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Report of the Committee on Social Development on its second session

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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Recommendations

New decade

1. The Committee recommends to the Commission, at its sixty-eighth session, that a new decade to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, 2013-2022, be proclaimed.
2. The Committee requests ESCAP to develop a proposal, in cooperation with member States, for the establishment of a regional multi-donor fund to broaden support for the implementation of a new decade.

Draft resolution on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP

3. The Committee recommends that the draft resolution on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP be submitted to the secretariat for further consideration by the informal working group on draft resolutions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives to ESCAP prior to formal submission to the Commission, at its sixty-seventh session, for consideration.

Priorities for ESCAP follow-up

4. The Committee strongly supports the regional campaign to “Make the Right Real” for accelerating the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities¹ in Asia and the Pacific and recommends that concerted efforts be made by ESCAP and all other stakeholders for the success of the campaign.
5. The Committee calls upon ESCAP to continue its work on analysing, documenting and disseminating good practices on social protection in Asia and the Pacific.
6. The Committee requests ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in protecting the rights of women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, and children.
7. The Committee calls upon ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in improving accessibility to the built environment, transportation, information and services for persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to improve access to information, services and facilities for persons with disabilities on the ESCAP premises. The Committee also requests ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in harmonizing national laws and policies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
8. Furthermore, the Committee requests ESCAP to strengthen efforts to address data gaps related to persons with disabilities and to analyse and promote greater awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities, including those with psycho-social disabilities, those residing in rural,

¹ General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex.

remote and poverty-stricken areas, as well as women and children with disabilities.

9. The Committee endorses the outputs, as reflected under section E on “Consideration of future programme focus” of the report,² for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.

B. Decisions

Adoption of the report

10. The Committee adopts the report on its second session on 21 October 2010 for submission to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

Date of the third session of the Committee

11. The Committee decides that its third session will be held in 2014.

II. Proceedings

A. Review of regional trends and emerging issues in the field of social development, particularly social protection for the most vulnerable social groups

12. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Regional trends and emerging issues in the field of social development, particularly social protection for the most vulnerable social groups” (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/1).

13. The following delegations made statements during the Committee discussion under agenda item 4: China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

14. The Committee recognized the role of ESCAP in facilitating the exchange of information and experiences among member States and in promoting social development. During the deliberations, delegations shared practices and experiences in the development and implementation of social protection measures. Some delegations informed the Committee of their respective national efforts on the establishment of more comprehensive systems of social protection through the development of road maps and multi-year action plans that facilitated coordination across ministries. Those road maps, with specific objectives, outcomes and action plans, were implemented by newly-established social welfare ministries or councils.

15. One delegation shared its experience concerning a comprehensive approach that aligned social protection measures with other economic and social development policies. This approach was integrated within an overall strategy that combined income-generation measures with more traditional social safety net measures, including the provision of income support, shelter, health care and subsidized basic services for vulnerable groups, such as the poor, persons with disabilities, older persons and children.

² See paras. 58-67.

16. Another delegation informed the Committee of its country experience in facilitating coordination among ministries through the use of electronic voucher systems which managed the identification of beneficiaries and provided benefits and services, including child care subsidies, long-term care services and assistive devices for the mobility of persons with disabilities.

17. Some delegations indicated that their respective Governments had taken measures to create a more enabling institutional environment. Those measures included changes made to laws on citizenship, strategies to facilitate access to justice and to promote more participation in decision-making, as well as better dissemination of information to citizens on laws, related rights and public complaint mechanisms.

18. Several delegations stressed the importance of providing social protection for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal achievement. They informed the Committee that they had developed policies and programmes to meet the particular needs and rights of vulnerable groups, including the poor, older persons, children, persons with disabilities and people living in rural and remote areas. In some cases, those policies had been implemented by multiple ministries within the framework of a single national comprehensive law. Measures taken ranged from cash benefits, subsidized basic services and skills development to broader income generation programmes.

19. The Committee provided guidance on the programme of work on social development within the 2012-2013 strategic framework of ESCAP. To facilitate further exchange on experiences and lessons learned with the development and implementation of social protection systems, the Committee called upon ESCAP to continue its work on analyzing, documenting and disseminating good practices on social protection in Asia-Pacific.

20. The Committee called upon ESCAP to further promote regional cooperation in protecting the rights of women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, and children.

21. The Committee requested ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in improving accessibility to the built environment, transportation, information and services for persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to improve access to information, services and facilities for persons with disabilities on the ESCAP premises. In that regard, efforts to improve accessibility must take into account, to the greatest extent possible, internationally-recognized accessibility standards. The Committee also requested ESCAP to promote regional cooperation in harmonizing national laws and policies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

22. Furthermore, the Committee requested ESCAP to strengthen efforts to address data gaps related to persons with disabilities and to analyse and promote greater awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities, including those with psycho-social disabilities, those residing in rural, remote and poverty-stricken areas, as well as women and children with disabilities.

23. One delegation expressed its view that ESCAP should address child labour and child abuse issues. Another delegation called upon ESCAP to

consider promoting a human security approach as the underlying conceptual framework for social protection, taking into account General Assembly resolution 60/1 on the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

24. The Committee commended the secretariat for the quality and timeliness of the documentation prepared for the session.

B. Thematic focus: Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific

25. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific” (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/2).

26. The following delegations made statements during the Committee discussion under agenda item 5: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Myanmar; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

27. The document was introduced by a resource person with a disability, Ms. Judy Wee, an expert on promoting barrier-free access.

28. The Committee’s attention was drawn to the concepts of mainstreaming and inclusive development as a part of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action;³ these were subsequently reinforced by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

29. The Committee noted that mainstreaming had to be a part of all policies and should reflect the voices of persons with disabilities. For this, it was important to involve persons with disabilities from diverse backgrounds at all stages of policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Mainstreaming would lead to the stronger inclusion, empowerment and equality of persons with disabilities. The Committee noted key areas for mainstreaming such as the provision of accessibility to the built environment through universal design features, as well as to information and communications technologies, particularly in rural and remote areas.

30. Furthermore, the Committee emphasized that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals required the mainstreaming of disability, including measures for its prevention, in all aspects of the development agenda, including in country progress reporting. That, in turn, required improvement in the collection, analysis and dissemination of disability data.

31. Many delegations underscored the importance of developing a constructive dialogue on mainstreaming to share experiences and good practices, including in areas such as legislative, policy and programme development in Asia-Pacific. Delegations exchanged experiences on the following: the importance of legislative reviews to ensure the consistency of laws across all sectors; the development of specific policies to address mainstreaming across sectors and within specific sectors, particularly education and employment.

32. The Committee stressed the importance of moving away from a welfare approach to a rights-based one. Some delegations informed the

³ E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1 (see also Commission resolution 59/3).

Committee of effective experience in achieving that through the establishment of a central government focal point for disability and national coordination bodies in which persons with disabilities should have a clear voice. Key in that respect, the Committee noted, was support for the development of self-advocacy groups which played an important role in monitoring the implementation of policy and programmes. The Committee stressed the importance of undertaking more research to inform evidence-based and disability-inclusive policy development.

33. Delegations made a range of interventions on disability mainstreaming and shared good practices on accessible tourism; independent living concept; the development of building codes based on the universal design concept; prioritizing the region's 400 million persons with disabilities in business development; sports development through making facilities and programmes accessible; credit facilities to support employment and livelihood programmes; social participation; capacity-building and vocational training programmes, and employment promotion in the public and private sectors; social empowerment and advocacy programmes; pension and other social security assistance schemes; disaster preparedness planning; personal assistants; public advocacy to enhance awareness in the wider community, particularly on the need to improve accessibility to the built environment and information; inclusive education programmes and early detection and intervention measures; and the role of the media in promoting positive images and rights-based views of persons with disabilities. Committee members drew attention to the importance of interventions to address the rights and special needs of women and children with disabilities, particularly in the health and education sectors.

34. Several delegations urged that national priorities and approaches concerning the mainstreaming of disability should be reflected in official development assistance (ODA) programmes, with good practice examples of inclusive ODA programmes and projects shared. On resource mobilization, one delegation indicated that national and regional standards and guidelines on mainstreaming disability should be consistent. Furthermore, partnerships between Governments and the United Nations for mainstreaming disability should be strengthened. Several delegations highlighted the need for more training on mainstreaming and rights-based policy and programme development within development cooperation programmes. One delegation expressed its view that there was a need for proactive promotion of inclusive development by ESCAP in partnership with other stakeholders.

35. The disability focal point of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat informed the Committee that progress had been made with the adoption by Pacific Leaders of the Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability, as well as through the introduction of rights-based disability and inclusive education policies by many Pacific island countries. However, resources needed to be mobilized for implementing such initiatives. The importance of a strong people-centred approach to the next decade as well as the need for greater emphasis on the social agenda and rights-based approaches were identified as priorities within the Pacific.

36. International non-governmental organizations called for enhanced efforts to mainstream the needs of special groups, including women and girls with disabilities, those with intellectual disabilities and older persons. The critical role played by self-help groups in mainstreaming, especially self-advocacy groups of persons with intellectual and psycho-social

disabilities, was highlighted, as was the support of the Asia Pacific Development Centre on Disability for the establishment of such groups. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the major mainstreaming challenges that hearing-impaired persons in Asia and the Pacific faced due to the scarcity of sign language interpreters, and the small number of national and grass-roots level associations of hearing-impaired persons that could support the mainstreaming of this group. Furthermore, the needs of hearing-impaired persons tended not to be taken into account in capacity development for sports, recreation and tourism.

37. The Committee noted the secretariat document and affirmed the critical importance of mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific. It noted that the promotion of disability mainstreaming, an important focus of work in the region over the past 10 years, had assisted in removing attitudinal barriers, raising awareness and improving the visibility of persons with disabilities.

C. Review of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region

38. The Committee had before the document entitled “Report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region” (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/3) and (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/3/Corr.1).

39. The following delegations made statements during the Committee discussion under agenda item 6: Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

40. The agenda item was introduced by an expert on the rights of persons with disabilities, and a member-elect of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Hyung Shik Kim.

41. The Committee’s attention was drawn to the achievements thus far of the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

42. The Committee noted that much remained to be done to ensure the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. It recognized that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2008, provided impetus to achieving those goals. The Convention clearly indicated that the wide-ranging provisions contained therein should be implemented to enable persons with disabilities to attain adequate living standards. The Committee further recognized that, for the rights of persons with disabilities to be realized through the effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention, Governments should accord it sustained attention.

43. The Committee expressed strong support for the regional campaign to “Make the Right Real” to accelerate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. It was recommended that concerted efforts be made by ESCAP and all other stakeholders for the success of the campaign.

44. Several delegations informed the Committee that their Governments were in the process of harmonizing national laws with the Convention. Furthermore, many delegations indicated that their Governments had

already promulgated, or were in the process of working to promulgate, new anti-discrimination laws to better protect persons with disabilities and had taken initiatives to improve accessibility for their fuller participation. Such initiatives included the provision of specific benefits that addressed the need for rehabilitation and financial support, social insurance funds that promoted employment, concessionary public transport fares, accessibility, and independent living.

45. The Committee noted that commitment at the highest level to the Convention was evidenced by national committees or similar bodies being directly under the Prime Minister or overseen at the Ministerial level. The Committee also noted that such bodies were often informed by stakeholder consultations, including with disabled persons' organizations.

46. The Committee noted that, despite some progress in implementing the Convention, many challenges were still being faced in areas such as the simultaneity of gender and disability-based discrimination, resource allocation, institutional capacity, enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, monitoring the implementation of the Convention and, in particular, addressing attitudinal barriers. Non-governmental organizations affirmed the necessity of the inclusion of disabled persons' organizations from the start to the end of all consultation processes. One non-governmental organization, in referring to the secretariat document, emphasized that the legal capacity of persons with disabilities should be respected in accordance with article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

47. Proposals made by delegations for consideration under the ESCAP programme of work in Asia and the Pacific included the establishment of a regional committee to support Governments in monitoring the implementation of the Convention; the creation of a resource centre to strengthen capacity development among key stakeholders; a stronger focus on subregional approaches, including recognition of existing subregional strategies such as the Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability and mechanisms for cooperation; harmonization of regional and subregional approaches; measures to strengthen South-South cooperation; and initiatives to enhance knowledge of the Convention in the Asia-Pacific region, including through support for packaging the Convention in more accessible formats, using available technology to reach persons with diverse disabilities, including those who have difficulty reading printed materials.

48. For promoting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY Consortium) indicated that it would provide its support of the following: (a) sign language synchronization with full text; (b) motion pictures with audio description; and (c) enhanced global languages and interactivity to meet the needs of all persons with print disabilities.

49. The Committee also noted that a recently-convened subregional conference in South Asia had resulted in the formation of a South Asia disability forum that would support the Convention. The Committee was informed that the forum would be supported by the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability.

50. The Committee, in considering the secretariat document, noted the significance of the Convention for building fully inclusive societies. The Committee noted that 31 Governments in Asia and the Pacific had signed the Convention, with 20 having ratified it. Some Governments were in the

process of preparing reports for submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee recognized the value of inter-country sharing of experiences in promoting inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based societies for persons with disabilities through initiatives which, inter alia, encouraged participation and empowerment, promoted employment opportunities and increased public awareness, for example, by translating the Convention into national and local languages.

D. Preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012

51. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Report on the Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012: the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action” (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/4).

52. Representatives of the following delegations made statements: Australia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Thailand and Viet Nam.

53. The Committee considered the report on the Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012: the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, which had been held in June 2010. The report contained recommendations on the way forward beyond 2012, including proposals for: (a) the agenda of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting; (b) a new decade; and (c) the expected outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

54. With regard to possible issues for inclusion in the agenda of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, delegations suggested that consideration be given to the following areas: disability inclusive development; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and addressing gaps in laws and policies; efforts aimed at poverty reduction, in particular for persons living with disabilities; preventing causes of disabilities, social protection; and the rights of children with disabilities. The secretariat was called upon to provide documentation in areas of legislation and economic empowerment, and to focus on actions that would support implementation efforts to “Make the Right Real”.

55. The Committee expressed its full support for the proposal to proclaim a new decade to promote the rights of persons with disabilities covering the period from 2013 to 2022. The secretariat informed the Committee that the recommendation for a new decade would be submitted to the Commission, at its sixty-eighth session in April/May 2012, for a final decision.

56. Many delegations emphasized the central role played by international cooperation in previous Decades and its continued importance in a new decade. A need for strengthened cooperation between donors was noted, particularly with regard to work at the subregional level, and a common fund was proposed.

57. The Committee emphasized the importance of the secretariat’s review of the achievements of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled

Persons, 2003-2012, particularly as a basis for the development of a strategic outcome document for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting that would focus on action at all levels. It was felt that the outcome document should contain clear and tangible goals and targets without simply repeating the contents of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and include the following areas: regional monitoring and review mechanism; subregional, regional and international cooperation; resource mobilization, including the possibility of a multi-donor trust fund. On the subject of a trust fund, the secretariat was requested to develop a proposal, in cooperation with member States, for the establishment of a regional multi-donor fund to broaden support for the implementation of a new decade.

58. The Government of Japan indicated its intention to continue to support the work of ESCAP on disability leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting in 2012 and beyond.

59. The Government of the Republic of Korea indicated that it had initiated preparations for the hosting of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, including the establishment of committees to oversee both the organizational and substantive preparations.

60. The Committee highlighted the necessity of deepening and expanding participation and commitment, in particular through consultations with persons with disabilities. International and national NGOs, including disabled peoples' organizations, supported that position, particularly emphasizing the need to engage disabled peoples' organization in decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. One non-governmental organization highlighted the need for the regional disability rights mechanism to underpin more effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the national level. Furthermore, another non-governmental organization pointed to the value of strategic partnerships between government and all other stakeholders, including the private sector. Attention was drawn to the draft strategic framework and action plan for a new decade prepared by organizations of persons with disabilities.

61. The Committee endorsed the roadmap for the regional preparatory process leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. The preparatory process comprised three tracks: (1) Intergovernmental consensus-building and follow-up; (2) Stakeholder engagement and advocacy; and (3) Assessment of the achievements and remaining challenges of the second Decade. The Committee expressed appreciation for the secretariat's early and comprehensive planning, which would allow member States to actively contribute to the process leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in late October 2012. The secretariat pointed out that, in line with Commission resolution 66/11, it would be engaging the participation of all key stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities, in the lead up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

E. Consideration of future programme focus

62. The secretariat, drawing from the recommendations on areas for regional cooperation made by delegations under agenda items 4, 5, 6 and 7 as well as other mandated areas of work, presented the key outputs proposed for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013. The Committee endorsed the outputs, as proposed by the secretariat, for inclusion in the programme of work of subprogramme 6 on social development for the biennium 2012-2013.

63. The Committee recognized the importance of three high-level intergovernmental meetings that would be convened by the secretariat in 2012, as mandated by the Commission on Social Development and the Commission. These were: (a) High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Person, 2003-2012; (b) Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference; and (c) Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Commission supported the activities that were proposed to be conducted in preparation for these high-level intergovernmental meetings, including research and analysis, expert group meetings, stakeholder consultations and advocacy and awareness-raising.

64. The Committee took note of the proposed publications to be included in the programme of work, including: (a) the Asia-Pacific Population Journal; (b) a study on persons with disabilities in Asia-Pacific; (c) working papers on a range of social development issues, including social protection; and (d) information materials and resource kits to promote greater understanding of the international instruments and other regional and global commitments in the field of social development. For the information materials and resource kits, the Committee recommended that the secretariat package the materials in user-friendly and accessible formats for various target groups, including persons with disabilities.

65. The Committee provided guidance on the ESCAP programme of work, emphasizing the need for the secretariat to strengthen efforts to mainstream disability into the regional development agenda. In particular, the Committee requested ESCAP to prioritize the identification, documentation and dissemination of good practices in disability mainstreaming; promote the integration of disability into Millennium Development Goal implementation, monitoring and reporting; translate global disability commitments into the regional context; keep the spotlight on key gaps to be addressed in implementing such commitments; and encourage stakeholders to commit additional resources to meeting the priorities and needs of persons with disabilities in all spheres of the development process.

66. The Committee called upon the secretariat to accord priority, in its work on disability, to analysing and documenting good practices in areas such as: (a) improving accessibility to the built environment, transportation, information and services; (b) harmonization of national laws and policies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; (c) participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making; and (d) measures to support persons with disabilities in rural and poverty-stricken areas as well as women and children with disabilities.

67. The Committee, in recognizing the value of the secretariat's capacity development work, supported the four project areas proposed by the secretariat for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013. The first project aimed to increase the regional knowledge base on social development and population trends, policies and good practices in Asia and the Pacific. In particular, the Committee requested the secretariat to consider establishing a resource centre for information sharing and networking, as well as resource pools of key development partners to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

68. The second project area would focus on supporting governments in accelerating the implementation of international commitments for gender equality and the social integration of vulnerable groups in Asia-Pacific. The Committee suggested that the following activities be included under this project area: (a) addressing the gaps between commitment and implementation at the regional and national levels; (b) promoting the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Asia-Pacific; and (c) following up on the outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

69. The third project area aimed to strengthen the national capacity of ESCAP member States to manage social risks and implement effective social protection programmes. Concrete actions under this project would include training and exchange of good practices. The Committee emphasized that particular attention should be paid to South-South cooperation modalities and to technical assistance to ESCAP member States in their work concerning women and children with disabilities.

70. The fourth project area would strengthen the national capacity of ESCAP member States to implement effective gender mainstreaming programmes. This project area would include building the capacity of National Women's Machinerys to advocate gender mainstreaming across the national development agenda. It would also entail building the capacity of the ESCAP secretariat to mainstream gender dimensions, where applicable, into the entire programme of work of the Commission, as had been mandated by ESCAP resolution 66/9.

71. Finally, the Committee supported additional issues to be addressed in the 2012-2013 work programme, including: (a) regional analysis of youth policies and programmes in follow-up to the 2010 International Year of Youth; (b) promoting the full and effective implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Beijing +15: Outcome Document of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its Regional and Global Outcomes; and (c) follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Progress Against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region, which would be held in 2011, as mandated in Commission resolution 66/10.

72. One non-governmental organization requested the secretariat to work on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and emergency response. Another non-governmental organization representative referred to the strong partnership between his organization and ESCAP in

implementing programmes in support of the current decade and in the implementation of a new decade. One non-governmental organization emphasized the need for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to be accessible in formats for all persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities. Another non-governmental organization highlighted the particular challenges affecting deaf persons, and pointed to the need for increasing the pool of sign language interpreters and called for the support of associations of deaf persons at the national and grassroots levels.

F. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session

73. The Committee considered the draft resolution on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP submitted by the Government of Japan, as contained in document E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/WP.1 (see annex I).

74. In introducing the draft resolution, the Government of Japan recalled as background: (1) the Biwako Millennium Framework, the objective of which was to identify accessibility as a priority policy area for further action; (2) Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which stipulated the removal of accessibility barriers to the built environment, information and other facilities and services; and (3) resolution 64/8 of 30 April 2008, which requested the Executive Secretary to improve the accessibility of the facilities and services at ESCAP.

75. The Russian Federation expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for the early submission of the draft resolution and noted that, in accordance with established practice, the draft resolution would be reviewed by an informal working group on draft resolutions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives to ESCAP prior to its consideration by the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

76. The secretariat indicated that it would be preparing a programme budget implication statement for the draft resolution in consultation with the Programme Management Division and Administrative Services Division. It noted that the earlier Commission resolution 64/8, which had been adopted by the Commission without any additional regular budget programme budget implication, had had a provision requesting the Executive Secretary “to improve the accessibility of the facilities and services of ESCAP for persons with disabilities, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and organizations and disabled persons’ organizations.” The current resolution was within the framework of that particular provision. With regard to the substantive component of the draft resolution, the secretariat indicated, on a preliminary basis, that it would appear to be possible to implement the activities without any additional regular budget programme budget implication.

77. With regard to the terminology used in the draft resolution, the representative of the Philippines suggested that language under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities be followed, where appropriate, to the extent possible. The delegation further proposed that a provision be included in the draft resolution urging governments to include, where appropriate, persons with disabilities in their national delegations to United Nations meetings related to disability issues.

78. The Committee recommended that the draft resolution be submitted to the secretariat for further consideration by the informal working group on draft resolutions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives to ESCAP prior to formal submission to the Commission, at its sixty-seventh session, for consideration.

G. Other matters

79. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat on the “Dates for the third session of the Committee on Social Development” (E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/5).

80. Bearing in mind that the secretariat would be convening three high-level intergovernmental meetings in 2012, and in accordance with annex 1, paragraph 14, of Commission resolution 64/1, the Committee decided that its third session should be held in 2014.

H. Adoption of the report

81. The Committee adopted the present report on 21 October 2010 for submission to the Commission, at its sixty-seventh session, for endorsement.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

82. The second session of the Committee on Social Development was convened in Bangkok from 19 to 21 October 2010.

83. The session was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Kasit Piromya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. In his inaugural address, the Minister of Foreign Affairs commended the role of ESCAP in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities in the Asian-Pacific region. The Minister highlighted the commitment of the Government of Thailand in this respect, as demonstrated by its active role in supporting two successive “Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons”, and prioritizing disability within its own national development policies and strategies. He noted that the Millennium Development Goals contain no specific reference to the rights of persons with disabilities and urged that disability be fully integrated into all efforts towards their implementation. The Minister expressed appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for its hosting in 2012 of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012 and encouraged other governments to actively engage in the regional preparatory process for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. The Minister stressed that Thailand was fully committed to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and referred to its upcoming role as representative of the Asian States at the Fourth Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to be held from 7 to 9 September 2011. In conclusion, the Minister underscored the need for enhancing regional cooperation to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

84. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in her statement, highlighted the importance of this session of the Committee on Social Development as an intergovernmental preparatory body for the 2012 High-level

Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. She noted that Asia-Pacific had pioneered the regional decade initiative as a vehicle for disability-inclusive development and emphasized the Asian-Pacific region's key role in providing impetus to the drafting and adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol thereto. The Executive Secretary highlighted the importance of social protection in setting the agenda for social policy and poverty reduction, noting that it provides a common platform from which to tackle the risks, needs and rights of the most vulnerable parts of the population, including persons with disabilities. She noted that the further ratification, adoption and implementation of the Convention remained a top priority for the region, and indicated the commitment of the secretariat to supporting Governments in promoting disability-inclusive development and a humane future for all in the Asia-Pacific region.

85. Mr. Monthian Buntan, Senator of Thailand and President of the Thailand Association of the Blind, delivered a statement celebrating the Asian-Pacific region's contribution to the negotiation and drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Senator outlined his vision for an accessible and barrier-free Asia-Pacific, in terms of product design, communication, mobility, infrastructure and programmes and services. The Senator illustrated how all people are disabled at different times during their lifetime, be it in infancy, in sickness and/or in old age. The Convention ensures that accessibility and the enjoyment of all rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis is not a privilege but an entitlement. The Senator concluded by emphasizing that the challenge ahead remained implementation of those rights in practice.

86. The Director of the Social Development Division, in her statement, highlighted the compelling vision for accessibility and inclusion projected by the Convention, as it provides a comprehensive approach to protecting, respecting and fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities. She underscored that with the launch of the regional preparatory process leading up to the final review of the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, it would be vital to fully engage persons with disabilities in the process.

87. During the opening session, the Executive Secretary launched the Asia-Pacific "Regional Campaign to Make the Right Real". In the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Meeting in 2012, the Campaign would promote the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its implementation in the Asia-Pacific region.

88. The opening session also featured a sign language interpretation of the fundamental principles of the Convention. The ESCAP film entitled "An Everyday Journey" on a day in the life of a person with disability was screened to highlight the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the importance of accessibility for their full participation and equality.

B. Attendance

89. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members of ESCAP: Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea;

Russian Federation; Singapore; Thailand; United States of America; and Viet Nam. The session was also attended by representatives of the following associate members of ESCAP: Hong Kong, China; and Macao, China.

90. In addition, representatives of the following offices of the United Nations bodies, and specialized agencies and related organizations attended: United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Population Fund; International Labour Organization; International Telecommunication Union; and World Health Organization.

91. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Colombo Plan Secretariat; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

92. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Disabled Peoples' International; Inclusion International; International Council on Social Welfare; International Federation for Human Rights; International Planned Parenthood Federation; Leonard Cheshire Disability; World Federation of the Deaf; World Federation of Occupational Therapists; World Vision International.

93. In addition, the following entities participated as observers: Alliance of Filipinos with Disabilities (AKAP-Pinoy); Asia Disability Institute; Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability which provided real time captioning services to the second session of the Committee on Social Development; Asia Pacific Disability Forum; Australian Federation of Disability Organisations; Committee for a Disability Rights Tribunal for Asia and the Pacific; DAISY Consortium; Danishkadah; Hanoi Independent Living Center; Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities; Korean Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities; Korean Solidarity for Preparation of the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons; Pacific Disability Forum; Nippon Foundation; Thailand Association of the Blind; and United Voice.

C. Election of officers

94. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chairperson: Mr. Prince Abbas Khan (Pakistan)
Vice-Chairperson: Ms. Fatemeh Rakhshani (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Rapporteur: Mr. Wai Keung Sui (Hong Kong, China)

D. Agenda

95. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Review of regional trends and emerging issues in the field of social development, particularly social protection for the most vulnerable social groups.
5. Thematic focus: Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific:

- (a) Mainstreaming disability into the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (b) Mainstreaming disability into national economic and social development plans and strategies;
 - (c) Mainstreaming disability into infrastructure-building and information and communications technology;
 - (d) Women with disabilities;
 - (e) Children with disabilities.
6. Review of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region.
 7. Preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.
 8. Consideration of future programme focus.
 9. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.
 10. Other matters.
 11. Adoption of the report.

E. Side events

96. The following side events were held:

19 October 2010:

1. Side event on “Good practices at the community level – Japan’s initiative for the Asia-Pacific regional cooperation” organized by the Japan Disability Forum in cooperation with the Government of Japan.

20 October 2010:

2. Regional launch of the report of the World’s Women 2010 to mark the commemoration of the first World Statistics Day organized by the Social Development Division and the Statistics Division of ESCAP.
3. Side event on a regional Asia-Pacific disability rights mechanism for effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities organized by the non-governmental Committee for a Disability Rights Tribunal for Asia and the Pacific based in Japan.
4. Proposal for Action Plan of the Third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons organized by the Korean Solidarity for Preparation of the Third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled People.

Annex I

Draft resolution on Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Welcoming the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities^a on 6 May 2008,

Recalling that the General Assembly, in its resolutions 61/106 of 13 December 2006 and 62/170 of 18 December 2007, requested the United Nations system to make concerted efforts to improve the accessibility of its facilities and services for persons with disabilities,

Reaffirming the region's commitment to the principles of creating inclusive and barrier-free societies as outlined in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific^b and Biwako Plus Five towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific,^c

Recalling its resolution 64/8 of 30 April 2008, in which it requested the Executive Secretary to improve the accessibility of the facilities and services of ESCAP for persons with disabilities, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and organizations and disabled persons' organizations,

Noting the progress made by the secretariat in improving the accessibility of its facilities and services for persons with disabilities and acknowledging the need to continue such efforts in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Mindful of the need to share good practices with regard to enhancing accessibility in the region as well as in the United Nations system,

Requests the Executive Secretary, within existing resources:

(a) To develop and implement accessibility policies regarding the secretariat's physical environment, information and communications systems, and other facilities and services, in accordance with the principles and relevant articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

(b) To establish within the secretariat an accessibility board composed of representatives of management and substantive divisions and offices, which would regularly review accessibility in the secretariat and make recommendations for its further improvement to the Executive Secretary;

^a General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

^b E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1 (see also Commission resolution 59/3).

^c E/ESCAP/APDDP(2)/2 (see also Commission resolution 64/8).

(c) To establish mechanisms that promote the hiring and employment of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

(d) To mainstream disability perspectives in its programme of work and operations on a sustainable basis;

(e) To develop a disability-sensitive training programme on the rights of persons with disabilities for all secretariat staff that uses an inclusive approach;

(f) To achieve cost savings in general operating expenses as well as supplies and materials and allocate the savings accrued to the improvement of accessibility within the secretariat;

(g) To report to the Commission at its seventieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex II**List of documents**

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| E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/2 | Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific | 5 |
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| E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/5 | Dates for the third session of the Committee on Social Development | 10 |
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| E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/INF/1 | Information for participants | |
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| E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/INF/3 | Tentative programme | |
| E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/INF/4 | Report of the Expert Group Meeting-Cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012: the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action | 7 |
| E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/INF/5 | Report on the ESCAP / APCD senior officials’ meeting on south-to-south cooperation on disability | 6 |