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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING  
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED  
PERSONS

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1 - 4	2
II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SUGGESTED PRIORITIES FOR GLOBAL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMES DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE DECADE .....	5 - 13	2
III. SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE MID-DECADE REVIEW ...	14 - 34	8
IV. OVERVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES .....	35 - 58	12
V. VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS .....	59 - 70	17

Annexes

I. Projects supported by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons from January 1988 to June 1988 .....	22
II. Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons: Statement of income and expenditure for the biennium 1986-1987 ended 31 December 1987, and Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 December 1987 .....	24
III. Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons: Contributions from Member States .....	26

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-second session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Secretary-General on the evaluation of the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons during the first half of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/42/561) and adopted resolution 42/58 of 30 November 1987, by which the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. In paragraph 17 of its resolution 42/58, the General Assembly requested Member States and all relevant bodies and organs of the United Nations to submit to the Secretary-General their comments on his above-mentioned report and on the recommendations in paragraphs 10 to 39 of the report of the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at the Mid-Point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, 1/ held at Stockholm from 17 to 22 August 1988. It also asked the Secretary-General to submit a report thereon to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1988.

3. The Secretary-General accordingly circulated a note verbale on 16 December 1987 and, in early 1988, submitted to the Economic and Social Council a report 2/ summarizing the comments so far received from 20 Member States 3/ and from the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system. 4/ In the light of the low number of replies, the Council, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit a more detailed report and analysis to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, based also on additional responses received. The aim is to establish a list of priorities for planning global activities and programmes during the remainder of the Decade and beyond.

4. Subsequently, on 15 June 1988, the Secretary-General circulated a note verbale to those Governments which had not yet replied, requesting them to submit their comments by 31 July 1988. Notwithstanding, replies were received from only 11 more Member States. 5/ Of these, only five commented on the recommendations, while the other five reported on their national achievements. These additional views are included in the present report, which should be read in conjunction with the earlier report to the Economic and Social Council. 2/

## II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SUGGESTED PRIORITIES FOR GLOBAL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE DECADE

5. The recommendations of the Global Meeting of Experts are far-reaching and reflect a determination to overcome the difficulties of the first half of the Decade and to accomplish far more during the second five years. Perhaps because efforts regarding disability issues in many countries are still in the formative stages, the many recommendations of the Global Meeting of Experts gave no clear indication of priorities. The Secretary-General cannot fail to note that only 31 Governments have responded to his inquiry on their recommendations.

6. The mid-Decade review exercise, replies received from Member States and the United Nations system, discussions at the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1988 and other available information have shown that not all of the recommendations are unanimously supported. While fully cognizant of the financial limitations at all levels, the Secretary-General believes that much more can and should be done to motivate Governments and organisations to implement the World Programme of Action and to undertake activities that will improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities. Experience gained during the first half of the Decade indicates clearly that additional resources must be mobilized.

7. The Decade serves as the initial time-frame for the implementation of the World Programme of Action. On the basis of an analysis of the above-mentioned information, the following priority activities may be considered for the remainder of the Decade.

A. Activities at the national level

8. Member States, which have the main responsibility for the implementation of the World Programme of Action, are invited to:

- (a) Establish and/or strengthen national committees or similar co-ordinating bodies;
- (b) Develop and implement national plans of action using a multisectoral, interdisciplinary approach;
- (c) Launch a public information and education campaign in which disabled persons are portrayed as equal members of society;
- (d) Support cultural activities to promote awareness of the Decade through such activities as a poster contest among school students, and commemorative postage stamps and post cards;
- (e) Review, update and, where necessary, improve national legislation to ensure general conformity with international standards;
- (f) Consider, in legislation and planning, the rights of disabled persons who are: (i) hearing-impaired, including their right to have their native and indigenous sign language accepted as their official language, and to have sign language interpretation; (ii) visually-impaired, including training in Braille and access to audio aids and large print information; (iii) mentally-impaired, including access to easy reading materials; (iv) speech-impaired, including access to new technologies;
- (g) Formulate and implement disability-related projects for inclusion in technical co-operation programmes financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the country programme funded by the indicative planning figure;

(h) Promote the development and functioning of organizations of disabled persons by providing technical and financial support;

(i) Review and extend services and benefits available to disabled people and their families, aimed at ensuring basic level income maintenance and promoting self-directed personal assistance, housing, transport and other facilities needed for independent living;

(j) Train personnel to build a national capability to deal with disability;

(k) Establish machinery for appropriate data collection on disability to be used in national planning;

(l) Use indigenous raw materials, scientific expertise and production facilities for the manufacture and local repair of appropriate technical aids and appliances needed by disabled persons;

(m) Accede to and implement the provisions of the Nairobi Protocol to the Florence Agreement concerning the duty-free international movement of equipment and material needed to assist the daily living of disabled people;

(n) Ratify, if they have not yet done so, International Labour Organisation Convention No. 159 of 1983 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons;

(o) Support research into the special needs of disabled persons and into programmes to benefit them and their families;

(p) Develop services and facilities to promote the rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities of disabled women, elderly disabled people, mentally ill and other mentally impaired people, multiple disabled persons, disabled refugees and disabled migrants.

## B. Regional activities

9. The regional commissions should be strengthened as focal points for the promotion of technical co-operation activities and the sharing of national resources for personnel training, exchange of information, policy and programme development, and research. Special measures would be necessary to ensure that the commissions are able to:

(a) Provide substantive and technical support to the national committees or similar mechanisms in the formulation and implementation of specific activities for the Decade;

(b) Participate in the established mechanism of the inter-agency meeting on the Decade and to establish inter-organizational task forces on disability;

(c) Provide vital regional inputs to global policies and programmes;

(d) Design specific regional activities for the observance of the Decade, based on the mid-Decade review, for the consideration of their respective executive bodies;

(e) Undertake an inventory of relevant programmes, facilities, institutions and experts, and to develop an information data base to encourage the optimal use of existing resources by all countries of the region.

### C. United Nations Secretariat

10. The focal point role of the United Nations as stimulator and co-ordinator in the implementation of the World Programme of Action was emphasized by the mid-Decade review and the comments of many Member States. The General Assembly may, therefore, wish to:

(a) Urge that priority be given to the promotion of the Decade and to the implementation of the World Programme of Action;

(b) Request increased action on the global public information and education campaign, which has been recommended to reinvigorate the Decade and to promote its objectives;

(c) Encourage global publicity and fund-raising to increase public awareness of the Decade and raise funds to assist disabled people, in particular those in developing countries;

(d) Request a feasibility study on the proposed establishment of a global information system network for the exchanges of disability information and technology, to be supported by Governments and others who have accumulated expertise and experience in the building of information networks, with a view to establishing a data bank of disability statistics and procedures for the dissemination and use of the data;

(e) Recalling its resolution 41/121 of 4 December 1986 on reporting obligations under United Nations instruments on human rights, and to reaffirm the need to implement all international standards which directly or indirectly concern the lives of disabled persons;

(f) Adopt measures to make United Nations meetings, information materials and documents accessible to persons who are sight- or hearing-impaired;

(g) Request concerned United Nations entities and international non-governmental organizations to disseminate widely the Nairobi Protocol to the Florence Agreement concerning the duty-free international movement of equipment and material needed to assist the daily living of disabled people;

(h) Request the organization of regional level technical meetings to prepare a strategy to the year 2000;

(i) Request the international monitoring of disability-related legislation;

(j) Urge the wide distribution and use of all manuals and special publications prepared by the United Nations for the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981, and the Decade, including those regarding access to the physical environment and information, design and adaptation of the physical environment, equalization of opportunities, portrayal of disabled persons in the media, legislation, development of statistics on disabled persons, co-operatives of disabled persons, the organisation and structure of national committees, and organisations of disabled persons;

(k) Invite a feasibility study on the substantive, financial and administrative implications of alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade in 1992, which would enable a review of the global progress achieved and obstacles encountered during the Decade and which would provide a mechanism for proposing those actions needed to the year 2000 and beyond.

D. Activities of agencies and bodies within the United Nations system and inter-agency co-ordination

11. The mid-Decade review stressed that the organs and bodies of the United Nations system could better co-ordinate their efforts on behalf of disabled persons in the developing countries as well as strengthen their ongoing programmes and activities. Action within the inter-agency framework should aim to strengthen national co-ordinating committees, to review and monitor progress on the World Programme of Action, and to assist in carrying out concrete plans and programmes. The following measures are proposed for the remainder of the Decade:

(a) An inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons should be held annually;

(b) Each concerned body or agency should review its disability-related programme with a view to expanding it or making it more effective;

(c) Each body or agency should ensure that the needs of disabled persons are integrated into regular projects, in addition to the specific projects designed to benefit them;

(d) Regional and country offices should promote a better understanding of disability issues, thereby encouraging Governments to give higher priority to disability-related programmes;

(e) Meetings organized or co-sponsored by United Nations bodies and agencies should include experts in disability, to promote the integration of the needs and concerns of disabled persons in national and regional programmes and services;

(f) In keeping with the guidelines in the World Programme of Action (paras. 6-12), the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the United Nations Office at Geneva/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and other interested agencies and organisations, should revise its Manual on the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps;

(g) A global study of the economic consequences of disability and the cost-benefit significance of measures for prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities will be explored with the World Bank, in collaboration with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Geneva;

(h) Technical support and assistance to disabled persons should be provided by international financing institutions, such as the World Bank;

(i) The monitoring and promotion of the implementation of human rights instruments, as they apply to disabled persons, should be carried out by each concerned body and agency in its respective field of competence;

(j) Spatial planning and programmes and projects on the space requirements for disabled persons should receive special attention;

(k) Implementation of Convention No. 159 of the International Labour Organisation on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for Disabled Persons should be monitored closely, with special attention paid to the impact of new technologies on employment opportunities for disabled persons;

(l) A special stamp or series of stamps should be issued to commemorate the Decade;

(m) A complete report on the available disability statistics should be prepared and made available to interested Governments, non-governmental organizations, including organizations of disabled persons and researchers, as well as to the United Nations system.

#### E. Intergovernmental organizations

12. During the mid-Decade review, it became apparent that some intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Economic Community (EEC), the Council of Europe, and the Organization of African Unity and its African Rehabilitation Institute, had taken important initiatives to implement the World Programme of Action. In keeping with this, United Nations bodies and organizations, including the regional commissions, should strengthen their relations with other intergovernmental organizations active in the field of disability, by establishing a system of consultation and collaboration. Similarly, intergovernmental organizations are urged to give priority to issues concerning disabled persons.

#### F. Non-governmental organizations

13. The important role of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the World Programme of Action has been noted and the United Nations has been encouraged to expand its collaboration with them, especially those of disabled persons. To promote further progress during the second half of the Decade, non-governmental organizations are urged, during the remainder of the Decade to:

(a) Establish regular and systematic contacts with the United Nations system and other non-governmental organizations in collecting and disseminating information and research findings; planning activities; sharing innovative experiences; and in maximizing the use of available resources;

(b) Mobilize their networks and resources to publicize the aims and objectives of the Decade;

(c) Provide regular information on their activities and meetings to the Disabled Persons Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and to actively support its activities.

### III. SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE MID-DECADE REVIEW

14. The additional replies received from Member States reinforce most of the views reflected in the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1988 on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. 2/ Additional comments may be summarized as follows:

#### A. Public information and education campaign

15. The recommendation by the Global Meeting of Experts that the General Assembly launch a comprehensive public information and education campaign was supported by three Member States (New Zealand, the Philippines and the United States of America). One Government (United States of America) encouraged the Secretariat to undertake this task from within existing resources or with additional voluntary funding, if it could be found. Another Government (Czechoslovakia) felt that the implementation of this recommendation and others would require substantial funds from the regular budget of the United Nations, which was not practicable given present financial difficulties.

#### B. Special conference on the human rights of disabled persons

16. Two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Italy) supported the drafting of an international convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against disabled persons. One Government (Italy) stressed that not enough instruments existed at the international level to protect disabled persons; a ratified convention would make implementation legally binding upon Member States; there is a perceived need for separate codification focusing on human needs as a way to overcome social and economic gaps between persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons; and a convention would acknowledge that there are specific needs to be met and would establish minimum standards to be followed by all States.

17. Another Government (United States of America) was opposed to a special conference for financial reasons and instead suggested that the proposal be forwarded to the next meeting of the Commission on Human Rights; the Commission



could then request its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on human rights and disability to prepare the outline of a draft treaty for its consideration. Another Government (Switzerland) considered that a new international convention exclusively for disabled persons might further marginalize rather than integrate them.

#### C. Strengthening of regional commissions

18. One Government (Philippines) underscored its strong linkage with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), especially regarding the latter's human resource development programme and its promotion of an exchange of information and expertise in the region. Another Government (United States of America) agreed in principle to the strengthening of regional commissions, as long as this could be funded within existing resources.

#### D. Systematic reproduction of materials in forms suitable to disabled persons

19. Three Governments (Czechoslovakia, Italy and the United States of America) offered reserved support for this recommendation. One Government (Czechoslovakia) said that, while it supported the request for sign language interpretation at meetings concerning the rights of disabled people, which would be attended by persons with hearing impairment, it did not consider it useful to proclaim people with hearing impairment as a linguistic minority with special rights. Other Governments underscored the difficulty of finding sign language interpreters (Italy) or requested a cost study, with the suggestion that the use of volunteers would minimize the costs involved (United States of America). The latter response also suggested that those countries which had hearing-impaired persons on their national delegations should provide sign language interpretation for them.

#### E. New disability fund within the United Nations Development Programme

20. One Government (United States of America), while supporting the inclusion of disability projects in programmes funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), strongly opposed the management by UNDP of the existing, or any new, disability fund. It noted that, as indicated in paragraphs 25 and 26 of the Secretary-General's report (A/42/561), the United Nations had already moved in the other direction by giving more authority over disability fund activities to the United Nations Office at Vienna, a move that that Government supported.

#### F. Establishing a secretariat for the Decade

21. Two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Switzerland) expressed reservations about the feasibility of such a recommendation for financial reasons. One Government (New Zealand) supported moves to set up a secretariat under the supervision of the

Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Another Government (Italy) suggested the strengthening of the Disabled Persons Unit of the Centre, as well as all those organisations in the United Nations system dealing with disability.

22. One Government (United States of America) was pleased with the appointment by the Secretary-General of a special representative to promote the Decade and expressed the hope that this would result in additional resources to strengthen the existing Disabled Persons Unit within the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

G. Setting up an advisory council of experts to advise the Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

23. Two Governments (New Zealand and Italy) supported the establishment of an advisory council of experts to provide advice to the Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. One of them (New Zealand) stated that the setting up of a secretariat and of an advisory council would formalize the machinery needed to plan and implement relevant programmes and activities and to disseminate information and publicity to interested groups. One Government (United States of America) considered that such a council would be too costly and unnecessary. It also noted that non-governmental organisations were free to give advice and suggestions at any time. Another Government (Switzerland) suggested that a secretariat and council should be created only if funds were available.

H. Consultations with and support to organizations representing disabled persons

24. Based on their national experiences, two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Italy) considered this recommendation useful. One Government (United States of America) opposed the recommendations that non-governmental organizations should be allowed to monitor and evaluate all plans, projects and activities concerning disabled persons in the United Nations system, and that they should be funded by the United Nations.

I. Technical co-operation activities

25. One Government (Czechoslovakia) strongly supported the recommendations concerning assistance to disabled persons in developing countries and expressed its readiness to take an active part. Another Government (United States of America) supported the recommendation that Governments should include projects on disability in technical co-operation programmes financed by UNDP through the indicative planning figure assigned to countries. Another Government (Switzerland) emphasized that, if technical co-operation activities are to be encouraged, priority should be given to bilateral co-operation programmes and to concrete aid to disabled persons.

J. International information system

and

K. Report on the Disability Statistics Data Base

26. Five Governments (Czechoslovakia, Italy, New Zealand, the Philippines and the United States of America) generally supported the establishment of an international information system. One Government (Czechoslovakia) did not deem it advisable to include items on disability in population census reports, while another (Philippines) agreed that disability should be included in regular census and national household surveys. Referring to the example of Handynet, which was established by the European Economic Community, one Government (Italy) suggested the creation of a data bank in different languages. Another Government (New Zealand) emphasized that a comprehensive information data base on disabilities should provide information about national and local social welfare services and should be available to advocates who could ensure that all people had equal access to services. Another Government (United States of America) stated that current information in that country could be made available.

L. Global study of the economic consequences of disability by the World Bank

27. Two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Italy) supported such a study, which they felt could be of use worldwide.

M. United Nations personnel policy

28. Two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Italy) supported the annual provision of data by the Secretary-General on the status of disabled persons working in the United Nations Secretariat. Another Government (United States of America) described it as a "long overdue action" and urged the United Nations to complete the work that it had started.

N. Global policy: technical and review meetings

29. Three Governments (Czechoslovakia, Italy and the United States of America) provided varying degrees of support for this recommendation. Two of them (Czechoslovakia and Italy) expressed the view that it might be useful to hold technical meetings before 1992 and a global conference at the conclusion of the Decade, which could help chart action beyond the Decade. One of them (United States of America) felt that the United Nations should prepare a detailed plan for a possible world conference in 1992 that would review the global progress made during the Decade and possibly launch a second United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002); a draft should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session in 1989 and subsequently considered by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

O. Review of legislation concerning disabled persons

30. Six Governments (Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Morocco, the Philippines and Switzerland) reported on national legislative measures. One of the Governments (Dominican Republic) stressed the need for legal procedures that would guarantee the development of activities aimed at protecting this population group. Another Government (Italy) stated that, although it had very advanced legislation, difficulties in implementation remained. Another Government (United States of America) supported a review of legislation and urged the Secretariat to ask national non-governmental organisations in the disability field to report on the situation in their countries; accurate national data could thus be compiled in a timely fashion at little cost to the United Nations.

P. Ratification of Convention No. 159 of the International Labour Organisation

31. Two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Italy) supported this recommendation, with one Government (Czechoslovakia) referring to its own recent ratification of the Convention, and the other (Italy) stating that it was considering doing the same.

Q. Social security systems and economic benefits to disabled persons

32. Support for this issue was expressed by three Governments (Czechoslovakia, New Zealand and Switzerland), each of which elaborated national action already being taken, or needed.

R. Access to technical aids

33. Two Governments (Czechoslovakia and Italy) expressed support for this recommendation, with one of them (Italy) suggesting that industries should be encouraged through incentives to produce the technical aids needed by disabled persons.

S. Groups deserving special attention

34. Most of the responses supported action in this regard and reported on national activities on behalf of disabled women and other groups deserving special attention.

IV. OVERVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES

35. In its resolution 42/58, the General Assembly requested, inter alia, action on specific issues designed to promote the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. It further requested the Secretary-General to report to the

General Assembly at its forty-third session. This section provides an overview of recent activities.

#### A. National committees

36. The General Assembly at its forty-second session urged Member States to rededicate themselves to early and effective implementation of the World Programme and invited Member States to establish or strengthen national committees or similar co-ordinating bodies, in consultation with disabled persons and their organizations.

37. According to the replies to the United Nations mid-Decade questionnaire on the implementation of the World Programme of Action, of the 94 responding countries, 6/87 had established some form of a national co-ordinating body concerned with disability issues. It should be noted that at the end of the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981, it was reported that national committees existed in 141 countries and territories (A/36/351, para. 5). According to information available to the Secretariat, the composition of national committees is varied in membership as well as in the affiliation of the person chosen to head them. Of the countries that reported having national co-ordinating committees, 68 per cent included representatives of organizations of disabled persons. Where local level co-ordinating committees were also present, 89 per cent reported representation of organizations of disabled persons. This trend reflects the emphasis being placed on the involvement of disabled persons in decision-making.

38. In order to encourage and strengthen national committees, and in response to the General Assembly's request that the Secretary-General consider convening an interregional meeting of representatives of such committees, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna is preparing a technical-level meeting in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. The meeting, the aim of which is to provide guidelines on the establishment and functioning of national committees, is expected to take place in early 1989. The guidelines will be incorporated into a technical publication which will be widely disseminated.

#### B. Disability projects in national planning

39. Some Governments have reported significant progress towards the integration of disabled persons into social and economic life. Examples of such action were given in the replies of Member States to the note verbale of the Secretary-General requesting comments on the recommendations of the Global Meeting of Experts.

40. Kuwait reported that, under its Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan (1985-1990), decentralization of welfare institutions for disabled persons to different regions of the country has begun. A combination of both large and small institutions is favoured, with due attention to different types of disabilities. Switzerland has reported concrete action, such as the provision of financial assistance for the construction of sheltered workshops.

41. Morocco reports that training, education and vocational centres have been built for the benefit of disabled persons. It has also encouraged co-operatives. New Zealand reported that the Head Office of its Department of Social Welfare was restructured in 1988, and now includes a Programmes and Services Division with national directorates, each of which is responsible for all services to particular client groups. One of these directorates handles a comprehensive package of benefits for and services to older people and disabled persons.

42. In the Dominican Republic, following the First Workshop Seminar on the Status of Disabled Persons, action is being taken to co-ordinate the activities of the different sectors. In Mexico, recent information shows that there has been increased participation of disabled persons in social, cultural, religious, recreational and community life and in decision-making at all levels. Mexico also reports that the Zapata Rehabilitation Centre now provides a physical education programme for disabled children, as well as education, training and employment for disabled persons.

C. Employment opportunities for disabled persons in the United Nations

43. A major step being undertaken by the United Nations to encourage real involvement of disabled persons in its programmes and activities is the elaboration of a draft plan for the employment of disabled persons in the Secretariat. The organizations of the common system adopted in 1983 guidelines concerning the implementation of a policy statement on the employment of disabled persons. In 1985, they decided to collect information for a review of the practices regarding the employment of disabled persons.

44. Further to discussions at the Staff-Management Co-ordination Committee of the Secretariat in 1983 and in 1985, the Office of Personnel Service (now the Office of Human Resources Management) was asked to prepare a draft comprehensive plan to improve the recruitment of disabled persons and the facilities available to them. The Office of Human Resources Management is expected to circulate the draft plan to all duty stations in late 1988 for the comments of local staff-management bodies. This plan will be finalized in consultation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. It will then be considered by the Staff Management Co-ordination Committee at its next regular session in 1989. The latter's approval is required prior to its inclusion in the personnel policy of the Secretariat.

D. Alternative structures to promote the disability issue

45. In examining ways to ensure a high level of awareness with respect to the issue of disability and to develop the Disabled Persons Unit in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Secretary-General has found that additional support is needed at a time when resources are ever tighter. Despite staff constraints, mandates of recent General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions continue to be carried out. However, difficulties in carrying

out this programme will become even greater as a result of the current post reduction exercise.

46. The need to augment the three regular budget professional posts presently attached to the Disabled Persons Unit have prompted requests for extrabudgetary assistance. One response has been the provision of two professional posts through a generous grant from the Government of Sweden, beginning in October 1988 for an initial period of one year. These new officers will concentrate on the legal aspects of disability and on promoting more effective involvement of non-governmental organisations in the implementation of the World Programme of Action and in the work of the United Nations. Other extra-budgetary resources from the Government of Sweden will be used to establish two special technical advisers on disability posts, one to be based in Africa and the other in the Asia-Pacific region.

47. In preliminary discussions, other Governments and organisations have shown their interest in the possible secondment of or ear-marked funding for other specialised officers who would strengthen the Unit during the remainder of the Decade.

E. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the Decade of Disabled Persons

48. An important step taken during the first half of the Decade was the recent appointment by the Secretary-General of the Special Representative for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The Special Representative, who took up his assignment on 1 April 1988, is based in the Office of the Director-General at the United Nations Office at Vienna. His activities, financed by special voluntary contributions, include the promotion of the objectives of the Decade and, wherever possible, fund-raising on behalf of Decade activities and programmes. In July 1988, he was also designated Chairman of the Committee on Actions for Disabled Persons as part of the United Nations humanitarian and economic assistance relating to Afghanistan. The Special Representative works closely with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the focal point for the Decade.

F. Collaboration and consultation with non-governmental organizations

49. The important role of non-governmental organizations, especially those representing persons with disabilities, has been repeatedly stressed. In order to strengthen collaborative links between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, the possibility of planning regular consultations between non-governmental organizations and the Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, especially prior to or following the inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, is under active consideration.

50. The Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Disabled Persons has regularized its meetings to promote exchanges of information among its members, and

with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Its membership now includes some 15 organisations.

51. Over the years, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs has developed fruitful working relations with a number of non-governmental organisations. Further efforts are being made to identify and classify non-governmental organizations according to specialisation and interest with a view to exchanging information and experience, planning joint activities, promoting research and disseminating research findings. Areas of recent collaboration reflect a wide range of interests, including: sports for disabled persons; rehabilitation; veterans and victims of war; legislation; the town and disabled persons; international classification of impairments, disabilities and handicaps; renewal of inner cities and design in service of disability, aged and handicapped people; human rights; sheltered workshops; problems of mental retardation; media and disabled persons; counselling disabled persons and their families; revitalizing the Decade; and independent living.

52. During the period in question, intensive discussions took place on a proposed global campaign in support of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. This campaign is to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, with the full participation of key international non-governmental organizations, including Disabled Peoples' International, the International Council on Disability, and IMPACT Foundation (United Kingdom) - An International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement. Its dual purpose would be to increase public awareness of the Decade and related issues, and to raise funds for projects to benefit disabled people, in particular those in developing countries. Significant progress has been made in planning the campaign, which would be the first of its kind. While it is generally agreed that such a campaign would have far-reaching potential, and while it has received expressions of support from many quarters, the provision of seed money to launch it remains unresolved. It has therefore been necessary to postpone the starting date, originally foreseen for the latter part of 1988.

53. The two main international umbrella organisations - the International Council on Disability and Disabled Peoples' International - participate regularly in the inter-agency meetings on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

#### G. Activities of the intergovernmental organizations

54. During the first half of the Decade, several intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system initiated activities in the disability field. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which established the African Rehabilitation Institute, based in Harare, operates through focal points in the African subregions. OAU has established a Technical Advisory Committee, of which the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and other concerned United Nations agencies are members.

55. EEC, through its Bureau for Action in Favour of Disabled Persons, organized a meeting on the topic of Mobility and Handicap at Brussels from 28 to 30 January 1988, to assist in the preparation of guidelines for a European policy.



This was further to a seminar on Accessibility of Public Buildings and Facilities for the Disabled, held at Utrecht, the Netherlands, from 30 September to 10 October 1987, which recommended access for all, not only for disabled persons, and suggested that EEC should enact a directive at the European level that would make implementation of the guidelines legally binding upon Member States.

56. Through its Committee on Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled Persons, the Council of Europe has also promoted a number of activities.

#### H. Inter-agency collaboration

57. The fifth inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, which was held at Vienna from 18 to 20 February 1987, stressed the importance of inter-agency planning and the co-ordination of activities for the second half of the Decade. The sixth inter-agency meeting, to be held from 5 to 7 December 1988, will, therefore, focus on the results of the mid-Decade review and will adopt a work-plan for the remainder of the Decade.

#### I. Technical co-operation activities

58. During the period from January 1987 to June 1988, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs provided short-term advisory services at the request of the Governments of Angola, Djibouti, Guinea and Mauritania. In Angola, an advisory mission made a preliminary assessment of the action required to establish a national capacity to produce and maintain orthopaedic and prosthetic appliances. In Guinea and Mauritania, advisory missions were carried out in connection with ongoing institution-building projects directed at establishing national disability centres for training national personnel and for transferring appropriate disability technologies. Advisory services to Djibouti helped to design a management plan and work programme for a disability training project being implemented by the Government in co-operation with Organisation Handicap Internationale, a non-governmental organization. Advice was also provided to Algeria under the project development facility of UNDP, on the design and organization of a programme to train trainers as part of Government's efforts to develop national self-reliance in the disability field.

#### V. VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS

59. Since becoming operational in 1980, the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons has provided over \$US 2 million in grants to 93 projects. The regional distribution of grants is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of grants by region

Region	Number of projects approved		Value of grant	
			(United States dollars)	
	January 1980 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988	January 1980 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988
Africa	19	4	630 375	65 156
Asia and the Pacific	16	7	252 855	84 267
Europe	1		1 440	
Latin America and the Caribbean	6	1	60 550	7 500
Western Asia	2	3	41 493	64 050
Interregional and global	25	9	709 934	87 240
Total	69	24	1 696 647	308 213

60. Table 1 reflects the strong emphasis of the Fund for country and regional-level action; of the 93 projects supported to date, 66 were at country and regional levels, accounting for about 60 per cent of the resources disbursed.

61. During the period from January 1987 to June 1988, the Fund received nearly 70 requests for assistance, of which 24 were approved for funding, involving a resource commitment of \$US 308,213. A list of the projects approved for funding appears in annex I. Although interregional and global projects account for the greatest number of projects and grants (which is due to support provided for activities organized in connection with the mid-Decade review and appraisal), regional and country-level action still account for more than 70 per cent of the grants. The Asia and Pacific region received nearly 30 per cent of all grants, followed by Africa and Western Asia, with some 20 per cent each.

62. In accordance with the guidance received from the General Assembly, priority in the allocation of the resources of the Fund is given to catalytic and innovative activities relating to the implementation of the World Programme of Action. As indicated in table 2, training accounted for nearly one half (48 per cent) of the resources disbursed during the first seven years of the Fund's operation, followed by support for activities of organizations of or concerned with disabled persons (20 per cent). Data collection and applied research was the third major area (14 per cent). This trend continued during the biennium 1987-1988, with training remaining the principal subject area.

Table 2. Distribution of grants by subject area

Area	Number of projects		Value of projects	
			(United States dollars)	
	January 1980 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988	January 1980 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988
Promotional activities	9	1	155 709	14 000
Support to organizations of or concerned with disabled persons	16	1	398 692	5 000
Data collection; applied research	11	5	184 832	88 700
Training	21	9	837 048	131 973
Information exchange	10	7	95 266	53 540
Technical co-operation on disability policies and programmes	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>20 100</u>	<u>15 000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1 696 647</b>	<b>308 213</b>

63. Non-governmental organizations, including those of disabled persons, continue to play a major role as executing agencies for projects assisted by the Fund. Whereas these organizations executed almost half of the projects during the first half of the Decade, they executed about two thirds of the projects during the biennium 1987-1988.

64. A review of selected project experiences shows that an important development during the biennium 1987-1988 was an increased focus on the integration of disabled persons into society through sports - a priority concern identified in the World Programme of Action. For example, the Fund supported training workshops, organized by International Fund Sports Disabled, for sports instructors for disabled persons in Asia, Western Asia and Africa.

65. The Fund continued to assist the Asian Federation of Laryngectomees in the development and expansion of its innovative instructor training programme in the esophageal method of speech, for participants from developing Asian and the Pacific countries. It supported the development of a national rehabilitation training

programme in the People's Republic of China, that is designed to respond to the urgent need for national disability personnel. In the Philippines, the Fund supported a pilot leadership training seminar for disabled persons aimed at developing and reinforcing their capabilities to manage their own organizations. A series of regional seminars supported by the Fund provided both regional inputs to the 1987 Global Meeting of Experts, which reviewed the implementation of the World Programme of Action at the mid-point of the Decade, and to important forums to evaluate its implementation at the regional level. In Djibouti, the Fund co-financed a technical co-operation project, "Assistance to the Disabled", with the help of UNDP, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), and the International Conference for Assistance to Refugees in Africa. This project reflects the important and growing role for the Fund in promoting co-operation and mobilizing critical resources.

66. These are but a few examples of projects being supported by the Fund. They reflect its complementary role, in both the substantive and financial sense, to other forms of assistance available. In each case the Fund contributed to strengthening the capacities of developing countries and regions through the effective use of its modest financial resources. The impact of the Fund's operations appears to have been positive and multi-directional. It continues to play a vital role in raising awareness of disability issues, in providing financial and technical support, and in mobilizing additional resources.

67. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs continues to carry out the managerial responsibilities of the Fund and to seek new and improved ways of streamlining and strengthening its operations. Proposals for funding are appraised by the Social Development Trust Fund Operations Committee, established in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs during 1987. The Committee's funding recommendations are submitted to the United Nations Secretariat for financial approval, with the grants being disbursed and monitored by the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Establishment of the Committee has reduced the time required to appraise and approve projects by approximately 50 per cent.

68. The Fund is uniquely positioned, not only to provide direct substantive and financial support to developing countries, but also to act as a catalyst for practical action. Its seed-money grants have, for instance, served to mobilize an estimated three to five times as many additional resources as those provided. The \$US 308,213 in grants made from the Fund during the period from January 1987 to June 1988, as reported above, resulted in the mobilization of an estimated \$US 1.5 million. Without seed-money grants, these larger resources might not have otherwise become available to benefit disabled persons.

69. The period under review was marked by continued close co-operation between the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and AGFUND in the disability field. Co-financing arrangements totalling \$US 180,000 were effected for six disability-related projects in the developing countries of Djibouti, India, Lebanon, Swaziland, Tunisia and Uruguay. In addition, the Administrative Committee of AGFUND approved co-financing grants for

disability-related projects in Jordan, Lebanon and Mauritania, which total \$US 265,000.

70. In spite of its solid record of achievements, the Fund urgently needs additional resources on a continuing basis if it is to meet its mandate as a source for technical and financial assistance. As has been reported at previous sessions of the General Assembly, the expenditures of the Fund continue to exceed contributions received. (Annex II provides the statement of income and expenditures as at 31 December 1987.) At the 1987 Pledging Conference, 11 countries made pledges totalling \$US 175,933. Unpaid pledges amounted to \$161,434 as at 31 December 1987 (annex III). Overall grants to date exceed \$US 300,000. Unless this trend is soon reversed and the resource capacities of the Fund strengthened and improved considerably, many priority requests from developing countries will not be met and the implementation of the World Programme of Action will be seriously affected.

#### Notes

1/ CSDHA/DDP/GME/7.

2/ E/1988/32.

3/ Belgium, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Oman, Rwanda, Spain, Sweden and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

4/ Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

5/ Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, the Philippines, Poland, Switzerland and the United States of America.

6/ Based on replies from 82 countries contained in CSDHA/DDP/GME/3 plus 12 additional country replies received after the deadline.

ANNEX I

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS  
DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS FROM JANUARY 1988 TO JUNE 1988

A. Africa

1. Ljubljana Service for Technical Co-operation: Assistance in technical aids and related services for selected African countries.
2. International Fund Sports Disabled: Training and instruction workshop for coaches and trainers for sports for disabled.
3. Ljubljana Service for Technical Co-operation: Workshop for key medical and technical personnel in prosthetics and orthotics for East African region.
4. Assistance for the formulation of a national programme of action concerning disabled persons (Djibouti).

B. Asia and the Pacific

5. Asian Federation of Laryngectomees Association: Support for the instructor's training courses in the esophageal method for laryngectomees in Asia (1987) (regional).
6. International Fund Sports Disabled: Second International Workshop of Sports for Disabled in Favour of Developing Countries (Kuala Lumpur, 13-27 April 1987) (regional).
7. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP): Regional expert seminar to review achievements at the mid-point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (Bangkok, 2-5 June 1987).
8. Assistance for the National Rehabilitation Training course for Disabled Persons (People's Republic of China).
9. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP): Promotion of Community Awareness Programmes concerning Disability (regional).
10. Asian Federation of Laryngectomees Associations: Support for the instructor's training course in the esophageal method for laryngectomees in Asia (regional).

C. Latin America and the Caribbean

11. Disabled Peoples' International (North America and Caribbean region): Regional Conference on the Mid-Decade of Disabled Persons (Kingston, 27-28 July 1987).

#### D. Western Asia

12. Assistance to the Al-Amal Institute for Mentally Retarded Children - expansion of the Broummana Centre (Lebanon).

13. International Fund Sports Disabled: Training and instruction workshop for coaches and trainers from selected countries of western Asian region for development and promotion of sports for the disabled (regional).

14. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA): Seminar on capabilities and needs of the disabled (regional).

#### E. Interregional and global

15. IMPACT Foundation (United Kingdom): Preparatory assistance for planning and organization of a global event in support of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

16. International Council for Building Research Studies and Documentation (CIB): Second International Seminar on Creating Non-handicapping Environments; renewal of inner cities (Prague, 15-17 October 1987).

17. Polish Society for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons: International Seminar on mass media and disabled persons (Warsaw, 23-25 September 1987).

18. Rehabilitation International (RI): International Expert Group Meeting on Legislation on Equalization of Opportunities of Disabled Persons (Vienna, 1-6 June 1986).

19. Rehabilitation International (RI): Third Consultation of the International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling; counselling disabled persons and their families (Vienna, 4-8 July 1987).

20. Global Meeting of Experts to Review and Assess the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at mid-Decade; assistance to disabled participants from developing countries (Stockholm, 17-22 August 1987) (interregional).

21. World Blind Union (WBU): Support for publication of the International Newsletter for the Deaf-Blind, 1987 edition.

22. Disabled Peoples' International: NGO Forum on United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (October 1987).

23. Disabled Peoples' International: International Symposium on United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

24. United Nations Statistical Office: Publication of Statistics and Indicators on Disabled Persons.

ANNEX II

SCHEDULE 15.4.18

VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS

I. Statement of income and expenditure for the  
biennium 1986-1987 ended 31 December 1987

(United States dollars)

Income

Pledged contributions	132 750
Public donations	136 000
Interest income	135 412
Miscellaneous income	<u>49 148</u>
Total income	<u>453 310</u>

Expenditure

Staff and other personnel costs	103 404
Travel	5 617
Contractual service	4 147
Operating expenses	3 657
Acquisitions	11 725
Fellowships, grants, other	<u>592 590</u>
Subtotal	721 140
Programme support costs	<u>93 598</u>
Total expenditure	<u>814 738 a/</u>
Excess of income over expenditure	<u>(361 428)</u>

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a/ Excludes expenditure not reported by UNDP for allocations of \$210,880.



II. Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 December 1987

(United States dollars)

Assets

Cash	723 448
Pledged contributions unpaid (schedule 15.4.1)	161 434
Accounts receivable	2 600
Operating funds provided to executing agencies	244 253
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>1 131 735</b>

Liabilities

Unliquidated obligations	34 011
Reserve for allocations	210 880
Deferred income	175 933
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>420 824</b>

Fund balance

Balance available 1 January 1986	1 283 219
Add: Excess of income over expenditure	(361 428)
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>921 791</b>
Less: Transfers to reserves	210 880
<b>Balance available 31 December 1987</b>	<b>710 911</b>
<b>Total liabilities and fund balance</b>	<b>1 131 735</b>

ANNEX III

VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS

Contributions from Member States\*

(In United States dollars)

<u>Countries/trust funds</u>	<u>Unpaid pledges as at 1 January 1986</u>	<u>Add: pledges for 1986 and 1987 and adjustments of prior pledges</u>	<u>Add: pledges for future years</u>	<u>Less: collections during 1986 and 1987</u>	<u>Less: loss (gain) on exchange</u>	<u>Unpaid pledges as at 31 December 1987</u>
<b>Voluntary fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons</b>						
Austria	16 949	21 127	10 435 a/	23 962	(11 973)	36 522
Belgium	-	35 000	-	35 000	-	-
Chile	-	5 000	-	-	-	5 000
China	-	20 000	10 000	10 000	-	20 000
Colombia	-	-	500	-	-	500
France	-	29 507	17 699 a/	30 546	(1 039)	17 699
Greece	-	10 000	5 000 a/	10 000	-	5 000
Holy See	-	2 000	1 000	2 000	-	1 000
Indonesia	-	3 000	-	-	-	3 000
Italy	-	-	122 449	100 000	-	22 449
Luxembourg	-	1 786	-	-	(241)	2 027
Mauritius	-	1 000	-	1 000	-	-
Oman	5 000	(5 000)	-	-	-	-
Panama	-	350	350	-	-	700
Philippines	-	1 000	1 000	-	-	-
Senegal	-	301	-	301	-	-
Uganda	-	2 240	7 000	-	(31 093)	40 333
Yugoslavia	-	4 939	-	-	735	4 204
Zaire	-	500	500	-	-	1 000
Subtotal	21 949	132 750	175 933	212 809	(43 611)	161 434

\* The cumulative total of contributions from Member States in the period from 1978 to 1986 was \$1,514,561 (see A/42/551, annex III).

a/ Subject to parliamentary approval.