




Side Event: “INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT”
Commission for Social Development
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SUMMARY

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H.E. Ambassador Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, DESA, emphasized the role of the United Nations in providing a platform for discussing ideas such as inclusive development. He underscored the leading role of civil society in pushing governments to understand the importance of issues such as the exclusion of persons with disabilities from development initiatives.

DESA, in keeping with the UN’s mission of ensuring dignity for all in societies based on justice and equity, is seeking to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in development processes. H.E. stressed that urgent action is needed to ensure the inclusion of at least 400 Million persons with disabilities living in developing countries to break the cycle of poverty and disability. Highlighting the importance of implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a means to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities, H.E. reinforced the pledge of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to make the UN a fully accessible building, “we cannot just talk about issues, we have to live them,” the Assistant Secretary-General remarked.

Yetnebersh Nigussie Molla of the Ethiopian Center for Disability & Development emphasized the importance of basing all development work on human rights, ensuring that inclusion be the guiding principle of development work. Highlighting a number of international, regional and bilateral development initiatives, she weighed the positive impact of inclusion of persons with disabilities as an emerging issue against the highly fragmented nature of current initiatives.

National partnerships on inclusion of persons with disabilities could serve as a principle means to ensure that access for and participation of persons with disabilities based on human rights is stepped up. Pointing to the example of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Molla underscored the importance of creating a critical mass at the national level, of Disabled People’s Organizations, NGOs, government and citizens to making international achievements applicable at the country level. In particular, the advocacy skills of Disabled People’s Organizations on inclusive development needed to be strengthened through such

initiatives to ensure also that persons with disabilities be included in all processes from the start.

Emphasizing that the challenges are immense, Ms. Molla underscored the importance of bringing about a paradigm shift, which views disability as a publicly shared concept and cross-cutting issue that applies to society as a whole. In closing, she pointed to the need for accountability of all processes. The goal, she observed is “to create a society that celebrates all kinds of differences – that is the responsibility of all!”

Nolan Quigley of IDDC, chairing the meeting, highlighted how the poverty described in each of the MDGs impacts specifically on persons with disabilities. However, neither the goals themselves or the specific targets they contain mention disability. This, he argued, means that persons with disabilities are often left out of international development and poverty reduction programmes. For this reason, IDDC has launched a new web-based resource which highlights why the MDGs matter to persons with disabilities (See www.IncludeEverybody.org). He also stressed the importance of addressing the MDGs through the perspective of human rights, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which came into force in 2008. Using examples from the IncludeEverybody website, he highlighted how addressing each of the MDGs can be linked to rights in the Convention.

MDG 1: Including Persons with Disabilities: Eradication of Extreme Poverty & Hunger
→ an adequate standard of living and social protection for persons with disabilities, including through access to poverty and hunger eradication programmes is reflected in Article 28 (2) (b) CRPD

MDG 2: Including Persons with Disabilities: To Achieve Universal Primary Education
→ it is estimated that 90% Children with disabilities in Africa do not go to school. The right of persons with disabilities, particularly children with disabilities, to inclusive universal primary education is reflected in Articles 7 & 24 CRPD

MDG 3: Inclusion of Women with Disabilities to Promote Gender Equality
→ the protection of the integrity of women and girls with disabilities, mindful of the impact of multiple discrimination are reflected in Articles 6 & 16 CRPD

MDG 4: Include Children with Disabilities to Reduce Child Mortality
→ abandonment and discrimination in health care can lead to higher prevalence of disease and malnutrition among children with disabilities. Their improved protection particularly by providing accessible health care services is reflected in Articles 6 & 25 CRPD

MDG 5: Inclusion of Women with Disabilities to Achieve Improved Maternal Health
→ assumed to lead asexual lives, women with disabilities are more likely to be excluded from health care and information programmes. Free or affordable health care for women with disabilities, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and population-based public health programs is reflected in Article 25 (a) CRPD

MDG 6: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities to Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria & other Diseases
→ it is estimated that prevalence of HIV among mothers of children with disabilities is double the average. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health for

persons with disabilities, without discrimination on the basis of disability is reflected in Article 25 CRPD

MDG 7: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities to Ensure Environmental Sustainability

→ among society's poorest, persons with disabilities are most at risk from changing climate and natural disasters. The sharing of scientific and technical knowledge with a focus on accessibility and inclusion is reflected in Article 32 (c); the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the preparation for and the response to situations of risk, such as humanitarian disasters is reflected in Article 11 CRPD

MDG 8: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities to Develop A Global Partnership

→ the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in development processes is enshrined in the first stand-alone provision on international cooperation in a core human rights treaty, Article 32 CRPD incorporates the key to unlock the exclusion of persons with disabilities in development processes: **"Inclusive Development"**.

Call to Action:

Following a discussion, with contributions and messages of support from national delegations, UN staff and NGOs alike, the meeting concluded with a call to use upcoming initiatives to further the cause of inclusive development. These are likely to include: Working Groups within the Conference of States Parties on the CRPD; an expert group on Human Rights Based Approach to International Cooperation & CRPD and a Resolution or other Commitment on Inclusive MDG Review (2010).

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