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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Seventy-third session**

Bangkok, 15-19 May 2017

Item 3 (g) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of  
the Commission, including the work of the regional  
institutions: social development****Preparations for the high-level intergovernmental  
meeting on the midpoint review of the Asian and Pacific  
Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

An estimated 650 million persons live with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. Their inclusion in society and the realization of their rights are instrumental to achieve sustainable development with “no one left behind”.

Member States adopted the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific to promote disability-inclusive development. The Incheon Strategy is the world’s first disability-specific development agenda, guiding the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. It is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, owing to their substantive similarities.

The year 2017 marks the midpoint of the Decade. The high-level intergovernmental meeting on the midpoint review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, will be held in Beijing for five days at the end of November 2017, comprising senior official and ministerial segments. The aim of the meeting will be to review the progress made in the implementation of the Incheon Strategy, informed by baseline data on its 41 core indicators. The outcome document to be adopted at that meeting will guide the actions to be taken by member States during the remaining five years, from 2018 to 2022.

**I. Introduction**

1. One in every six persons in Asia and the Pacific, or 650 million people, is estimated to live with a disability. This number is expected to increase as a result of population ageing, natural disasters, chronic health conditions, road traffic injuries and poor working conditions, inter alia.

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\* E/ESCAP/73/L.1.

2. Persons with disabilities tend to be excluded and undercounted. Physical, informational and attitudinal barriers prevent them from accessing opportunities in education and employment, and from participating in all other aspects of society on an equal basis with those without disabilities. Furthermore, persons with disabilities face risks to their personal safety. For instance, they are two to four times more likely to perish as a result of disasters, and women and girls with disabilities are at least 1.5 times more susceptible to be victims of abuse and sexual violence compared with those without disabilities.

3. A fundamental barrier to effective policymaking is the lack of reliable and comparable data relating to disability. While the World Health Organization and the World Bank estimate a global disability prevalence of 15 per cent, all but two member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) report figures below that level. The mean disability prevalence in the region, as recorded by national Governments, is 4.4 per cent — effectively meaning that approximately 450 million out of 650 million persons with disabilities are not counted. This hampers assessments of the quality of life and socioeconomic participation of persons with disabilities, which are crucial to designing effective policies and programmes.

## **II. The Commission’s commitment to disability issues**

4. Since 1993, ESCAP has promoted disability rights and disability-inclusive development, guided by three consecutive regional disability decades. Activities in the past two decades made a significant contribution to the adoption in 2006 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5. The current Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, spanning the period from 2013 to 2022, was established by the Commission by its resolution 68/7, with the aim of expediting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and promoting disability policymaking and implementation, backed by reliable and comparable statistics.

6. The 2012 High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea. The Meeting adopted the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific as the framework to guide the current Decade.

## **III. Incheon Strategy: regional mandate**

7. At its sixty-ninth session, the Commission endorsed the Ministerial Declaration and the Incheon Strategy by its resolution 69/13. The Commission also endorsed, by its decision 70/23, the ESCAP Road Map for the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. The Road Map outlines recommended actions to be taken by Governments, subregional organizations

and the ESCAP secretariat. Both the resolution and the decision state that a high-level intergovernmental meeting should be held in 2017 to carry out the midpoint review of the implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

8. The Incheon Strategy is the world's first disability-specific development agenda agreed upon at the intergovernmental level. It comprises 10 interrelated goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators. The 10 goals are as follows:

- (a) Reduce poverty and enhance work and employment prospects;
- (b) Promote participation in political processes and in decision-making;
- (c) Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;
- (d) Strengthen social protection;
- (e) Expand early intervention and education of children with disabilities;
- (f) Ensure gender equality and women's empowerment;
- (g) Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;
- (h) Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data;
- (i) Accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention;
- (j) Advance subregional, regional and interregional cooperation.

9. The Incheon Strategy is unique in two aspects. Firstly, it is underpinned by disability data collection and requests member States to submit data for the 41 core indicators in 2017 and 2022, enabling member States and other stakeholders to assess the extent of disability inclusion in measurable terms. This approach did not exist in the previous decades or in other regions. Secondly, the Incheon Strategy called for the establishment of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. The Working Group, comprising representatives of 15 member States and 15 civil society organizations, provides technical advice and support to member States in enhancing the implementation of the Incheon Strategy. At its sixty-ninth session, the Commission endorsed the membership of the Working Group for the first half of the Decade by its decision 69/4. The Working Group, which has held annual meetings four times since 2014, provides a forum for equal and open discussion among representatives of member States and civil society organizations on challenges related to the implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

#### **IV. Synergy between the Incheon Strategy and global mandates**

10. The Incheon Strategy is aligned with a number of key development and human rights agendas. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2008, supports the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Incheon

Strategy's 10 goals are all aligned with the articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Data collected for the Incheon Strategy indicators will help States parties to monitor, evaluate and report on their implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

11. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, is a milestone development agenda with its mandate to "leave no one behind". Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda contain five explicit references to disability in targets focused on quality education, work and employment, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, and partnership for the Goals. A further 11 Sustainable Development Goal indicators within these targets are also disability-specific. Moreover, six additional Sustainable Development Goals implicitly linked to persons with disabilities cover issues related to poverty reduction, gender equality, peace and justice, industry innovation and infrastructure, good health and climate action. Furthermore, all the Sustainable Development Goal indicators are expected to be disaggregated by the status of disability. Thus, the Incheon Strategy's requirements for data collection for the 41 core indicators in 2017 predate the development of the 2030 Agenda monitoring process and help member States to prepare for their Sustainable Development Goal reporting obligations in advance.

12. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in 2015, highlights the needs of and contains both direct and indirect references to persons with disabilities to a much greater extent than its predecessor, the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Sendai Framework establishes persons with disabilities and their advocacy organizations as key stakeholders in designing and implementing disaster risk reduction policies. It calls for the adoption of "universal design" so that the built environment will be widely accessible for all to the maximum extent possible, including persons with diverse disabilities, and thereby reduces their risk of injury and death in disaster situations.

13. In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provided the foundational policy framework to uphold and advance women's rights across 12 critical areas of concern, promoting their full participation in the economic, political and educational spheres. The Platform makes specific reference to the particular vulnerabilities of certain demographics, including girls and women with disabilities. The Beijing+20 review in 2015 revisited the progress of the Platform, calling for renewed support in achieving gender equality and women's rights and empowerment at the global level.

## **V. High-level intergovernmental meeting on the midpoint review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022**

14. Following the adoption of Commission resolution 69/13, in 2015 the Government of China offered to host the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the midpoint review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. It was subsequently agreed with the secretariat to hold the meeting in Beijing over five days at the end of November 2017, comprising senior official and ministerial segments. The meeting will be organized in close cooperation with the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the focal point of disability matters in China, and a long-term partner of

ESCAP. The meeting is expected to be attended by ministers and senior officials responsible for disability matters, as well as representatives of civil society organizations on disability and other international development organizations.

15. The purpose of the meeting is threefold. Firstly, it will position the implementation of the Incheon Strategy in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Secondly, the meeting will discuss the results of the midpoint review survey in terms of progress and gaps in the implementation of the Incheon Strategy, particularly trends identified from the baseline data for the 41 Incheon Strategy indicators. Thirdly, the meeting will adopt an outcome document that will provide a road map for member States to expedite the implementation of the Incheon Strategy for the remaining five years of the Decade. The outcome document will highlight the Incheon Strategy's synergy with the Sustainable Development Goals and other development and human rights agendas so that member States can plan on taking harmonized actions in the future. The meeting will also adopt its report, which will contain recommendations for the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

## **VI. Preparations for the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the midpoint review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022**

### **A. Survey for the midpoint review**

16. To ensure effective deliberations and to adopt a practical and action-oriented outcome document, preparations for the high-level intergovernmental meeting have been undertaken since 2016. The third session of the Working Group, held in March 2016, decided on a timeline and an inclusive and participatory process for the ESCAP survey on the midpoint review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. In accordance with the decisions adopted at the third session, the secretariat developed three separate questionnaires, targeting member States, civil society organizations, and international and development organizations. After a peer review by the members of the Working Group, the questionnaires were distributed to the ESCAP membership, civil society organizations and international organizations in early October 2016.

17. Governments are the main implementers of the Incheon Strategy and their responses to the questionnaire constitute a major pillar of the review document. Responses from civil society organizations and international organizations will supplement this information and insight. The questionnaire for Governments consists of three parts: it requests information on the institutional context of disability policymaking; on legal and policy measures on disability rights and disability-inclusive development; and data relating to the 41 core indicators of the Incheon Strategy. Civil society organizations, as both agents of implementation and beneficiaries of government-led implementation of the Incheon Strategy, are requested to provide information on their contribution to attain each of the Incheon Strategy goals and targets, their assessment of Governments' work on these, as well as collaboration between civil society and government at the national level. The questionnaire for international organizations collects information on their specific activities contributing to the attainment of each goal of the Incheon Strategy.

18. As at 24 February 2017, six weeks after the initial deadline, 15 Governments had responded to the questionnaire. Some 147 civil society organizations from a total of 17 countries had responded to the civil society organization questionnaire. Some 13 international organizations had responded to the international organization questionnaire.

19. The secretariat provided an overview of the responses to the ESCAP surveys to the fourth session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, held in Bangkok in March 2017.

## **B. Documentation for the high-level meeting**

20. The secretariat will produce a midpoint review document based on an analysis of data obtained relating to the 41 Incheon Strategy core indicators and compile a list of good practices from the implementation of its technical cooperation projects on disability data collection, accessibility and disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction. Member States and civil society organizations will have the opportunity to review the draft midpoint review document and comment on its content by July 2017.

21. In addition, the secretariat will launch the *Disability at a Glance 2017* publication at the meeting. The 2017 report will provide a visual summary of data obtained from the survey and salient analysis of the status of the implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

22. With regard to the development of the outcome document, the secretariat provided a tentative annotated outline for discussion to the members of the Working Group at its fourth session. The feedback received informed the revision and further development of the draft outcome document. This revised draft document will be reviewed by an expert group meeting, which will be held in April 2017. The secretariat will collect and integrate feedback from all member States and other stakeholders into a finalized draft outcome document towards the end of June 2017.

## **VII. Stakeholder engagement**

23. The Commission's work on disability since 1993 has actively included important stakeholders, particularly organizations of and for persons with disabilities, respecting the globally embraced motto "nothing about us without us". Their participation integrates real needs and experiences in the policymaking process.

24. The drafting of the Incheon Strategy is the collaborative product of more than two years of consultations between Governments and organizations of persons with disabilities. The Working Group and the midpoint review process are based on the principle and practice of equal participation by member States and organizations of persons with disabilities.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

25. The participatory midpoint review process, together with successful deliberations at the high-level intergovernmental meeting, will have important benefits on enhancing the implementation of not only the Incheon Strategy, but also the 2030 Agenda with its axiom of "no one left behind". The

estimated 650 million persons with disabilities shall not be left behind from development opportunities.

26. The Commission is invited to consider the proposed review process and to provide guidance to the secretariat regarding further actions in advance of the upcoming high-level intergovernmental meeting.

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