



**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

PIFS(09) FDMM.06

**FORUM DISABILITY MINISTERS' MEETING**

Rarotonga, Cook Islands  
21-23 October 2009

**SESSION EIGHT**

**INTEGRATING DISABILITIES INTO THE NATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS**

This paper was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

*Summary*

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol as well as the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific noted the importance of integrating disability, as an issue, in the national planning process so that the rights of persons with disabilities are recognized and their concerns are consistently and evenly addressed across all sectors of the economy. This requires consultations with persons with disabilities when developing national plans and budgets and strengthened coordination and collaboration amongst government ministries as well as with other stakeholders in civil society.



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#### SESSION EIGHT

### INTEGRATING DISABILITIES INTO THE NATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

#### Purpose

To review the reasons for and outcomes of mainstreaming the priorities of persons with disabilities, including the Articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in national plans.

#### Introduction

2. Since persons with disabilities have the same human rights as everyone else, disability, as an issue, needs to be integrated in national planning processes. Such integration could ensure that their rights are fully recognized and their concerns addressed, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations, New York<sup>1</sup> as well as the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific<sup>2</sup>. Their inclusion in the national planning process is therefore essential for development that is both sustainable and inclusive, as well as progress towards attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

3. In the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, State Parties reaffirmed “the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed their full enjoyment without discrimination (*para c*); emphasized, in its preamble, “the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development” (*para g*); and considered that “persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making

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<sup>1</sup> Convention was signed by Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu and ratified by Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands while the Protocol was ratified by Australia and the Cook Islands (Annex 1 and 2).

<sup>2</sup> Adopted at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, 25-28 October 2002, Otsu City, Shiga, Japan, organized by ESCAP.

processes about policies and programmes, including those directly concerning them” (*para. o*). Article 4 (*para. 3*) of the convention further notes that “in the development of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, State Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations”. Countries, including those which have yet to sign the Convention, need to consider how these Articles could be implemented within the framework of their national sustainable development strategies.

## **National Plans for Sustainable Development**

4. A national sustainable development strategy, as embodied in national plans, is a “tool for informed decision-making” since it provides a framework for addressing various national priorities by institutionalizing consultations and consensus building processes.<sup>3</sup> There are many reasons why national plans need to consider disability: First, integration of disability into national plans mainstreams disability by ensuring that the government, private sector and civil society fully recognize the rights of persons with disabilities. Second, it allocates financial and human resources so that services and access tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities can be provided. Third, integration of disability into national plans allows standardization of these services and better coordination of their delivery mechanisms. Yet, while most countries in the Pacific have developed national plans, only Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands actually refer to disability (Annex 1 and 2) in their respective plans and only one has identified disability as an issue to be mainstreamed across sectors (Box 1).

### **Box 1. Integration of disability into the national plan**

In its introduction, *The Strategic Development Plan, 2004-2023* of the Federated States of Micronesia states the need to “focus on the needs of disabled persons and their potential contributions to society if mainstreamed properly into development activities.”

One of its strategic goal focuses on the special economic, legal, political and social needs of disabled persons and persons with special needs. This goal sets three outcomes:

1. National policy on disabled persons and persons with special needs adopted;
2. Disabled persons and persons with special needs mainstreamed into public and private activities, programs and services; and
3. Positive contribution of disabled persons and persons with special needs recognized.

*Source:* Federated States of Micronesia. *Strategic Development Plan, 2004-2023. The Next 20 Years: Achieving Economic Growth and Self-reliance.*

<sup>3</sup> Department for Economic and Social Affairs. “Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium.” Outcome of the International Forum on National Sustainable Development Strategies, Accra, 7–9 November 2001, p. 1.

## ***Mainstreaming disability***

5. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve equality. Mainstreaming a *disability* perspective is the process of assessing the implications for persons with *disabilities* of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is the process for making the concerns and experiences of *persons with disabilities* an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that *persons with disabilities* benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.<sup>4</sup>

6. Since a national plan is a policy statement developed in consultation with stakeholders, integration of disability into the national plan ensures that the concerns of persons with disability can be addressed by different stakeholders across sectors. Consultation at various stages of the national planning cycle is critical for successful policy development, as well as strengthening national ownership and commitment for implementation. Consultations, especially at early stages of policy development, build partnerships with key stakeholders including government agencies, the private sector and civil society, which are essential for effective implementation of the key priorities of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

7. To ensure that disability is fully integrated in the national planning process and effectively considered across all sectors, a situation analysis of key economic, social and environmental issues should also be conducted. A situation analysis forms the foundation for the formulation of national goals as well as sector-specific objectives, and strategies for implementation. The situation analysis should be based on national disability-disaggregated census and survey data which, not only identifies the prevalence of different types of disability, but also the participation rate of persons with disabilities in various activities, and outline appropriate responses.

8. The development of a national plan through a consultative approach and conduct of a situation analysis with involvement of people with disabilities could lead to implementation of a “no-gap policy” which recognizes that since “no entity ... can achieve the goal of equality for persons with disabilities on its own,.... an interconnected network of actors is required to reach this goal.” “Different entities need to ensure that their respective spheres of responsibility provide the necessary opportunities and access to persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others. If any one element of the network fails in this obligation, persons are not able to reap the benefit from the other elements”.<sup>5</sup> In other words disability concerns must be consistently addressed in all sectoral policies.

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda” (E/CN.5/2008/6). Commission for Social Development, forty-sixth session, 6-15 February 2008, item 3c of the provisional agenda: Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Emerging issues. (p. 3).

<sup>5</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda” (E/CN.5/2008/6). Commission for Social Development, forty-sixth session, 6-15 February 2008, item 3c of the provisional agenda: Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: emerging issues. (p. 4) For example, in order for a person with

## *Allocating Resources*

9. Given the recognition of disability as a priority within their national plans, governments should ensure that their national budgets allocate financial and human resources needed to provide appropriate services. In developing countries, only a small fraction of people with disabilities currently have access to rehabilitation and other public health services, or receive compulsory education.<sup>6</sup> Early identification and intervention is furthermore essential since up to half of all disabilities are preventable and often linked to poverty. According to the World Health Organization, more than two-thirds of blindness in children is either preventable or treatable and half of disabling hearing impairment was preventable.<sup>7</sup>

10. The World Bank estimates the global annual economic costs of excluding people with disabilities due to exclusion from the labor market as US\$ 1.37 to US\$ 1.94 trillion. Among developed countries in the 1990's, the unemployment rates for adults with disabilities were 80 per cent higher than that of persons without a disability.<sup>8</sup> Such statistics underscore the need to allocate resources to cover some of the direct costs associated with disability in order to increase economic output.<sup>9</sup> To ensure that key interventions can be made, the government focal point for disability needs to ensure that the heads of ministries are aware of their responsibilities and allocate resources to interventions required for integration of people with disabilities into the labour force and to ensure equitable access to other livelihood earning opportunities, particularly in the informal sector.

11. To implement the “no gaps” approach, consultations with a range of Ministries, including the Ministry of Finance, are necessary. Like the planning process, the budget process should also involve persons with disabilities since “participatory budgeting ... has the potential to make governments more responsive to citizens’ needs and more accountable to them for performance in resource allocation and service delivery.... Citizen feedback would serve as an important influence in overcoming deficiencies in service delivery systems.”<sup>10</sup>

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disabilities using a wheelchair to access decent work, the person needs to be able to physically move in and out of his or her home, access public space and transportation as well as work facilities, in terms of both the built environment and its information and communications systems.

<sup>6</sup> Leandro Despouy. 1993. *Human Rights and Disabled Persons*. Geneva and New York: Centre for Human Rights and C. Lewis and S. Sygall (eds.). 1997. *Loud, Proud and Passionate: Including Women with Disabilities in International Development Programmes*, MIUSA.

<sup>7</sup> *The Prevention of Childhood Blindness*. WHO, Geneva, 1992. The main causes of blindness in children are corneal scarring due to vitamin A deficiency, measles, trachoma or neonatal conjunctivitis, cataracts, genetic causes and congenital abnormalities such as rubella.

<sup>8</sup> The World Bank. 2007. *Social Analysis and Disability, A Guidance Note Incorporating Disability-inclusive Development into Bank Supported Projects*, Social Analysis Sector Guidance Note Series, p 11.

<sup>9</sup> The costs associated with disability include (1) direct cost of treatment including the costs of travel and access; (2) indirect costs of those who are not directly affected, such as carers; and (3) opportunity costs of income foregone from incapacity. Department for International Development. 2000. *Disability, Poverty and Development*, United Kingdom, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Anwar Shah, “Demanding to be Serviced: Holding Governments to Account for Improved Access”, *Policy Research Working Paper 4643*, World Bank, p 7.

## **Improving Coordination and Standards**

12. Inclusion of disability in national plans could lead to better coordination and standardization of services. Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands have established national coordinating mechanisms for people with disabilities comprising representatives of key government agencies, the private sector, disabled persons organizations, NGOs and faith-based organizations (Annex 1 and 2). As a result of improved coordination between government ministries, schools (Ministry of Education) and community health clinics (Ministry of Health), more children with disability have access to schools and early intervention services. To be widely effective, governments also need to collaborate more closely with faith-based organizations and NGOs providing similar services.

13. Establishment of service provision standards and regular reviews of delivery mechanisms could also improve the quality and reach of services targeted towards persons with disabilities. As a general rule, costs can be minimized if the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in the planning stages. For example, inclusion of universal design principles in the planning stage of a new building is more cost-effective than retrofitting a completed building in order to make it accessible. Inclusion of early detection and intervention programmes as part of primary health care is also more cost-effective than providing remedial care.

## **Conclusions**

14. Inclusion of person's with disabilities in national plans recognizes their economic and social contribution. Social attitudes towards persons with disabilities limit their access to education, employment, decision-making and participation in public life. Since attitudes often present the greatest barrier, recognition of disability in national plans and implementation of inclusive sectoral policies could lead to reversal of these social norms. Such recognition is important since an inclusive society is one that enables all persons to contribute towards national development.

15. Implementation of regional and international commitments requires reiteration of these issues as priorities in national as well as sector-specific plans. The priorities outlined in the national plan should be reflected in sectoral, ministerial and community policies, priorities and plans. If disability is a priority and policies with clear goals, objectives and implementation plans have been approved, government agencies are more likely to fund these programmes. In line with the principle of country-owned development, development partners are also more likely to support the programmes developed in line with the priorities of national plans.

16. To ensure that the concerns of all are reflected in national priorities, governments should consult persons with disabilities in the development of national plans and budgets. Inclusion of people with disabilities in the national planning and budgeting process could lead to greater transparency and more effective realization of regional and international commitments. Secondly, governments should develop a "no gaps" approach through

reviewing policy and legislation, strengthening coordination and collaboration amongst government ministries as well as with other stakeholders in civil society, including disabled person's organization, non-governmental organizations, private sector employers, training organizations and faith-based organizations. Implementation of these commitments is ultimately based on the principle that people with disabilities have the same indivisible human rights as all other people.

### **Recommendations**

17. Ministers are invited to:

- (a) **support** the need for consultation persons with disabilities and related disabled persons organisations in the development of national plans and budgets; and
- (b) **consider** developing a “no gaps” approach to disability inclusive development through reviewing policy and legislation, strengthening coordination and collaboration amongst government ministries as well as with other stakeholders in civil society, including disabled persons' organization, non-governmental organizations, private sector employers, training organizations and faith-based organizations to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are consistently and evenly addressed across all sectors.

**Annex 1: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Rights-Based National Policies and Plans on Disability.**

ESCAP Members	Convention		Protocol		Passed Rights-Based National Policies	Included in National Plans	Comments	National Coordinating Mechanism
	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified				
Australia	30 Mar, 2007	17 Jul, 2008		21 Aug, 2009	Yes	N.A.		
Fiji					Yes	Yes	National Policy on Persons Living With Disabilities 2008-2018 passed.	The Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons established in 1994.
Kiribati					No	No	Draft policy being developed.	No
Marshall Islands (the)					No	No	Inclusive policy mentioned under special needs education, policy statements.	No
Micronesia (Federated States of)					Yes	Yes		No
New Zealand	30 Mar, 2007	25 Sep, 2008			Yes	N.A.		
Nauru					No	No	School support services to improve services to persons with disabilities mentioned in the education plan.	No

ESCAP Members	Convention		Protocol		Passed Rights-Based National Policies	Included in National Plans	Comments	National Coordinating Mechanism
	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified				
Palau					No	No	Need for accessibility at all schools mentioned under the School Administration and Management.	No
Papua New Guinea					Yes	Yes	Papua New Guinea National Disability Policy, along with the National Action Plan on Disability developed in 2005 and launched in 2009.	National Advisory Committee on Disability established with passing of new disability policy in June 2009.
Samoa					Yes	No	National disability policy passed in 2009. Disability addressed in Community Sector Plan (2008-12).	No
Solomon Islands	23 Sep, 2008				Yes	No	National policy prepared by the Ministry of Health through the Community Based Rehabilitation programme and draft legislation being developed.	No
Tonga	15 Nov, 2007				No	No		No

ESCAP Members	Convention		Protocol		Passed Rights-Based National Policies	Included in National Plans	Comments	National Coordinating Mechanism
	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified				
Tuvalu					No	No	Equity of access to healthcare services to persons with disabilities aimed.  Provision of special needs education for persons with disabilities with NGO support aimed in Education and Human Resources: Priorities and Strategies 2005-2015.	No
Vanuatu	17 May, 2007	23 Oct, 2008			Yes	Yes	National Disability Plan: 2007-2012 completed.	National Disability Committee established in 2006.

Source: United Nations. United Nations Enable: Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. Convention and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications. (URL: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/countries.asp?navid=12&pid=166>, as of 25 August 2009 and national sources.

**Annex 2: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Rights-Based National Policies and Plans on Disability in selected areas.**

ESCAP Associate Members	Convention		Protocol		Passed Rights-Based National Policies	Included in National Plans	Comments	National Coordinating Mechanism
	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified				
American Samoa					Yes			Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 applies.
Cook Islands		8 May, 2009		8 May, 2009	Yes	Yes	National disability policy and action plan developed in 2003.	The Cook Islands National Disability Council established in 2001.
Guam					Yes			Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 applies.
Niue					No	No	Community-based support for persons with disabilities exists.  Draft national policy on disability being developed.	
Northern Mariana Islands					Yes			Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 applies.

Source: United Nations. United Nations Enable: Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. Convention and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications. (URL: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/countries.asp?navid=12&pid=166>, as of 25 August 2009 and national sources.