on “Consideration of future programme focus” of the report,<sup>2</sup> for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.

## **B. Decisions**

### **Adoption of the report**

10. The Committee adopts the report on its second session on 21 October 2010 for submission to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex.

<sup>2</sup> See paras. 58-67.

**Date of the third session of the Committee**

11. The Committee decides that its third session will be held in 2014.

**II. Proceedings**

**A. Review of regional trends and emerging issues in the field of social development, particularly social protection for the most vulnerable social groups**

12. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Regional trends and emerging issues in the field of social development, particularly social protection for the most vulnerable social groups” (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/1).

13. The following delegations made statements during the Committee discussion under agenda item 4: China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

14. The Committee recognized the role of ESCAP in facilitating the exchange of information and experiences among member States and in promoting social development. During the deliberations, delegations shared practices and experiences in the development and implementation of social protection measures. Some delegations informed the Committee of their respective national efforts on the establishment of more comprehensive systems of social protection through the development of road maps and multi-year action plans that facilitated coordination across ministries. Those road maps, with specific objectives, outcomes and action plans, were implemented by newly-established social welfare ministries or councils.

15. One delegation shared its experience concerning a comprehensive approach that aligned social protection measures with other economic and social development policies. This approach was integrated within an overall strategy that combined income-generation measures with more traditional social safety net measures, including the provision of income support, shelter, health care and subsidized basic services for vulnerable groups, such as the poor, persons with disabilities, older persons and children.

16. Another delegation informed the Committee of its country experience in facilitating coordination among ministries through the use of electronic voucher systems which managed the identification of beneficiaries and provided benefits and services, including child care subsidies, long-term care services and assistive devices for the mobility of persons with disabilities.

17. Some delegations indicated that their respective Governments had taken measures to create a more enabling institutional environment. Those measures included changes made to laws on citizenship, strategies to facilitate access to justice and to promote more participation in decision-making, as well as better dissemination of information to citizens on laws, related rights and public complaint mechanisms.

18. Several delegations stressed the importance of providing social protection for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal achievement. They informed the Committee that they had developed policies and programmes to meet the particular needs and rights of vulnerable groups, including the poor, older persons, children, persons with disabilities and people living in rural and remote areas. In some cases, those policies had been implemented by multiple

ministries within the framework of a single national comprehensive law. Measures taken ranged from cash benefits, subsidized basic services and skills development to broader income generation programmes.

19. The Committee provided guidance on the programme of work on social development within the 2012-2013 strategic framework of ESCAP. To facilitate further exchange on experiences and lessons learned with the development and implementation of social protection systems, the Committee called upon ESCAP to continue its work on analyzing, documenting and disseminating good practices on social protection in Asia-Pacific.

20. The Committee called upon ESCAP to further promote regional cooperation in protecting the rights of women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, and children.

21. The Committee requested ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in improving accessibility to the built environment, transportation, information and services for persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to improve access to information, services and facilities for persons with disabilities on the ESCAP premises. In that regard, efforts to improve accessibility must take into account, to the greatest extent possible, internationally-recognized accessibility standards. The Committee also requested ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in harmonizing national laws and policies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

22. Furthermore, the Committee requested ESCAP to strengthen efforts to address data gaps related to persons with disabilities and to analyse and promote greater awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities, including those with psycho-social disabilities, those residing in rural, remote and poverty-stricken areas, as well as women and children with disabilities.

23. One delegation expressed its view that ESCAP should address child labour and child abuse issues. Another delegation called upon ESCAP to consider promoting a human security approach as the underlying conceptual framework for social protection, taking into account General Assembly resolution 60/1 on the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

24. The Committee commended the secretariat for the quality and timeliness of the documentation prepared for the session.

## **B. Thematic focus: Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific**

25. The Committee had before it the document entitled "Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific" (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/2).

26. The following delegations made statements during the Committee discussion under agenda item 5: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Myanmar; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

27. The document was introduced by a resource person with a disability, Ms. Judy Wee, an expert on promoting barrier-free access.

28. The Committee's attention was drawn to the concepts of mainstreaming and inclusive development as a part of the Biwako Millennium Framework for

Action;<sup>3</sup> these were subsequently reinforced by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

29. The Committee noted that mainstreaming had to be a part of all policies and should reflect the voices of persons with disabilities. For this, it was important to involve persons with disabilities from diverse backgrounds at all stages of policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Mainstreaming would lead to the stronger inclusion, empowerment and equality of persons with disabilities. The Committee noted key areas for mainstreaming such as the provision of accessibility to the built environment through universal design features, as well as to information and communications technologies, particularly in rural and remote areas.

30. Furthermore, the Committee emphasized that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals required the mainstreaming of disability, including measures for its prevention, in all aspects of the development agenda, including in country progress reporting. That, in turn, required improvement in the collection, analysis and dissemination of disability data.

31. Many delegations underscored the importance of developing a constructive dialogue on mainstreaming to share experiences and good practices, including in areas such as legislative, policy and programme development in Asia-Pacific. Delegations exchanged experiences on the following: the importance of legislative reviews to ensure the consistency of laws across all sectors; the development of specific policies to address mainstreaming across sectors and within specific sectors, particularly education and employment.

32. The Committee stressed the importance of moving away from a welfare approach to a rights-based one. Some delegations informed the Committee of effective experience in achieving that through the establishment of a central government focal point for disability and national coordination bodies in which persons with disabilities should have a clear voice. Key in that respect, the Committee noted, was support for the development of self-advocacy groups which played an important role in monitoring the implementation of policy and programmes. The Committee stressed the importance of undertaking more research to inform evidence-based and disability-inclusive policy development.

33. Delegations made a range of interventions on disability mainstreaming and shared good practices on accessible tourism; independent living concept; the development of building codes based on the universal design concept; prioritizing the region's 400 million persons with disabilities in business development; sports development through making facilities and programmes accessible; credit facilities to support employment and livelihood programmes; social participation; capacity-building and vocational training programmes, and employment promotion in the public and private sectors; social empowerment and advocacy programmes; pension and other social security assistance schemes; disaster preparedness planning; personal assistants; public advocacy to enhance awareness in the wider community, particularly on the need to improve accessibility to the built environment and information; inclusive education programmes and early detection and intervention measures; and the role of the media in promoting positive images and rights-based views of persons with disabilities. Committee members drew attention to the importance of interventions to address the rights and special needs of women and children with disabilities, particularly in the health and education sectors.

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<sup>3</sup> E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1 (see also Commission resolution 59/3).

34. Several delegations urged that national priorities and approaches concerning the mainstreaming of disability should be reflected in official development assistance (ODA) programmes, with good practice examples of inclusive ODA programmes and projects shared. On resource mobilization, one delegation indicated that national and regional standards and guidelines on mainstreaming disability should be consistent. Furthermore, partnerships between Governments and the United Nations for mainstreaming disability should be strengthened. Several delegations highlighted the need for more training on mainstreaming and rights-based policy and programme development within development cooperation programmes. One delegation expressed its view that there was a need for proactive promotion of inclusive development by ESCAP in partnership with other stakeholders.

35. The disability focal point of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat informed the Committee that progress had been made with the adoption by Pacific Leaders of the Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability, as well as through the introduction of rights-based disability and inclusive education policies by many Pacific island countries. However, resources needed to be mobilized for implementing such initiatives. The importance of a strong people-centred approach to the next decade as well as the need for greater emphasis on the social agenda and rights-based approaches were identified as priorities within the Pacific.

36. International non-governmental organizations called for enhanced efforts to mainstream the needs of special groups, including women and girls with disabilities, those with intellectual disabilities and older persons. The critical role played by self-help groups in mainstreaming, especially self-advocacy groups of persons with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities, was highlighted, as was the support of the Asia Pacific Development Centre on Disability for the establishment of such groups. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the major mainstreaming challenges that hearing-impaired persons in Asia and the Pacific faced due to the scarcity of sign language interpreters, and the small number of national and grass-roots level associations of hearing-impaired persons that could support the mainstreaming of this group. Furthermore, the needs of hearing-impaired persons tended not to be taken into account in capacity development for sports, recreation and tourism.

37. The Committee noted the secretariat document and affirmed the critical importance of mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific. It noted that the promotion of disability mainstreaming, an important focus of work in the region over the past 10 years, had assisted in removing attitudinal barriers, raising awareness and improving the visibility of persons with disabilities.

### **C. Review of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region**

38. The Committee had before it the document entitled "Report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region" (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/3) and (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/3/Corr.1).

39. The following delegations made statements during the Committee discussion under agenda item 6: Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

40. The agenda item was introduced by an expert on the rights of persons with disabilities, and a member-elect of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Hyung Shik Kim.

41. The Committee's attention was drawn to the achievements thus far of the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

42. The Committee noted that much remained to be done to ensure the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. It recognized that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2008, provided impetus to achieving those goals. The Convention clearly indicated that the wide-ranging provisions contained therein should be implemented to enable persons with disabilities to attain adequate living standards. The Committee further recognized that, for the rights of persons with disabilities to be realized through the effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention, Governments should accord it sustained attention.

43. The Committee expressed strong support for the regional campaign to "Make the Right Real" to accelerate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. It was recommended that concerted efforts be made by ESCAP and all other stakeholders for the success of the campaign.

44. Several delegations informed the Committee that their Governments were in the process of harmonizing national laws with the Convention. Furthermore, many delegations indicated that their Governments had already promulgated, or were in the process of working to promulgate, new anti-discrimination laws to better protect persons with disabilities and had taken initiatives to improve accessibility for their fuller participation. Such initiatives included the provision of specific benefits that addressed the need for rehabilitation and financial support, social insurance funds that promoted employment, concessionary public transport fares, accessibility, and independent living.

45. The Committee noted that commitment at the highest level to the Convention was evidenced by national committees or similar bodies being directly under the Prime Minister or overseen at the Ministerial level. The Committee also noted that such bodies were often informed by stakeholder consultations, including with disabled persons' organizations.

46. The Committee noted that, despite some progress in implementing the Convention, many challenges were still being faced in areas such as the

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