



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 August 2010

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Committee on Social Development

Second session

Bangkok, 19-21 October 2010

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**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**

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

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In its resolution 66/11 of 19 May 2010, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, among other things, to encourage the participation of all key stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities from Asia and the Pacific, in the preparatory process leading to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

In pursuance of the above-mentioned mandate, 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 was held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 June 2010 to launch the preparatory process for the High-level Meeting, which is to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in 2012.

The Committee's attention is drawn in particular to section IV of the present document, which contains the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation on the way forward beyond 2012. The recommendations focus on three areas: (a) a new decade; (b) a strategy for a new decade; and (c) the outcome document of the 2012 High-level Meeting.

In the light of these recommendations, the Committee may wish to guide the secretariat on the substantive preparations for the 2012 High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

Contents

	Page
I. Background.....	2
II. Objectives of the Meeting.....	2
III. Issues related to the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.....	3
IV. Recommendations on the way forward beyond 2012.....	4

I. Background

1. In its resolution 66/11 of 19 May 2010 on regional 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, the Commission, among other things, called upon all members and associate members and key stakeholders to actively contribute to the preparatory process leading up to, as well as to participate in, the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, which would be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in 2012. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to encourage the participation of all key stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities from Asia and the Pacific, in the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

2. In pursuance of the above-mentioned resolution, 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 was held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 June 2010.

3. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation was attended by 43 experts from government and disabled people's organizations (DPOs), as well as representatives of intergovernmental and international organizations, including those from the United Nations system. In addition, 45 representatives of DPOs attended as observers.

4. The secretariat presents the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation for the consideration of the Committee.

II. Objectives of the Meeting

5. The objectives of the Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation were as follows:

(a) To review the achievements, challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012;¹

(b) To identify the way forward in preparation for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

¹ The Decade was proclaimed by the Commission in its resolution 58/4 of 22 May 2002.

III. Issues related to the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012

A. Review of the process leading up to the final review of the implementation of the Decade

6. The secretariat presented a road map for the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Meeting. It indicated that the Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation constituted the launch of the regional preparatory process, which comprised three tracks: (a) intergovernmental consensus-building and follow-up; (b) stakeholder engagement and advocacy; and (c) assessment of the achievements and remaining challenges of the second Decade.

7. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation expressed support for the three-track approach for the regional preparatory process, including the activities outlined by the secretariat and the emphasis on engagement of key stakeholders, particularly DPOs, in the process.

B. Assessment of the achievements of the Decade to date

8. The secretariat presented an assessment of the achievements and remaining challenges of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

9. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation noted that, although progress had been made in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action² and the Biwako Plus Five,³ many challenges remained. Areas in which progress had been particularly noted included strengthened measures to promote the empowerment and rights of persons with disabilities, a greater policy commitment to rights-based and social model-based approaches, improved data collection capacities, and increased attention to disability-inclusive development.

10. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation identified some of the remaining challenges, including the need: (a) to ensure recognition of the diversity of needs of persons with disabilities; (b) to address issues faced by women and children with disabilities, especially in rural and remote areas; (c) to harmonize national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;⁴ (d) to build the capacity of DPOs and promote their effective participation in decision-making; (e) to improve data collection and research; (f) to mainstream disability perspectives into all areas of development; and (g) to address implementation and monitoring gaps from the first two Asia-Pacific disability decades.

11. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation called for accelerated action to ensure the full implementation of existing commitments, including those in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to address remaining challenges.

12. The need for a stronger focus on effective mechanisms at the regional, subregional, national and community levels to monitor gaps and

² E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1 (see also Commission resolution 59/3).

³ E/ESCAP/APDDP(2)/2 (see also Commission resolution 64/8).

⁴ General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

progress was strongly emphasized by the Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation. The importance of all stakeholders paying greater attention to accountability was also highlighted, as was the critical role of high-level political commitment. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation observed that genuine progress in addressing disability issues would contribute to more just and inclusive societies.

C. Review of the tentative outline of the study on persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific to be launched at the 2012 High-level Meeting

13. The secretariat presented an outline of a research study that would be prepared as an input to the High-Level Meeting. It indicated that the research would articulate the voices of persons with disabilities and bring them into the process of policymaking and implementation. The well-being and livelihood of persons with disabilities had been chosen as the main focus of the proposed study to provide a coherent framework for analysing the diverse types of barriers (physical and information accessibility, social constraints, transport, communication, education and finance) as well as gaps in implementation and policy formulation.

14. The research study would address a gap in regional research on barriers faced by persons with disabilities. The secretariat highlighted the importance of involving all stakeholders in the design, implementation and dissemination of the research and its outcome. The importance of active government participation in providing data and information for the study was underscored.

15. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation commended the secretariat's initiative. The representatives of DPOs expressed full support for the initiative. They also expressed an interest in participating in the research. Several experts offered their support to the secretariat in the planning and implementation of the research and the dissemination of its outcomes.

16. Some experts also recommended that the proposed research outcomes be used as a benchmark at the start of a new decade of persons with disabilities, which could be followed by further phases of data collection to monitor progress towards the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

17. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation commended the bottom-up approach proposed by the secretariat. Appreciation was expressed for the use of qualitative and quantitative data analysis. It was emphasized that research capacity must be built among those involved in country-level research, particularly the teams responsible for ground-level data collection. For comprehensive coverage, the importance of collecting data from a variety of sources, including government and disabled people's organizations, was highlighted.

IV. Recommendations on the way forward beyond 2012

18. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation considered the secretariat document entitled "Proposals on the way forward after 2012". It noted that, as at 1 June 2010, 30 Governments in the Asia-Pacific region had signed the Convention and 18 had confirmed, ratified or acceded to it.

19. The Chairperson of Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific presented the outcome of a meeting entitled "Asian and Pacific Disabled Peoples' Organizations United: towards the Establishment of the Regional Decade on the Effective Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", which had been held in Bangkok on 21 and 22 June 2010. The outcome document, entitled "Bangkok Recommendations" (see E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/INF/4, annex II), called for a new decade that would promote ratification and implementation of the Convention. It underscored, among other things, the leadership of disabled peoples' organizations in supporting the implementation of the Convention at the regional, subregional and national levels. Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific also circulated a draft input entitled "Incheon strategy" for consideration by the Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation.

20. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation undertook group discussions on the way forward.

A. A new decade

21. It was recognized that, while there had been significant progress in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, more action was needed to achieve the full inclusion of persons with diverse disabilities. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation thus expressed strong support for the proclamation by the Commission of a new regional decade.

22. Various options were considered concerning a theme for a possible new decade focusing on the Convention and disability-inclusive development.

23. The purpose and primary focus of the new decade would be as follows:

(a) To promote regional and international cooperation on good practices concerning the rights and needs of persons with disabilities;

(b) To accelerate in Asia and the Pacific the ratification, harmonization and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

(c) To promote the implementation of the Convention in all subregions of Asia and the Pacific;

(d) To keep a strong national focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities as a development priority;

(e) To remove attitudinal, physical, institutional and policy-related barriers in order to increase the participation of persons with diverse disabilities in decision-making, self-determination and human-centred development;

(f) To strengthen multisector engagement and the sustainability of resource allocations for disability-inclusive development;

(g) To facilitate local, national and subregional tracking of progress using measurable and achievable indicators;

(h) To improve community-based services for diverse groups of persons with disabilities.

B. A strategy for a new decade

24. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation considered the following possible elements for a strategy for a new decade:

- (a) Reflect evidence-based research findings;
- (b) Embody the spirit and intent of the Convention;
- (c) Emphasize, through action, gender equality and the inclusion of all groups of persons with disabilities and their families that had hitherto been excluded from mainstream policies and programmes, including deaf persons, persons who are deaf-blind, persons with multiple disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with higher brain dysfunction, persons with intractable and chronic diseases, persons with autism, and women and children with disabilities;
- (d) Support concrete and practical implementation that would yield tangible results;
- (e) Encourage the promulgation, implementation and review of anti-discrimination legislation to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities;
- (f) Promote multisectoral and wide stakeholder and grass-roots participation in fostering change for disability-inclusive development;
- (g) Enhance the sustainability of more resource allocations through, among other things, disability-sensitive budgeting, promotion of corporate social responsibility and adoption of business models, such as social enterprises;
- (h) Promote networking and collaboration among disability-inclusive business enterprises;
- (i) Emphasize the role of disabled people's organizations in all processes concerning the new decade;
- (j) Highlight the role of organizations of parents and families of persons with disabilities in relevant processes concerning the new decade;
- (k) Ensure capacity development of persons with disabilities, including for more effective advocacy;
- (l) Ensure capacity development for the families and allies of persons with disabilities for more effective advocacy and support;
- (m) Use diverse approaches, for example, community-based rehabilitation and independent living, to empower persons with disabilities and accelerate the implementation of the Convention;
- (n) Address the need for stronger and more inclusive community-based development and rehabilitation;

(o) Reinforce a paradigm shift towards a social model of consumer-driven, community-based service delivery and independent living;

(p) Employ accessible information and communications technology (ICT) as a tool for social change;

(q) Promote the mainstreaming of disability perspectives in all policy domains, programmes and services;

(r) Utilize subregional mechanisms, including ESCAP subregional offices, for implementation of activities.

C. Outcome document of the 2012 High-level Meeting

25. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation took the view that the outcome document could address the following issues:

(a) Wider ratification of, or accession to, the Convention;

(b) Commitment of adequate resources for addressing issues identified in the decade strategy;

(c) Establishment of clear, achievable and measurable targets and plans for decade action at all levels;

(d) Stronger articulation of the silent voices of the excluded, including deaf persons, persons with intellectual disabilities and their families, persons with psychosocial disabilities, women and children with disabilities, persons who are deaf-blind, persons with autism, and persons with multiple disabilities;

(e) Disability-inclusive development, mainstreaming and “last mile connectivity” with respect to missing links for accessibility and full inclusion:

(i) Early detection and intervention;

(ii) Education and training;

(iii) Empowerment of persons with disabilities;

(iv) Information and communications technology, including assistive technology and sign language interpretation and captioning, and literacy promotion;

(v) Employment and entrepreneurship development;

(vi) Prevention of HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases;

(vii) Disaster risk reduction and management, including silent pandemics;

(viii) The built environment and public transport;

(ix) Statistics and research;

- (x) Regional and international development agendas and programmes;
- (f) Enhancement of ESCAP capacity and resources for supporting the implementation of the new decade through, among other things, the following:
 - (i) Provision of information in accessible formats and easy-to-understand language for deaf persons (sign language interpretation and captioning in meetings with deaf participants), blind persons and persons with intellectual disabilities;
 - (ii) Improvement of the accessibility of ESCAP premises so that it becomes a model for the United Nations system in Asia and the Pacific;
 - (iii) Employment of persons with disabilities at ESCAP headquarters and its subregional offices.

D. Outcome document links

26. The Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation recommended that the outcome document be linked with other regional and international instruments and measures in order to reinforce policy and programme implementation.
