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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons held its third session at Vienna from 3 to 12 August 1981 and its report is being submitted to the current session of the General Assembly in document A/36/471/Add.1.
2. The present statement contains observations of the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the recommendations of the third session of the Advisory Committee.

II. DRAFT WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS

3. In paragraph 8 of recommendation 1 (III), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to find the means within existing budgets to provide additional resources to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to enable the Centre to provide a follow-up to the Year and facilitate the implementation of the World Programme of Action. The Secretary-General, bearing in mind Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 concerning international years and anniversaries, has already been making every effort to absorb the costs of follow-up activities of the Year within existing resources through internal redeployment within the Centre.
4. In paragraph 11 of the same recommendation, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and other bodies and organization of the United Nations system to improve employment opportunities for disabled persons within those bodies at all levels and to improve access to their buildings and facilities and to their information.
5. With regard to the improvement of employment opportunities for disabled persons, it will be recalled that the Secretary-General, in paragraph 3 of A/35/444/Add.3 submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, informed the Assembly that the recruitment policy of the Organization did not distinguish between persons who were disabled and those who were not and that he, nevertheless, intended to bring the Advisory Committee's recommendation to the attention of all organizational units of the United Nations as well as the specialized agencies. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee would again be brought to the attention of the forthcoming inter-agency meeting on the International Year of Disabled Persons, to be held at Vienna on 27 and 28 October 1981.
6. As regards the question of access to buildings and facilities, it will be recalled that the Secretary-General, in paragraph 3 of A/35/444/Add.3, informed the General Assembly that he had commissioned a consultant, who was herself handicapped, to undertake a study of modifications to United Nations Headquarters buildings required to meet the needs of disabled persons. The consultant has completed her study, and a number of the physical modifications to the

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United Nations premises recommended therein are being implemented on a priority basis in New York, Geneva and Vienna. Further changes still remain to be undertaken for the full accessibility and freedom of mobility for the disabled at United Nations Headquarters.

7. With regard to the question of access to information, it will be recalled that the General Assembly, at its thirty-fifth session, approved resources for a consultancy assignment of four work-months to review the question of access to United Nations documents and information for persons with sensory disabilities. An outline of this study has been prepared and arrangements are presently under way for the recruitment of a consultant to undertake this study, which is expected to be completed early in 1982.

III. SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PREVENTION OF DISABILITY AND THE REHABILITATION AND EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISABLED PERSONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

8. By paragraph 2 of recommendation 3 (III), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take immediate action, until the question of the continuation of the International Institute for Rehabilitation in Developing Countries is to be definitely settled, to secure the necessary support services for intensified technical co-operation in the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities for disabled persons and to support, in particular, the regional activities in that regard.

9. Should the General Assembly approve this recommendation, the Secretary-General would make necessary arrangements for:

(a) Substantive support of the present efforts of the national committees of the International Year of Disabled Persons to co-ordinate disability-related activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and local levels;

(b) Provision of support services to the regional commissions which are presently working on improving technical co-operation at the regional level in prevention of disability and rehabilitation of disabled persons;

(c) Provision of more effective support services to the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Development Programme in their programme for disabled persons.

10. The Secretary-General intends to implement the above-mentioned activities from within existing resources, to be supplemented, wherever appropriate and to the extent necessary, by the resources of the Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

11. By paragraph 4 of the same recommendation, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to set up an inter-organizational task force, within existing resources, for supporting national and regional activities in the developing regions for the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities with adequate documentation and related services. By paragraph 5, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to secure the necessary conditions for the functioning of the task force until the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, when appropriate measures are expected to be taken with regards to technical co-operation and assistance activities in these fields in the context of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. The Secretary-General proposes that the existing interagency co-ordinating mechanism within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination be utilized for this purpose.

IV. CELEBRATION OF A WORLD DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS TO BE OBSERVED AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CO-ORDINATING MECHANISM FOR CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

12. In paragraph 1 of recommendation 4 (III), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly should consider, in consultation with organizations of disabled persons, the possibility of proclaiming a world day of disabled persons to be observed at the international level. The Assembly may wish to postpone a decision on the subject-matter until its thirty-seventh session, when the Secretary-General will be in a position to present the views of the organizations of disabled persons as well as an analysis of the purpose of proclaiming a world day of disabled persons.

13. In paragraph 2 of the same recommendation, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General should consider the possibility of setting up a co-ordinating mechanism at the international level within the existing organizations of the United Nations system to promote close and effective co-operation between the developed and the developing countries, which would pursue the objectives of the Year through the transfer of technology and of the results of research and exchange of information on the prevention of disability and the involvement of disabled persons. The Secretary-General's comments in this regard are the same as those made in paragraph 11 above concerning the utilization of the existing interagency co-ordinating mechanism.

V. FOLLOW-UP OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE YEAR, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LONG-TERM WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION

14. In paragraph 2 of recommendation 5 (III), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly should make available to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, from within the existing resources of the entire United Nations system, the necessary professional and supporting staff for

the follow-up to the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Secretary-General wishes to report in this connexion that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) each seconded one Professional staff member to the secretariat of the Year during the 1980-1981 biennium. UNICEF also provided for one General Service staff member. Whether these or other organizations within the United Nations system would be able to make staff available to the Centre for the follow-up activities of the Year would depend on their work loads and staffing situations. The Secretary-General would explore every means to seek the continuation of these collaborating efforts.
