



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/36/363
9 July 1981
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: CHINESE/ENGLISH

Thirty-sixth session
Item 30 of the preliminary list*

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

Note verbale dated 2 June 1981 from the Permanent Representative
of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to General Assembly resolution 35/133 on the International Year of Disabled Persons, adopted at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on 11 December 1980, has the honour to transmit a letter and enclosures addressed to the Secretary-General by the Chinese Organizing Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

It is kindly requested that the above-mentioned letter and enclosures be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 30 of the preliminary list.

* A/36/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 14 May 1981 from the Chinese Organizing Committee
of the International Year of Disabled Persons to the
Secretary-General

The Chinese Organizing Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons was officially established in Beijing on 25 April this year, and the Chinese National Assembly of the International Year of Disabled Persons was convened on the afternoon of 28 April. Mr. Kang Yonghe, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, addressed the Assembly. Statements were made by two representatives of disabled persons, and the "Proclamation of the Chinese Organizing Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons" was read at the meeting. The conclusion of the Assembly was followed immediately by the showing of a film about disabled persons. Enclosed herewith are a list of the members of the Organizing Committee, the proclamation and the texts of the speech and statements.

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APPENDIX I

Proclamation of the Chinese Organizing Committee
of the International Year of Disabled Persons

This year has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Chinese Organizing Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons was officially established on 24 April, with the approval of the State Council, to make better arrangements for the activities related to the International Year of Disabled Persons undertaken in this country. We hereby announce the relevant arrangements as below:

1. The Chinese Organizing Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons is composed of the heads of the State General Labour Office, the Ministry of Civil Administration, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Culture, the National Construction Committee, the National Athletic Committee, the National Statistics Bureau, the National Publications Bureau, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the All-China Women's Federation, the Chinese Association of the Blind and the Deaf-mute, the Chinese National Committee of the Red Cross, the Chinese National Committee for UNESCO, the Chinese People's National Committee for the Protection of Children, the Xinhua News Agency, the Central People's Broadcasting Station, the Central Television Station and the Central Newsreels and Documentary Films Studio, and is responsible for organizing and playing a leading role in all activities related to the International Year of Disabled Persons undertaken in China. After the International Year of Disabled Persons has ended, all follow-up actions will be taken by the ministries and organs concerned. The secretariat of the Organizing Committee is located at the External Affairs Bureau of the State General Labour Office.

2. The main purpose of the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons is the full integration of such persons in social life and social development and their equitable sharing with other citizens of the fruits of social and economic development. This is a long-range objective we strive for. Proceeding from the nature of our socialist system and the reality of overpopulation in conjunction with a weak economic base, and in the light of our needs and capability, the competent government bodies and mass organizations will establish priorities, make serious efforts toward formulating plans, take positive measures and, as production techniques and cultural education continue to develop, march step by step toward this objective.

3. Newspapers, radio stations and television networks will make arrangements for special coverage and programmes on the Year. Departments and organizations in charge of propaganda and publishing will write monographs, issue bulletins and pictorials, produce motion pictures and TV films, as means to give publicity both within and outside the country to the solicitude and loving care shown by our

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Government for the disabled in such areas as labour, cultural education and welfare benefits, measures and actions taken for the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of the disabled, and the achievements and contributions of disabled persons at the posts they occupy.

4. The Chinese National Assembly of the International Year of Disabled Persons will be held in Beijing; cities which are in a position to do so will organize exhibitions, recreational and sports performances, commemorative rallies and other related activities to publicize the accomplishments of disabled persons.

5. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications will design and issue commemorative stamps on the International Year of Disabled Persons.

6. The competent authorities will formulate plans for the prevention and cure of disability and the health care, education, housing, insurance benefits, development and training of the disabled, and take measures to organize and implement such plans step by step.

7. Friendly countries and regional and global organizations concerned are welcome to join us for an exchange of information and data concerning activities undertaken during the International Year of Disabled Persons and follow-up actions.

The Chinese Organizing Committee
of the International Year of
Disabled Persons
28 April 1981

APPENDIX II

Members of the Chinese Organizing Committee of the
International Year of Disabled Persons

Chairman: Kang Yonghe (Director, State General Labour Office)

Vice-Chairmen: Wei Hengcang (Deputy Director, State General Labour Office)
Huang Qingxi (Vice-Minister, Ministry of Civil Administration)
Guo Ziheng (Vice-Minister, Ministry of Health)
Yang Bozhen (Ministry of Education)

Members: He Liliang (Deputy Director, Department of International
Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Lei Zhenqi (Director, Department of Labour and Wages, Ministry
of Posts and Telecommunications)
Wang Chengyuan (Director, Department of Culture, Education,
Administration and Financial Services, Ministry of Finance)
Zhu Ming (Director, Department of External Affairs, Ministry
of Culture)
Li Yunjie (Director, Planning Bureau, National Construction
Committee)
Cao Sihui (Deputy Director, Department of Mass Organizations,
National Athletic Committee)
Fu Kang (Head of Social Section, National Statistics Bureau)
Cao Guohui (Director, Beijing Braille Books Publishing House,
National Publications Bureau)
Li Xian (Director, Department of Labour Insurance, All-China
Federation of Trade Unions)
Xin Kegao (Deputy Director, Executive Office of the Central
Committee, Communist Youth League)
Xu Xuehai (Deputy Director, Department of International
Organizations, All-China Women's Federation)
Li Shihan (Vice-President, Chinese Association of the Blind
and the Deaf-mute)
Su Lin (Secretary-General, Chinese National Committee for UNESCO)
Gu Jinxin (Vice-President, Chinese National Committee of the Red
Cross)

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Zhang Shuyi (Secretary-General, Chinese People's National
Committee for the Protection of Children)

Xiao Yen (Deputy Director, Department of Cadres, Xinhua News
Agency)

Chen Zeran (Deputy Director, Central Broadcasting Station)

Wang Quanyu (Director, Office of the Editor-in-Chief, Central
Television Station)

Jiang Yunchuan (Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Central Newsreels and
Documentary Films Studio)

Secretary-General: Wu Yuanjin (Director, Department of External Affairs, State
General Labour Office)

APPENDIX III

Speech delivered by Mr. Kang Yonghe, Chairman of the Chinese Organizing Committee, at the National Assembly of the International Year of Disabled Persons

Comrades and Friends,

This year has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Disabled Persons. In order to make better arrangements for this event, and with the approval of the State Council, we have officially established the Chinese Organizing Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons with the responsibility of initiating and organizing activities related to the Year in China. And it is for the same purpose that we are assembled here today for such an important meeting. Among the participants at this Assembly today are Vice-President Yang Shangkun of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, leaders of appropriate government bodies and mass organizations who serve on the Organizing Committee, representatives of the blind and the deaf-mute in all walks of life in our national capital, representatives of the masses of workers in relevant units of the central and Beijing municipal governments and eminent public figures who have contributed to the cause of the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped. Mr. Shallon, UNDP Resident Representative in China, is invited to the Assembly. Now, on behalf of the Organizing Committee, I would like to express my profound gratitude to those organizations and persons who have contributed to the cause of the disabled in China and have given their support to and shown interest in the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons in China, and I would like to extend my warm welcome and cordial greetings to the leaders of our country, eminent persons and representatives of all walks of life, our foreign friends, and in particular to the representatives of the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped.

The main purpose of the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons is the full integration of such persons in social life and social development and their equitable sharing with other citizens of the fruits of social and economic development. This is a long-range objective we strive for. Proceeding from the nature of our socialist system and the reality of overpopulation in conjunction with a weak economic base, and in the light of our needs and capability, the competent government bodies and mass organizations will establish priorities, make serious efforts toward formulating plans, take positive measures and, as production techniques and cultural education continue to develop, march step by step toward the realization of this objective. This year, in launching the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons, we must make a comprehensive survey of our national conditions, devote major efforts to publicizing this main purpose, mobilize strength from all possible sources and, starting from our present conditions, march positively, systematically and steadily toward this objective.

In publicizing and implementing the main purpose of the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons, an important point of departure and

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prerequisite is to help all members of society, both the healthy and the disabled, to develop a correct understanding of disabled persons, that is, to see them not as peculiar people who are different from others, but as ordinary people who have peculiar problems. Healthy people should not show any discrimination against the disabled, but should rather love and help them. Disabled persons should not have any inferiority complex, but should rather have the courage to prove that they are handicapped in body but sound in mind. Everyone should realize that, despite their physical defects and functional disabilities of one kind or another, the majority of disabled persons are capable of working and living like healthy persons, and of acquitting themselves with distinction in various posts suitable to their condition and making a satisfactory contribution, if only appropriate measures are taken to overcome or alleviate these defects or disabilities and provide them with proper training.

Under our socialist system, the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped in society, as well as staff members and workers in industries and enterprises whose disabilities are related to their occupations, receive proper care in such areas as labour, education, daily life and benefits. Under the loving care of the Government at various levels, the majority of blind, deaf-mute and handicapped persons who are capable of physical work have already been suitably placed. In addition, the industries and enterprises have strengthened their labour protection measures and emphasized safety in production, thus minimizing industrial accidents that can lead to new cases of disability. Staff members and workers who sustain industrial injuries are entitled to necessary help and even preferential treatment in accordance with the Labour Insurance Regulations.

Since the founding of the republic 31 years ago, Government at various levels has been actively engaged in organizing the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped in the cities and integrating them in different kinds of productive activities, enabling them to do productive work that is within their capability. In those cities where productive activities have attained a greater degree of development, the employment problems of the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped have been basically solved.

Mindful of the physical characteristics of the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped, the Government has established for them social welfare and production units, with the main purpose of absorbing into the labour force a number of such persons who live in the cities and are capable of physical work. According to statistics, there are at present more than one thousand such social welfare and production units throughout the country, with more than 135,000 staff members and workers, of whom more than 48,000 are blind, deaf-mute or handicapped. Such units are exempted from income tax by the State. A wage system is applied to their staff members and workers, whether healthy or disabled.

In rural areas, organizers at all levels within a people's commune have also made effective arrangements for the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped to participate in agricultural and side-line production work, or in the work of the commune-owned and brigade-operated enterprises, thus enabling them to maintain their living standards at a level comparable with that of local commune members.

Long years of practice have shown that blind people are also capable of performing massotherapy. Massotherapy clinics and hospitals exist in many of our cities, with blind persons as masseurs. Massotherapy can cure a number of ailments and is eagerly sought by urban and rural people alike.

Our Government pays great attention to the cultural, educational and health services available to disabled persons. According to statistics, there are at present 292 schools for the blind and the deaf-mute in China, seven times as many as before the liberation. Enrolments at those schools amount to more than 30,000, a ten-fold increase over the pre-liberation days. In many areas there are also schools for the blind and the deaf-mute, technical schools for young deaf-mutes, vocational schools for deaf-mutes, etc., where students work their way through school. China has adopted a unified Braille alphabet, expanded the programme of Braille publications, formulated a common system of sign language for the deaf-mute and improved teaching methods in the schools for the blind and the deaf-mute. Work related to the prevention and treatment of blindness and deafness is developing at a quickened pace, and the rates of incidence have shown a marked decline. To the mentally retarded and the physically maimed, medical help is provided to the utmost extent under present conditions and has produced better results. In recent years great importance has been attached to the prevention and early treatment of disabilities among children in particular, and measures have been taken to provide eugenic guidance to out-patients. Such measures have already achieved initial results.

Under our socialist system, the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped can give full play to their intelligence and natural talents. Many such persons have developed into cadres; some have won praise as advanced producers and model workers, and some have been elected deputies to the National People's Congress or representatives to the People's Political Consultative Conference. A number of them have become engineers, painters, experts and professors.

In China much has been done in the field of labour insurance to prevent new cases of disability due to industrial accidents in industries and enterprises. Ever since the early years of the Republic, "safety in production" has been a basic guideline for socialist production and construction. Under this guideline, a series of laws and regulations have been adopted, providing for regular safety and health inspections, development of measures and plans for safe production techniques, propaganda and education to promote safety in production, introduction of safe production activities, scientific studies on labour protection, and strengthening of supervision and inspection related to labour protection. All these measures have played a significant role in preventing industrial accidents and holding down the number of new cases of disability. Persons who become disabled as a result of industrial incidents in industries and enterprises are entitled to disability benefits according to the extent of loss of their ability to work. Those who retire as a result of such accidents receive their pensions at preferential rates.

In short, our country has made considerable efforts and achieved fair results in such areas as the prevention and treatment of disability and the health care,

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education, work, livelihood and welfare of the disabled. However, owing to the fact that China is still a developing socialist country, facing the problems of overpopulation, a weak economic base, relative backwardness in the economy and low levels of scientific, cultural and technological development, there is still a long way to go before we can achieve the desirable goals. We hope that, through the activities we carry out this year in connexion with the International Year of Disabled Persons and after all the appropriate bodies and organizations have given due attention and devoted efforts to our goal, our work in this field will be able to take a giant step forward. We believe that, under our socialist system, based on our specific conditions, if we draw upon the advanced experience of other countries, formulate long-term plans, take positive measures, with the concerted efforts of our government bodies and mass organizations, with the active support of the international organizations concerned, and along with our socio-economic development, the main purpose of the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons will gradually become a reality in our country at long last.

28 April 1981

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APPENDIX IV

Statement by Gong Kemin, a representative of the blind

Leaders, Comrades and Friends,

This year is the International Year of Disabled Persons. Today I am very happy to have the opportunity to be present at this solemn meeting. The Central Committee of the Party and the State Council have shown great concern for the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped, and have attached great importance to the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons. The meeting being held today is ample evidence of this. I am here today mainly to report on the work and life of myself and other workers at the workshop for the blind in the Beijing Municipal Watchcases Factory. I will use these personal experiences to show that in our socialist country disabled persons, like normal people, are masters of their country. Life is getting better each day, and they have opportunities to participate in all kinds of social activities.

My name is Gong Kemin. At present, I am head of the workshop for the blind in the Beijing Municipal Watchcases Factory. I am fifty years old. I became ill and lost my eyesight at the age of twenty-one. At that time I experienced excruciating mental agony and encountered many difficulties in daily life. In 1958 the Civil Administration Department of our district government began to set up a welfare factory and organize blind persons for productive work. It was then that I began to participate in their work. At the beginning, some 20 blind people formed a group to produce cardboard boxes. It was subsequently expanded into a general factory consisting of several groups. Through readjustments and development, it has now become the Beijing Municipal Watchcases Factory, employing a staff of more than 500 people. There are 127 workers at our workshop for the blind, among whom 84 workers are blind, chiefly engaged in the production of special types of copper products in over 100 models of various categories and specifications. Last year, the entire workshop turned over to the factory more than 70,000 yuan in profits. For the first quarter of 1981 our performance exceeded our plan by 17 per cent. Production outlook is getting better and better.

In 1960 I had the honour to join the Chinese Communist Party, and in 1964 I was promoted to my present position as head of the workshop. In addition to my responsibility related to production, my job mainly involves ideological work among the blind. I regularly chat with blind people, visit their families, get to know their work, studies, life, families and such other situations, pay attention to the problems in their daily life, marriages, family planning and illness, and help them overcome all kinds of difficulties. Through thorough-going and painstaking work with individuals, quite a number of problems have found timely solutions, they have received peace of mind and production has been boosted. In recent years certain blind persons in our workshop have been chosen as advanced producers of the factory, of the corporation and of the bureau.

With the progress in production, the life of workers in our workshop and my own life are now upgraded and improved. According to preliminary statistics, each

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of the 84 blind workers in our workshop has savings deposits; among them five accounts have deposits of more than 1,000 yuan each. These workers have purchased a total of 20 television sets, 20 tape-recorders, 6 sewing-machines, 4 washing-machines, 8 electric fans, 5 desk-clocks, 15 Braille wrist-watches and a great deal of woollen clothes and furniture. There are five people in my family. My wife, our two sons and one daughter-in-law are all employed; they have a total monthly income of over 250 yuan. We have at home a television set, a record-player, a washing-machine, sofas, wardrobes, a round dining-table and so on.

Furthermore, commercial service departments deliver goods to the door-steps of their blind customers. The public bathhouse near the entrance of the marketplace has a number of berths reserved for blind customers on every Thursday, so that we can enjoy a hot bath. We blind people not only receive help in our work and care in our daily life, but are also involved in the democratic management of factories. In April last year I was elected to the National Association of the Blind and participated in the discussion of matters of great importance to the blind and the deaf-mute.

In short, from the personal experiences of the blind workers in our workshop and my own, I can deeply feel how great is the concern of the Communist Party and the People's Government for the work and life of the blind, the deaf-mute and the handicapped. Under our socialist system, through the concerted efforts of competent government bodies and mass organizations and of disabled persons, the main purpose of the International Year of Disabled Persons will certainly become a reality in China in the long run.

28 April 1981

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APPENDIX V

Statement by Liu Jingsheng, a representative of
the physically maimed

Leaders and Comrades,

I am very happy to be present at this meeting today. Now I will tell you mainly how I have emerged from agony and despair after I lost both arms, how I rebuilt my confidence step by step, overcame my problems, underwent strenuous training and became rehabilitated at work.

My name is Liu Jingsheng, now a worker at the Fifth Paper Mill of Beijing. I am 28 years old. I joined the mill in March 1969. I have always worked hard and sought improvement, and now I am the League's branch secretary for our workshop. In May 1978, in the course of a repair job, I was injured by an electric shock. I was rushed to the hospital for emergency treatment. They were able to save my life, but my two arms were completely amputated. When I left the hospital after three months' treatment, leaders at the mill began to make careful arrangements for my life, but my heart was full of agony, feeling that all my past ideals, hopes and plans for the future seemed to have vanished all of a sudden, and there was a time when I thought of death as a means to end all sufferings. But then it occurred to me that the State and the Organization had gone to so much trouble to save my life and that many comrades had donated their precious blood to me. If I should die, how could I be worthy of all this kindness? Then, memories of the ideological education I had received from the Party and the League, and stories and famous sayings of ancient and modern heroes in China and other countries began to well up in my mind, urging me to emerge from agony and despair. For instance, I remembered coming across the following sentence in a book: "To a weak person, a disaster is a bottomless pit; to a person of strong will, it is a ladder to climb." Then I thought of the foreigner Bauer, of Sima Qian and Sun Bin in ancient China, and of Wu Yunduo in modern China. Although they suffered so much from their physical handicaps, all of them had worked hard to make themselves strong and had made a considerable contribution. In particular, I was greatly encouraged by the reports in the newspapers on Geng Yuting. The physical condition of Comrade Geng Yuting was worse than mine. Yet, with his indomitable willpower, he made a great contribution and became a labour hero. What other people could do, I should be capable of doing. Even if I could not become a labour hero, I would not want to be a coward either. In this way, I gradually restored my self-confidence and the courage to live on, with the determination to become someone who is of value to the people.

In order to be able to do something for the people, I began to learn to write with my foot. But the characters I wrote with my foot were very large, and my foot was always obstructing my view. Then I tried to write using my mouth to hold the brush, just the way Geng Yuting writes, but I could only write square characters, and the whole thing was very tiring. Later on, I devised a way of writing with the brush tied to my body by means of rubber bands, but this was no easier. Finally I

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made a sketch and asked a fitter for help. He used iron plates and pipes to make a writing tool and attached it to my body. Through practice, I finally succeeded. With the help of this tool and using the strength of my shoulders, my waist and even my whole body, I practised writing first the cursive hand and then the regular script. At the beginning, it was rather hard, and I was tired out after writing dozens of characters. However, I was aware that I could not develop a skill if I was afraid of hard work and fatigue, and that I could never go back to my job if I could not first develop a skill. Therefore, I practised unremittingly and with perseverance, even in the bitter cold of winter and the intense heat of summer.

At long last, I was duly rewarded for such hard work and the sweat of my brow. After more than one year of practice, I was able to handle a brush or a pen with greater dexterity. I was able not only to copy documents with a pen, but also use a brush to practise Chinese calligraphy in various scripts. Last December I attended a calligraphy class in the Xuanwu District where I managed to improve my calligraphy under the guidance of noted calligraphers. Through the recommendation of the district authorities, I was admitted to the Beijing Calligraphy Association as a member and took part in an exhibition performance at a calligraphy training course for teachers in the Haidian District. Since then, I have been invited many times to primary and secondary schools to give guidance to students. I have visited Madian, Dazhongmiao, the Thirteenth Middle School, the children's clubs on Nu Street and other places, where I had an exchange of learning experiences with students. This is a source of tremendous encouragement and stimulation to me. I feel that I have at last done something of value to the people.

After making endless efforts, I repeatedly applied to the leadership. After the leaders of the factory had studied my case and the higher authorities had expressed their concern, arrangements were made in the light of my specific conditions, and I was assigned to work at the library of the factory.

Now, in addition to this new job, I have a happy family, and I am leading a happy life.

From my personal experience, I am deeply convinced that, under our socialist system, a physically maimed person can also make his own contribution to the people, so long as he is broken only in body but not in spirit.

28 April 1981
