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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Conference on the Capabilities and Needs of
Disabled Persons in the ESCWA Region
20-28 November 1989
Amman

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA
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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 31/123 of 16 December 1976, the General Assembly proclaimed the year 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. This marked one of the United Nations most successful international events. It was observed in all countries and generated world-wide awareness of the rights, capabilities and needs of disabled persons. For disabled persons themselves, it was a milestone in a long history of the struggle against discrimination and for equal rights. One important outcome of the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) was the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/53 of 3 December 1982. The World Programme of Action is based on the principles of human rights, full participation, self-determination, integration into society and equalization of opportunities. It contains a set of guidelines for national, regional and international action. It represents a joint effort of Governments, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to gain universal commitment to recognize the rights of disabled persons and to provide the services and opportunities for their full participation in society.

2. In adopting the World Programme of Action, the General Assembly also proclaimed the period of 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The Decade provides a time-frame for Governments to intensify their efforts to improve the living conditions of disabled citizens. It was recommended that monitoring and evaluation be carried out, at periodic intervals, at international and regional levels, as well as at the national level, in order to assess the situation of disabled persons and to measure development.

3. At the international level, the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at the Mid-Point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was convened by the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Meeting, which was held at Stockholm from 17 to 22 August 1987, recognized that the opportunities offered by the Decade of Disabled Persons to stimulate implementation of the World Programme of Action had not been fully exploited and that insufficient progress had been made throughout the world.

4. At the regional level, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Social Development, Population and Human Settlements Division, convened the 1st Meeting of the ESCWA Inter-Organizational Task Force on Disability.^{1/} The Meeting was held at Amman from 21 to 23 October 1987, where guidelines for future activities in the ESCWA region in the form

^{1/} The ESCWA Inter-Organizational Task Force on Disability is composed of representatives from the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), the Statistical Office of the United Nations Development of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

of a framework for regional activities were adopted. The establishment of the Task Force and its subsequent activities formed a major part of the work of the United Nations on disability issues in the region. These activities have a five-year span to coincide with the second half of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, which will end in 1992.

5. In the context of the Decade and the implementation of the World Programme of Action, ESCWA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development of Jordan, the Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind and the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), and with additional financial assistance from the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund and the Government of the Netherlands, organized the Conference on the Capabilities and Needs of Disabled Persons in the ESCWA Region. The Conference was held at Amman from 20 to 28 November 1989. As the Conference was conducted in both Arabic and English, simultaneous interpretations were available throughout the deliberations of the Conference.

6. Also, special attention was given to the full participation of disabled persons in the deliberations of the Conference. All Conference documents were produced in both Arabic and English Braille for the benefit of blind participants. In addition, Perkins Braille machines were made available during the Conference to permit blind participants to type their own notes. Sign language interpretations were made available to ensure the full participation of deaf persons in the substantive discussions.

7. The Conference was attended by some 200 Arab and international experts - some 40 of whom were themselves disabled - including experts participating in their personal capacity, representatives of Governments, representatives of Arab organizations, mass media experts and some eminent personalities from the region, in addition to representatives of members of the ESCWA Inter-Organizational Task Force on Disability and other United Nations agencies (see the list of participants in annex I). Special interest in the Conference was shown by the Government of Jordan at all levels. Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein attended the opening and delivered a major speech. Queen Noor also attended the final sports day for the disabled and officially closed the Conference. His Royal Highness Prince Raad Bin Zaid attended various sessions and all the side events and played a major role in organizing the sports competition for disabled athletes. His Excellency, Mr. Zuheir Melhas, the Minister of Health and Social Development, acted as the Honorary Chairman of the Conference and delivered a keynote speech to the participants.

8. The Conference was a follow-up to the 1st Meeting of the ESCWA Inter-Organizational Task Force. It was aimed at reviewing and revitalizing the framework for regional activities endorsed by 1st Meeting, evaluating the progress made, identifying obstacles encountered in the implementation of such activities and developing a new, concrete regional plan of action until the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and beyond. For this purpose, the scientific programme of the Conference was designed to cover virtually all the major aspects of disability. A number of related side events also took place during the Conference.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Organization of work

9. The Conference included the following major components:

(a) Substantive presentations and discussions in the form of formal working sessions covering major subjects on disability;

(b) Exhibition by 18 companies from various parts of the world of the latest technologies designed to serve disabled persons. The exhibition was opened on Monday, 20 November 1989, at 3 a.m. by His Excellency Mr. Zuheir Melhas, Minister of Health and Social Development. A demonstration was also given on the use of the equipment;

(c) A series of cultural and sports events for disabled persons showing the creativity and capabilities of disabled persons:

- (i) In collaboration with the Jordanian Union of Voluntary Organizations, ESCWA sponsored a concert performed by the Egyptian Al-Noor Wal Amal Orchestra (the internationally recognized orchestra composed of 40 blind women musicians). It was held at the Cultural Palace of the Hussein Sports City on Tuesday, 21 November 1989, at 7 p.m.;
- (ii) A sports competition for disabled persons was organized by ESCWA in collaboration with the Jordan Sports Federation for the Disabled. The participating teams came from Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and the Syrian Arab Republic. It was opened by His Royal Highness Prince Raad Bin Zaid, on Wednesday, 22 November 1989, at 3 p.m. and closed by Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein on Friday, 24 November 1989;
- (iii) The background music for the reception given by ESCWA was performed by a small band of blind girls from the Regional Centre for Blind Girls in Amman (the Centre is affiliated to the Middle East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind).

10. The Conference adopted the timetable contained in the programme of work (annex II). All of the main agenda items were discussed in the plenary sessions.

B. Attendance

11. The Conference was attended by representatives from the ESCWA Inter-Organizational Task Force on Disability, observers from other United Nations bodies and agencies, regional and international experts, participating in an individual capacity, representatives of Governments and Arab organizations, mass media experts and by a number of eminent personalities from the region. Some 40 of the participants were themselves disabled (see the list of participants in annex I).

C. Opening of the Conference

12. The Conference was opened by Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein. In her opening statement, Her Majesty reviewed several major social, environmental, cultural and medical causes of disability in the region. She stressed the increasing magnitude of this problem, referring to the disabled population projection of 20 million in the region by the year 2000. She suggested several measures to encourage the full participation of disabled persons in all aspects of society and to ensure the equalization of opportunities for them: including the adaptation of their physical and social environment to the needs of disabled persons; strengthening regional or subregional co-operation in order to prevent duplication and to allow the pooling of national capabilities and qualified staff; adaptation and transfer of appropriate technologies and the provision of training services for mothers and families of disabled persons. She also expressed a hope that fruitful recommendations would result from the deliberations of the Conference. She concluded her address by stating that she and His Majesty King Hussein were pleased to reaffirm their commitment to the very important goal of the equalization of opportunities for all citizens, including disabled persons.

13. During the opening session, the Assistant Director of the Special Groups Activities Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, addressed the Conference. He congratulated ESCWA on the active role it had played in promoting the goals of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. He urged the participants to devise new dynamic strategies to translate the goals of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons into real action.

14. During the opening session, the Executive Secretary of ESCWA addressed the Conference and welcomed the participants. In his statement, the Executive Secretary reviewed disability-related trends in the ESCWA region, together with their implications for overall socio-economic development. He stated that the extent of the problem of disability in the region had recently increased in size, as well as in scope, and that the prolonged armed conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war, the Lebanese conflict and the repeated Arab-Israeli wars and ruthless suppression of the recent intifadah in the occupied territories all added to the gravity of the problem. He added, on the basis of the regional framework for action which was endorsed by the 1st Meeting of the Inter-Organizational Task Force, there was an urgent need to formulate a new set of concrete action-oriented recommendations to be implemented by the Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international agencies during the remaining period of the United Nations Decade and beyond. Concluding his address, he expressed his gratitude to the host Government and donors, and urged participants to contribute to the success of the Conference through suggestions and proposals based on their varied and rich professional and personal experiences.

15. A message from His Royal Highness Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, President of AGFUND was delivered by Mr. Mohammad Ali el-Banna. In his message, Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud stated that AGFUND was pleased to contribute to the convening of this most important Conference. He added that it was imperative to strengthen regional co-operation in order to create suitable conditions to enable disabled persons in the region to lead a normal life. He stated that AGFUND would continue to support projects to help disabled persons in the region.

16. During the morning session of 22 November 1989, Her Excellency Ms. Ethel Wiklund, Ambassador, Special Advisor on Matters concerning Disabled Persons, addressed the Conference on behalf of the Government of Sweden. She said that His Excellency Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, Minister for Family Affairs and Matters concerning the Disabled and the Elderly of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in Sweden had declared that so far the Decade had not effectively improved the situation of disabled persons. She added that the Swedish Government considered a binding international rules necessary. Also, she confirmed her Government's wish to continue to participate in the global efforts to improve the situation of disabled persons.

17. During the same session, Mr. Salah Bourjini, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme, Iraq, and representative of UNDP at the Conference also made a brief keynote statement regarding the role of UNDP in the field of disability for countries of the ESCWA region.

18. During the morning session of 23 November 1989, the Palestinian delegate, Mr. Emad Tarawiyeh made a brief statement regarding the increased scope of disability-related problems caused by the Israeli suppression and intifadah against the occupation.

19. During the morning session of 26 November 1989, His Excellency, Mr. Zuheir Melhas, Minister of Health and Social Development made a brief keynote address. In his address, Mr. Melhas said that health services and national planning are the primary concern of disability-related issues in Jordan. He outlined the recent improvement regarding health related services and preventive measures of disability in Jordan.

D. Election of officers

20. The following persons were elected as officers of the Conference:

His Excellency Mr. Zuheir Melhas	Honorary chairman
Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghanim	Chairman
Mr. Fathi Abdul Rahim	Vice-Chairman
Ms. Munira al-Qatami	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Abdel Aziz al-Sartawi	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Othman Farraj	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Hashem al-Husseini	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Yousef al-Othaimen	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Suhail al-Ubaidy	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Mohamad al-Suqour	Vice-Chairman

Colonel Yousef el-Karmi	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Mohammad Ali el-Banna	Rapporteur
Mr. Riad Tabbarah	Executive Co-ordinator
Mr. Akil Akil	Secretary of the Conference

E. Adoption of the agenda

21. The Conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Overview of the problems and needs of the disabled: an international perspective.
2. Overview of the problems and needs of disabled persons: a regional perspective.
3. Vocational rehabilitation, employment and income maintenance.
4. Education and training.
5. Prevention, treatment and community-based rehabilitation (CBR).
6. Child disability prevention and rehabilitation.
7. Development of disability statistics in the region.
8. Social aspects of disabled persons in the ESCWA region.
9. Adaptation of physical and social environment to the conditions of the disabled.
10. Women and disability.
11. Introduction, adaptation and transfer of appropriate technologies in the ESCWA region.
12. Overview of country papers on disability issues (presentation of country papers and analysis).
13. The role of non-governmental organizations in the region (informal session).
14. The role of mass media in the field of disability (informal session).
15. Co-operation among the United Nations agencies in the ESCWA region (closed session).

F. Documentation

22. Thirty-three documents on the agenda items were prepared and made available in both English and Arabic, as well as in Braille. A complete set of documents in the most appropriate format was sent to each participant for his/her review and study prior to the Conference. The documents prepared for the Conference are listed in annex III. Additional documents on speeches and presentations were distributed to participants during the Conference, together with papers received during the Conference from various organizations and individuals. Several copies of the ESCWA data base on disability-related issues (e.g. the directory of experts, Arabic and English bibliographies, directory of institutions, indicators on disability issues) were also available for reference at the information desk throughout the Conference.

G. Proceedings

23. The scientific programme of the Conference covered almost all the major aspects of disability. In accordance with the timetable contained in the programme of work (annex II), several days were devoted to the presentation of substantive and technical papers. Each session was composed of a 30-minute presentation by the main speaker(s), brief comments on the presentation by a competent discussant chosen from among the participants and a minimum one-hour discussion on the subject (see the attached organization of sessions in annex IV). In the first few days, ESCWA Inter-Organizational Task Force members organized each session in its field of competence. CSDHA organized the session on the overview of the problems and needs of disabled persons: international perspective; WHO organized the session on prevention and treatment and community-based rehabilitation; UNESCO organized the session on the training and education of disabled persons; UNICEF organized the session on childhood disability prevention and rehabilitation; ILO organized the session on vocational rehabilitation and the employment of disabled persons; and the statistical office of DIESA organized the session on the development of disability statistics in the region. ESCWA organized the sessions on the overview of the problems and needs of disabled persons: regional perspective; the transfer of appropriate technology for disabled persons (round-table session); women and disability; social aspects of disabled persons in the ESCWA region; and the adaptation of the physical environment to the needs of disabled persons. The background papers were the result of studies carried out under the specific socio-economic and cultural conditions of the ESCWA region, therefore their findings were directly relevant to the situation in the ESCWA region. Regarding the round-table session on the transfer of appropriate technology for disabled persons, four technical background papers, including the ESCWA paper, were presented prior to the discussions.

24. In addition to the formal sessions, a number of informal sessions on various disability-related issues were held, e.g. the role of the mass media in the field of disability and co-ordination among NGOs of disabled persons and the closed session on co-ordination among the United Nations agencies and bodies in the ESCWA region. Furthermore, a few spontaneous sessions dealing with issues of concern to particular categories of disabled persons were held. During the course of the substantive discussions, 56 realistic recommendations covering all aspects of the scientific programme of the Conference were made. These are presented separately in the final chapter of this report.

25. Following the discussions on the above-mentioned substantive and technical issues, the last day was devoted to the overview and analysis of country papers. During the interesting and lively discussions that followed the country presentations, the participants contributed useful ideas and knowledge gained from their experiences.

H. Adoption of the recommendations of the Conference

26. The recommendations of the Conference were adopted by consensus on 28 November 1989 (see below).

I. Closing session

27. During the closing ceremony on 28 November 1989, which was attended by Queen Noor al-Hussein, the recommendations were read to the Queen by the Rapporteur Mr. Mohammad Ali el-Banna. The Chairman of the Conference, Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghanim, made a brief statement on behalf of the participants. He expressed the gratitude of the participants to the Government of Jordan for the excellent facilities and services provided for the Conference. He also expressed the participants' appreciation to ESCWA for the efficient way in which the preparations and organization of the Conference had been made.

28. A brief closing statement was made by the Chief of the Social Development, Population and Human Settlements Division of ESCWA. He expressed his deep gratitude to Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein and to His Highness Prince Raad Bin Zaid for their patronage of the Conference, and also to the Government of Jordan for hosting the Conference. He also thanked the participants for their outstanding contribution to the successful deliberations of the Conference. He stated that in future every effort would be made to ensure the participation of disabled experts in substantive meetings that had no direct relevance to disability.

29. Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein officially closed the Conference with a message of congratulations from His Majesty King Hussein on the successful completion of the Conference.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

30. During the deliberations of the Conference, the participants reached agreement on the following framework within which regional activities could be elaborated in the remaining period of the Decade and beyond.

A. General recommendations

(a) At the international, regional and national levels, disabled persons, as members of organizations and in their personal capacity, should participate fully in decision-making processes as equal partners. Appropriate legislation should be enacted to this end.

(b) Questions of disability and related policies should be based not on charitable considerations, but on an awareness of the importance of the integration of disabled persons into socio-economic development. In this regard, it is recommended that policies in all socio-economic sectors take into account the needs and contribution of disabled persons. It is also recommended that existing national development policies and legislation be systematically reviewed with a view to promoting equalization of opportunities for disabled persons.

(c) An important condition for the success of national rehabilitation services is effective co-ordination among various ministries, government agencies and NGOs. It is therefore recommended that national co-ordination or implementation committees be established where they do not exist, or that existing committees be strengthened so that they perform these tasks effectively. Governments should allocate special funds to support these committees.

(d) Ongoing issues of disability and the need to achieve the goals of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons necessitate the design of programmes and activities in the field of disability at the national, regional and international levels. These should go beyond the end of the Decade in 1992, and should be developed and actively implemented by ESCWA, in collaboration with the relevant regional, international and Arab organizations, especially the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA/UNOV), the Statistical Office of DIESA, WHO, ILO, UNESCO, UNDP AGFUND and the League of Arab States, in order to publish information, undertake research and implement the World Programme of Action. For this purpose, it is recommended that a series of regional technical meetings dealing with various aspects of disability be held before the proposed 1992 Global Conference.

B. Prevention and early detection

(a) It is recommended that Government, NGOs and concerned institutions in the region initiate policies and plans to implement programmes regarding prevention and the early detection of disability, taking into consideration all of the causes that lead to disability.

(b) Services provided to disabled persons through centralized institutional activities do not always reach sufficient numbers of disabled persons, particularly in rural and remote areas. Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) is a desirable means of overcoming this problem. One of the most important advantages of CBR is that it involves the families of disabled persons, and it is recommended that this concept be advocated within the framework of the International Year of the Family, which is to take place just after the end of the Decade. A major prerequisite for the development of CBR is the systematic assessment of existing community development projects which can satisfy the needs of disabled persons, with the aim of selecting the most appropriate CBRs for the particular social and cultural conditions of each country or region. CBR programmes should encourage local production of low-cost technical aids for disabled persons made from locally available resources.

(c) The most significant cultural factor in the prevalence of severe disability in the region is the practice of kinship marriage in all communities and among all social classes. Special attention should be given to genetic testing before marriage. Also, there is an urgent need for appropriate legislation to curb hereditary disability.

C. Childhood disability

(a) It is recommended that, as a way of preventing childhood disability, there should be mass immunization programmes, nutritional programmes and pre-natal care. It is also recommended that diagnostic tools be developed and that programmes for early detection be implemented.

(b) It is recommended that systematic programmes (including CBR programmes) be developed for mothers of disabled children and other members of their families in order to encourage positive attitudes towards disability and help the family deal with it in an appropriate manner. These programmes should include training for parents in prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation. A training manual for parents should be developed as an essential component of this programme. It is important that rehabilitation of the disabled should cover children, adults and the elderly.

D. Education and training

(a) Educational services for disabled children and young people in the ESCWA region are all too often centred on isolating them, which frustrates the integration process. Opportunities for primary, secondary and higher education should be made available to the disabled and "mainstreaming" of disabled persons should be promoted whenever possible.

(b) The ministries of education should set up special education programmes. In this regard, there is an urgent need to train sign language interpreters for formal education and mass media. Also, the provision of educational materials in braille and audio-visual aids should be encouraged for visually impaired persons. Programmes for the training of trainers should be implemented.

(c) There is an urgent need to develop a standardized Arabic sign language which is complementary to indigenous sign languages. The standardized sign language should be widely disseminated in the form of manuals and other audio-visual materials. It is also important that adult education programmes for deaf adults should be provided on a regular basis.

(d) It is recommended that particular attention be given to special education programmes for severely disabled children and those with multiple disabilities. Training of special teachers and provision of special education materials and services are prerequisites for achieving this goal. Special education should also be introduced as a subject in regular teacher training programmes.

(e) It is recommended that disabled persons be included in community literacy and adult education programmes and that this question should be given special emphasis during the International Year of Literacy, 1990.

(f) It is recommended that scientific information on special education should be widely disseminated in the countries of the ESCWA region.

E. Vocational rehabilitation and employment

(a) Everyone, including the disabled, has a right to paid employment or self-employment. Vocational rehabilitation programmes are prerequisites for enabling a disabled person to exercise this right with dignity. It is therefore recommended that Governments undertake studies of labour market needs in order to adapt vocational training for the disabled to those needs. Efforts at mainstreaming in the field of vocational training are also important.

(b) The Conference urges employers' and workers' organizations to adopt training policies that are in line with market requirements.

(c) It is recommended that Governments of ESCWA countries adopt policies aimed at increasing employment opportunities for disabled persons including disabled employment quota schemes, subsidies, co-operatives, tax reductions and other such incentives. Governments should also adopt social security schemes which take into account the needs of disabled persons.

(d) The Conference recommends that special attention in the area of vocational training be given to mental disability and in particular severe mental disability, with a view to integrating these categories of disabled persons into their community, enabling them to live a life of dignity and be self-reliant.

(e) The Conference urges Governments which have not yet ratified ILO Convention 159 to do so. Their activities in this area should be based on the principles set out in that Convention.

F. Data base and research on disability issues

In spite of the limited data available, it is clear that disability rates in the region are among the highest in the world, owing to repeated wars and armed conflicts, in addition to more traditional causes of disability. A major requirement for the formulation of appropriate policies and programmes to deal with this important social problem is the development of an adequate data base including statistics and information on various aspects, characteristics and causes of disability in the region. Therefore, the following measures are recommended:

(a) All countries in the region should include appropriately formulated questions in all national censuses, household surveys and national registrations and the resulting information should be published and made available to all concerned institutions.

(b) ESCWA should continue to develop its data bank on disability issues including directories of institutions and workers in the field of disability, a list of companies producing technical aids, a bibliography on disability and a directory of projects being undertaken in the countries of the region. These data should be regularly updated and made available to Governments and NGOs in the appropriate forms.

(c) ESCWA, in collaboration with the United Nations agencies and Arab scientific bodies should develop a glossary of Arabic terms relating to disability, co-ordinating with organizations which have already begun such work. A short list of various types of disability recognized by WHO should be drawn up, in order to achieve a more systematic and precise regional and national application of norms in surveys carried out in the region.

(d) Data series should be developed in an understandable and directly usable form by researchers, policy makers and field workers. In this connection, the current ESCWA project on social indicators should be continuously updated and widely disseminated.

(e) Research on the prevalence, causes and consequences of disability and the nature of disability-related problems should be encouraged through the provision of guidance, appropriate funding and opportunities for publication in journals, newsletters and conference proceedings.

(f) ESCWA should develop an active clearing-house programme through which the activities of institutions dealing with disability and case-studies are disseminated to all concerned, together with similar relevant information in the form of a periodic newsletter. Also, research material should be systematically distributed in the region in Arabic and funding should be made available for this purpose.

G. Transfer of appropriate technologies

It is clear that the integration of disabled persons in the community often requires the use of appropriate technologies related to various aspects of disability. The Conference therefore recommends the following measures:

(a) Advanced technologies developed in industrial countries should be adapted to meet local needs and transferred to the region through staff training.

(b) The use of computers should be promoted to assist the integration of disabled persons in the community. The process may involve the adaptation of hardware to make it accessible to various categories of disabled persons and the development of appropriate software packages.

(c) Local production of appropriate and simplified technologies should be encouraged for items such as wheelchairs, prosthetic devices and mobility aids, taking into account technical, socio-economic and cultural conditions in the society in question. Governments are urged to undertake pilot projects for the establishment of suitable rehabilitation industries and to set up a national delivery system of rehabilitation aids.

(d) Urgent efforts should be made to develop an Arab speech recognition system, artificial intelligence and other computer-aided systems. In view of the absence of Arabic language in computer technology and the difficulty involved, the necessary research should be undertaken to Arabize computer systems to make them compatible with programs for disabled persons.

(e) The problem of the high cost of new technologies cannot be separated from the cost of maintenance and service. Governments should subsidize whenever possible the acquisition of these technologies. In this regard, international and regional co-operation should be an important means for widening markets and thus reducing the unit cost.

(f) To keep abreast of new innovations, Arab experts, and in particular disabled experts, should participate in seminars, exhibits and events at both regional and international levels.

H. Women and disability

Many of the problems facing disabled women are the same as those facing disabled men. All the recommendations of this conference therefore apply to disabled women. But there are particular characteristics which apply to women only as a result of the position of women in Arab societies by reason of their low levels of education and economic participation. These characteristics also arise from the role of women as wives and homemakers and their primary responsibility for the upbringing of children. In view of this, the Conference recommends the following measures:

(a) Institutions concerned should formulate programmes to train disabled women to perform various types of housework and to provide them with the necessary aids for that purpose. Furthermore, it is necessary to adapt the physical environment inside the home to the needs of these women, to give them psychological and practical training to take care of their children and to bring them up in a proper fashion.

(b) Special attention should be devoted to women who have responsibility for the welfare of disabled family members and give them psychological and practical training to cope effectively with those disabilities.

(c) Efforts should be concentrated on the rehabilitation of disabled women and breaking down the social barriers that prevent their active participation in economic life and fulfilment of their marital responsibilities. Counselling activities relating to the marital life of disabled persons should be intensified.

(d) All national, regional and international programmes for the advancement of women should include women with disabilities.

I. Adaptation of the physical and social environment to the needs of the disabled

It is not sufficient to rehabilitate and teach disabled persons and their families in order to integrate them in the normal life of the community; it is also necessary to adapt the physical and social environment to the needs and conditions of disabled persons. The Conference, therefore, recommends the following measures:

(a) Account should be taken in city planning and in building and construction legislation, of the conditions that facilitate the movement of disabled persons and ensure their safety. This includes, for example, infrastructure services, transport and the entrances and interiors of buildings.

(b) Educational and media programmes should be formulated which promote the awareness necessary for the acceptance of disabled persons in the community and the elimination of prejudices and stereotypes which have conditioned some actions towards them and to facilitate their participation in economic activity and their complete integration in socio-economic life.

(c) To encourage scientific research on the adaptation of the physical and social environment, and the dissemination of the results of such research in Arabic to the media, decision makers and specialists, taking into consideration United Nations publications and international standards.

J. Media, public awareness and mass communications

The media is a basic means of providing disabled persons with the information they need and of changing social attitudes with a view to their acceptance and integration into overall development plans and programmes. The Conference therefore, recommends the following measures:

(a) A regional information programme on disabled persons should be formulated and proclaimed, drawing attention to the responsibilities of the media towards disabled persons, their families and society.

(b) Due importance should be attached to the training of media professionals to help them to assume their responsibilities towards disabled persons, to the organization of training programmes and the teaching of disability issues in the schools of mass communications and journalism, to the unification of terms and concepts used in communicating with disabled persons, to the exchange of media expertise in the field of disability and the creation of links between disabled persons and academic and media professionals in the field

(c) Intensive efforts should be made through the various media to spread awareness in the community and promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons and to correct negative ones. Sign language should be used in all television programmes.

(d) To benefit as much as possible from advanced technologies in the world to improve communication equipment in line with socio-economic conditions in the region and to benefit also from broadcast information programmes suitable for more than one country.

(e) A regional centre should be established for studies and research on information and disabled persons and a yearly prize should be awarded for the best media item dealing with the issue of disability and to exchange information programmes on disability among the countries of the region.

(f) Appropriate attention should be devoted to the guidance of children through information programmes aimed at promoting a spirit of co-operation with and proper treatment of the disabled from childhood.

K. Technical co-operation

(a) International aid and development agencies should assess how their development programmes affect disabled persons and to what extent these persons benefit from the programmes or have access to them. A certain portion of overseas development assistance budgets allocated to the region should be earmarked for disability-related projects.

(b) Priority should be given to technical co-operation programmes for the disabled in the least developed countries in the region and other countries which suffer particularly from disability problems, because of wars, occupation and armed conflicts.

(c) ESCWA is requested to establish a separate unit on disability-related issues to co-ordinate regional activities in this field and to follow up the implementation of the recommendations of this Conference.

(d) Voluntary work in favour of the disabled is an important component of overall programmes in this field and is an essential complement to public activities, however it is still not properly developed in most countries of the ESCWA region. It is therefore recommended that the United Nations Volunteers Programme intensify its activities in this region, particularly those concerned with sponsoring the training of administrative and technical personnel of relevant NGOs, facilitating the exchange of expertise among them and sponsor the voluntary work of NGOs in remote and rural areas at the grass-roots level.

(e) NGOs concerned with the disabled should be given the necessary financial support, especially in view of the fact that the work of these organizations which are active at the grass-roots levels is of great importance in meeting the needs of the disabled.

(f) ESCWA and other specialized United Nations agencies are requested to strengthen their regional advisory services in the field of disability, and to place particular emphasis on data base and research activities, special education and vocational training and the adaptation of the social and physical environment to the needs of disabled persons; NGOs should have access to this information.

(g) The Regional Bureau of Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind has demonstrated its effective role in serving the blind and promoting their welfare within and outside the region of Western Asia, however these services have not been extended to any degree to other categories of the disabled. The Conference therefore recommends that the Bureau extend the basis of its activities to include other categories of the disabled and recommends that Governments of the region support the Bureau in carrying out this mission.

L. Fund-raising

(a) In order to implement the above recommendations, more intensive efforts should be made to obtain the necessary funds for problems of disability. ESCWA, as the agency charged with the co-ordination of the regional activities of the United Nations agencies in the field of disability, is requested to take the initiative in fund-raising in order to support its own activities as well those of the other United Nations agencies.

(b) In addition to the regular long-term projects on disability issues in the region, there is an urgent need in some countries of the region for assistance to emergency projects dealing with disability. It is therefore recommended that ESCWA establish a regional emergency fund in order to respond to those needs through limited aid to the NGOs and other organizations concerned.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS*

A. Eminent personalities

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Jordan

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Bahrain Mobility International

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** Has disability.

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The Regional Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Blind Girls
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UNESCO and other United Nations agencies

Viennatone
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K. ESCWA secretariat

Executive Secretary

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Human Settlements Officer, Social Development, Population and Human Settlements Division

Social Affairs Officer, Social Development, Population and Human Settlements Division.

Associate Social Affairs Officer, Social Development, Population and Human Settlements Division.

Annex II

PROGRAMME OF WORK

Monday, 20 November 1989

9 a.m. Departure from Inter-Continental Hotel to the Royal Cultural Centre.

10-11 a.m. Opening of the Conference.

11-11.30 a.m. Reception.

11.30 a.m.-12 noon Return to Inter-Continental Hotel.

12 noon-3 p.m. Lunch break.

3-5 p.m. Opening of the exhibit.

5 p.m. Organizational meeting:
(a) Election of officers;
(b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

Tuesday, 21 November 1989

9-11 a.m. Overview of the problems and needs of the disabled: International perspective (The United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA)).

11-11.30 a.m. Break.

11.30a.m.-1.30 p.m. Overview of the problems and needs of the disabled: Regional perspective (ESCWA).

1.30-5 p.m. Break.

5-6 p.m. Shows of exhibiting companies.

6 p.m. Departure from Inter-Continental Hotel to the Cultural Palace at the Hussein Sports City.

7 p.m. Concert performed by the Egyptian orchestra Al-Noor Wal Amal, at the Cultural Palace at the Hussein Sports City.

Wednesday, 22 November 1989

9-10 a.m.

Keynote speeches by:

Her Excellency, Mrs. Ethel Wiklund
Ambassador, Special Adviser on Matters
concerning Disabled Persons, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs;

Mr. Salah Bourjini
UNDP Resident Representative, Iraq.

10-11.30 a.m.

Prevention, treatment and community-
based rehabilitation (WHO).

11.30 a.m.-12 noon

Break.

12 noon-1.45 p.m.

Education and training of disabled
persons (UNESCO).

1.45-2.30 p.m.

Lunch break.

2.30 p.m.

Departure from Hotel Inter-Continental
to the Jordan Sports Federation for the
Handicapped.

3-5 p.m.

Opening of the sports competition under
the patronage of His Royal Highness
Prince Raad Bin Zaid.

5-7 p.m.

Transfer of technologies appropriate
for disabled persons in the ESCWA
region.

7.30-9 p.m.

Reception given by ESCWA.

Thursday, 23 November 1989

9.-9.30 a.m.

Keynote speech by the Palestinian
delegate, Mr. Emad Tarawiyeh.

9.30-11 a.m.

Global view of UNICEF-assisted
programmes and global strategy of
childhood disability prevention and
rehabilitation (UNICEF).

11-11.30 a.m.

Break.

11.30 a.m.-1.30 p.m.

Vocational rehabilitation and
employment of disabled persons (ILO).

1.30-3. p.m.

Lunch break.

3.-5 p.m.

Development of disability statistics in the region (Statistical office of the United Nations).

5-7 p.m.

Shows of the exhibiting companies.

Friday, 24 November 1989

9-11 a.m.

Open discussion on disability issues.

2.30-3 p.m.

Departure from Hotel Inter-Continental to the sports field of the Jordan Sports Federation for Handicapped.

3 p.m.

Sports competition (final game).

Saturday, 25 November 1989

8.30 a.m.-2.30 p.m.

Field visits.

4-5 p.m.

Informal session on the role of mass media on disability-related issues.

5.45 p.m.

Departure from Hotel Inter-Continental to the headquarters of the General Union of Voluntary Societies in Jordan.

6-10 p.m.

Reception given by the General Union of Voluntary Societies in Jordan.

Sunday, 26 November 1989

9-10 a.m.

Keynote speech by His Excellency, Mr. Zuheir Melhas, Minister of Health and Social Development, Jordan.

10-11.30 a.m.

Social aspects of disabled persons in the Western Asia region and the importance of their modification (ESCWA).

11.30 a.m.-12 noon

Break.

2 noon-1.30 p.m.

Adaptation of the physical and social environment to the conditions of the disabled (ESCWA).

.30-3 p.m.

Lunch break.

3-5 p.m.

Women and disability in the Western Asia region (ESCWA).

8-10 p.m.

Informal session for disabled persons.

Monday, 27 November 1989

9-11 a.m.

Presentation and discussion of the country papers (ESCWA):

Presentation and discussion of the country papers of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman;

Presentation and discussion of the country papers of Bahrain and Egypt.

11-11.30 a.m.

Break.

11.30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Presentation and discussion of the country papers of Iraq and Jordan.

Presentation and discussion of the country papers of Kuwait, Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic.

Presentation and discussion of the country papers of Lebanon and West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Presentation and discussion of the country papers of Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic.

5-7 p.m.

Informal session for non-governmental organizations (organized by Mr Abdullah al-Khateeb).

7-8 p.m.

Closed session to discuss co-ordination among the United Nations agencies and bodies.

Tuesday, 28 November 1989

9 a.m.-12 noon

Adoption of the recommendations of the Conference.

5.30-7 p.m.

Closing session: under the auspices of Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein.

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>Document title</u>	<u>Symbol</u>
Aide-memoire	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/INF.1 and Corr. 1
Provisional agenda (organization of work)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/L.1/Rev.1
Annotated provisional agenda	E/ESCWA/SD/WG.1/L.1/Add.1
The realistic approach of the World Health Organization to disability prevention and management through community- based rehabilitation	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/2
UNICEF-assisted programmes and global strategy on childhood disability prevention and rehabilitation	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/3
Adapation and transfer of new technologies designed for the disabled in the ESCWA region	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/4
The situation of the disabled in Egypt	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/5
Access for the disabled in the urban environment	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/6
Study of the disabled in Democratic Yemen	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/7
The situation of disabled persons in the Syrian Arab Republic	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/8
Report on programmes and methods of care for disabled persons in the Sultanate of Oman	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/9
Report on programmes and methods of care for disabled persons in the State of Qatar	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/10
The situation of the disabled: their capacities and needs in ahrain	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/11

<u>Document title</u>	<u>Symbol</u>
Social aspects of the disabled in the Western Asia region and the importance of their modification	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/12
Report on programmes and methods of care for disabled persons in the United Arab Emirates	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/13
International development of disability statistics: accomplishments and goals	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/14
Disabled persons in the West Bank and Gaza strip	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/15
Special education for disabled persons: an agenda for the 1990s	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/16
Future guidelines in special education planning, organization and management	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/17
Disability in Jordan	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/18
The disabled: the blind and prospects of modern technology (supplementary document)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/19
Study of the disabled in the Yemen Arab Republic	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/20
Overview of problems and needs of disabled persons - international perspective	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/21
Disabled persons in Lebanon	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/22
Capabilities and needs of the disabled in Kuwait	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/23
Care of the disabled in Iraq	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/24
Women and disability	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/25
Vocational rehabilitation and employment of the disabled	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/26
Bibliography on disability-related issues in the ESCWA region (English only).	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/27

<u>Document title</u>	<u>Symbol</u>
Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: a regional profile of the ESCWA region	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/28
Status of disabled persons and programmes of available services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/29
Training and development of workers with disabled persons	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/30
Provisional list of disability-related projects (English only)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/31
Bibliography on disability (Arabic only)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/32
Queen Alia Fund for Voluntary Social Work in Jordan and its activities in the field of special education	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/33
Directory of institutions in the field of disability in the ESCWA region (Arabic only)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/34
Directory of experts in the field of disability (Arabic only)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/35
Summary of the country papers in the field of disability (Arabic only)	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/36
From old to new technologies: technical aids and the integration of disabled persons Luiz M.F. Azevedo	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/37
Computer-based assistant-systems for handicapped M.A. Hashish, O.S. Emam	
Provisonal list of documents	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/INF.2
Provisional list of participants	E/ESCWA/SD/89/WG.1/INF.3/Rev.1

Annex IV

Honorary Chairman: Mr. Zuheir Melhas
 Chairman: Sheikh Abdulla al-Ghanim
 Rapporteur: Mr. Mohammad A. el-Banna

ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS

<u>Session</u>	<u>Chairperson of the Session</u>	<u>Organizer(s)/Speaker(s)</u>	<u>Discussant</u>
1. CSDHA Overview of the problems and needs of the disabled: international perspective (9-11. a.m., 21st)	Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghanim	Mr. Mohammed Sharif Ms. Marian Awwad	Ms. Amal Ibrahim
2. ESCWA Overview of the problems and needs of the disabled: regional perspective (11.30 a.m.-1.30 p.m., 21st)	Mr. Fat'hi Abdul Rahim	Mr. Akil Akil Ms. Kay Abe-Nagata	Ms. Marian Awwad
3. WHO Prevention, treatment and CBR (10-11.30 a.m., 22nd)	Ms. Munira al-Qatami	Mr. M. al-Khawashki	Mr. Mo'tacem Hejazi
4. UNESCO Special education for disabled persons (12 noon-1.45 p.m., 22nd)	Mr. Abdel Aziz al-Sartawi	Ms. Lena Saleh Mr. Abdalla Hamdan Mr. F. Abdul Rahim	None
5. UNICEF Global view of UNICEF-assisted programme and global strategy for childhood disability and prevention (9-11 a.m., 23rd)	Mr. Othman Farraj	Ms. Gulbadan Habibi Ms. Fat'hieh Saudi	Ms. Shaika al-Husseini
6. ILO Vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled (11.30 a.m.-1.30 p.m., 23rd)	Mr. Hashem al-Husseini Mr. Yousef Zumot	Mr. Mokhless Mugharbel	Mr. F. Abdul Rahim
7. Statistical Office, DIESA Development of disability statistics in the region	Mr. Yousef al-Othaimen	Ms. Marie Chamie	Mr. Hashem al-Husseini

<u>Session</u>	<u>Chairperson of the Session</u>	<u>Organizer(s)/Speaker(s)</u>	<u>Discussant</u>
8. ESCWA Physical adaptation (12 noon-12.30 p.m., 26th)	Mr. Suhail al-Ubaidy	Mr. Riadh Tappuni	Mr. Mohamad Tarawneh
9. ESCWA Social aspects 10-11.30 a.m., 26th)	Mr. Mohamad al-Suquor	Mr. Amani Kandil	Ms. Munira Ben Hindi
10. ESCWA Women and Disability (3-5 p.m., 26th)	Colonel Yousef el-Karmi	Ms. Nazek Nosseir	Ms. Heba Hagrass
11. ESCWA (round-table) Appropriate technologies (5-7 p.m., 22nd)		Mr. Hassan Charif (organizer) - Mr. Luiz Azvedo) - Mr. Nazeh Qadmani) round-table - Ms. Kay Abe-Nagata) - Mr. Mohammed Hashish)	
12. Role of NGOs (informal session) (afternoon, 26th)		Dr. Abdullah al-Khatib (organizer)	
13. Role of mass media (afternoon, 26th)		Mr. Jamil Mattar (organizer)	
14. Country papers (27th)	Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghanim	- Mr. Fathi Abdul Rahim (United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman) - Ms. Hanan Kamal (Bahrain) - Mr. Mohammed Ali el-Banna (Egypt) - Mr. Basil al-Husseini (Iraq) - Mr. Abdullah al-Khatib (Jordan) - Ms. Munira al-Qatami (Kuwait) - Mr. Hussein Husni (Democratic Yemen, Yemen Arab Republic) - Mr. Hashem al-Husseini (Lebanon) - Ms. Nour Dajani (West Bank and Gaza Strip) - Mr. Jamil al-Sofi (Saudi Arabia) - Ms. Rashika Azzouni (Syrian Arab Republic)	
15. Closing Session (afternoon, 28th)	Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghanim		

