

ANNEX I – CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS (GENERAL)

Recommendations of the European Conference on Disability and Development Cooperation

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Impact and Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in Developing Countries

20-21 November 2006, Brussels

The vast majority, 80%, of the 650 million persons with disabilities worldwide live in developing countries. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented amongst the poorest persons in the world. 20% of the world's poorest people are persons with disabilities. The first European Conference on the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held in Brussels on 20-21 November 2006 focused on this link between poverty, human rights, disability and development cooperation.

A unique gathering of key decision makers and experts from the United Nations, the OHCR, the EU Member State Governments, the EU institutions, the World Bank, the OECD, academic and research institutions, persons with disabilities organisations, and non-governmental development organisations came together in Brussels on 20-21 November 2006. The Conference formulated ideas for a strategy to promote the UN Convention and its role in advancing development policies inclusive of disability.

Key messages from the Conference

- There is a need for cooperation and alliance-building in order to maximize the impact of Article 32, the UN Convention Article on International Cooperation. Referring to the motto of the international disability movement 'Nothing about us without us' persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the South (DPOs) must be at the centre of this process. For this to happen, capacity building of DPOs, particularly in the South, is essential.
- All stakeholders must build their own capacity and knowledge on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and actively promote and raise awareness about the Convention towards others. This includes producing accessible, easy to understand formats of the convention in local languages, and the use of accessible and appropriate media to generate interest in the Convention.
- Development funding must not go against the terms and spirit of the new UN Convention, and therefore must not create new, or prolong existing, barriers for persons with disabilities, but adopt basic standards of accessibility, in line with the principles of 'accessibility for all'.

There is now a UN Convention which upholds the rights of person with disabilities. Article 32 brings into being legal recognition of inclusive development - development cooperation inclusive of persons with disabilities. There are no more excuses for not making development cooperation more inclusive!

Conference recommendations

I - UN Convention: recommendations on follow-up

- For all stakeholders¹ to consider the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, not in isolation, but rather in conjunction with the other Human Rights Conventions. Stakeholders must consider how the body of these international legal frameworks can have a positive impact on the lives of persons with disabilities in the poorest countries and communities.
- The forthcoming EU Presidencies must play an active role in encouraging signature, ratification and implementation of the UN Convention. The German EU Presidency should introduce Article 32 (International Cooperation) of the UN Convention of the Rights for persons with disabilities as an agenda item into the debate of the respective Council Committees (CODEV, COREPER) and the GAERC, to agree on a Action Plan on how EU Member States and EU institutions can move forward to comply with the terms of Article 32.
- Multilateral and bilateral agencies including the EU member states and the European Commission should discuss with developing countries how to go forward on the UN Convention with respect to the framework of National Development Plans, National Poverty Alleviation Strategies, Country Strategy Papers and the Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers.
- Governments in the North and the South should develop a clear strategy at country level on ratification and implementation of the UN Convention in consultation with DPOs and other stakeholders, including an Action Plan to achieve Inclusive Development in the context of Article 32 ('International Cooperation').
- DPOs should facilitate the ratification process by screening the legislature in their respective countries and identify the legislative revisions necessary for the ratification of the UN convention.
- DPOs should take an essential and active role to hold Governments' accountable for ratification and implementation of the Convention.
- DPOs should advocate for and ensure that the Convention is accessible to all persons with disabilities and, therefore, available in accessible formats as well as local and easy to understand languages.

II - Awareness raising

- All stakeholders have a duty to raise awareness about the Convention.

¹ All stakeholders: multilateral and bilateral agencies including the EU institutions and EU member states; Governments of developing countries, development NGOs, and organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs)

- Stakeholders must use all forms of accessible and appropriate media and use media opportunities in a creative way to promote the Convention and to raise awareness on disability issues.

III - Participation

- DPOs, as the voice of all persons with disabilities, have to be inclusive themselves , both by representing persons with all forms of disability, by representing children and women with disability as well as men, and by representing rural as well as urban voices.
- DPOs should take an active role in the development debate in their country and engage pro-actively in debates related to National Development Plans, National Poverty Alleviation Strategies; PRSPs and Country Strategy Papers.
- Governments of developing countries and multilateral and bilateral agencies (including the EU Member States and the Commission) should pro-actively facilitate the participation of DPOs and disability NGOs in development debates.

IV - Partnership

- All stakeholders should recognize the importance of alliance building and networking for the Convention to be ratified and implemented globally.
- The disability sector should develop partnerships with the human rights sector and the wider Civil Society movement.

V - Inclusive practices

- All stakeholders must adopt basic standards of accessibility, in line with the principles of 'accessibility for all', as a baseline criterion for environments, technology and services they work in and support, in order to avoid the creation of, for example, inaccessible schools, hospitals or water and sanitation projects.
- All stakeholders must establish an internal organisational culture which creates incentives rather than disincentives for the inclusion of marginalised groups. Often bureaucratic barriers prevent direct partnership with grass-roots DPOs. Ways should be found to overcome these bureaucratic barriers whether by adapting donor requirements, or building capacity of DPOs, among other actions.
- All stakeholders should work on an organisational culture which embraces the notion of integral human development and dignity for all.
- All stakeholders should be encouraged to conduct a social exclusion analysis before drafting National Development Plans, National Poverty Alleviation Strategies, PRSPs, Country Strategy Papers and other relevant policies.. Poverty reduction measures cannot be successful if they do not address the impact of discrimination faced by person

with disabilities in respect of access to health care, education, housing, employment, micro-finance, protection of the law and other social services.

VI - Capacity building

- Development NGOs, multilateral and bilateral agencies must recognize the need for capacity building of DPOs in developing countries and support their empowerment so DPOs can act effectively and with confidence in decision making which affects the lives of persons with disabilities.
- Governments of developing countries must recognize and support DPOs in their political role as part of the wider Civil Society movement.
- All stakeholders have the duty to build their own capacity and knowledge on the UN convention and to raise awareness about the Convention amongst other stakeholders.

VII – The development of organisations’ own internal resources

Human resources

- All stakeholders should ensure that appropriate human resources are devoted to disability and inclusive development in order to build organizational learning and expertise.

Financial resources

- All stakeholders should apply the twin track approach to disability funding support, internally within their operations; i.e. to support disability specific actions as well as to introduce the disability component across all projects and initiatives.
- Multilateral and bilateral agencies such as the EU member states and the European Commission, Southern governments and NGOs should pro-actively assure that persons with disabilities are no longer discriminated against and excluded from development cooperation programmes and actively seek their inclusion in all poverty eradication programmes.

Technical resources

- Multilateral and bilateral agencies, Governments of developing countries and NGOs must develop tools to better monitor spending with a particular view to providing transparent and comprehensive information on funding support for disability initiatives in developing countries.
- Multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and Governments of developing countries should systematically conduct disability awareness training internally within their own organisations.
- Multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and Governments of developing countries should develop manuals and guidelines on inclusive sector policies.

- Multilateral and bilateral agencies, Governments and NGOs should facilitate and help grass-roots DPOs to document best practices of inclusive development.

Disability Policies

- Agencies, Governments and NGOs must develop a policy on disability inspired by the Convention which includes mechanisms for practical application and follow-up.

ANNEX II – CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS THE EU

Recommendations of the European Conference on Disability and Development Cooperation

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Impact and Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in Developing Countries

20-21 November 2006, Brussels

Recommendations towards all the EU Institutions (Council, Commission, Parliament)

- Build internal capacity and knowledge on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (The Convention) and raise awareness about the Convention amongst other stakeholders by way of referring to the Convention in relevant documents and policy discussions;
- Establish a dialogue between EU and developing countries on how to go ahead on the UN Convention on the Rights for persons with disabilities with respect to the framework of the Country Strategy Papers and the Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers;
- Internal disability awareness training should be undertaken systematically within EU institutions;
- Provide incentives within the EU institutions for initiatives and actions which will give a positive image of disability policy and practice in the context of development cooperation;
- Ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are meaningfully involved in all Civil Society consultations carried out by EU delegations;
- Make available EU funding for the capacity building of disabled peoples organizations (DPOs) and other Civil Society groups working on disability issues; notably by responding to demands/ request for support from organizations in the South;
- Recognize the importance of alliance building by encouraging and supporting partnerships between the various sectors and actors as well as across different discriminated and marginalized groups;
- Pro-actively and meaningfully assure that persons with disabilities are no longer discriminated against and excluded from development cooperation programmes and actively seek their inclusion in all poverty eradication programmes;
- Research the possibility to conduct a social exclusion analysis before drafting Country Strategy Papers and other relevant policies;

- EU development funds must not go against the terms and spirit of the new UN Convention, they must therefore not create new or prolong existing barriers for persons with disabilities but adopt basic standards of accessibility, in line with the principles of 'accessibility for all';
- Establish tools to better monitor EU spending in developing countries with a particular view to providing transparent and comprehensive information on funding support for initiatives targeting persons with disabilities and/or integrating them;
- Apply the twin track approach in EU supported operations; ie to support disability specific actions as well as to introduce the disability component across all projects and initiatives;

Specific recommendations towards the European Council

- The German EU Presidency should introduce Article 32 (International Cooperation) of the UN Convention of the Rights for persons with disabilities as an agenda item into the debate of the respective Council Committees (CODEV, COREPER) and the GAERC, to agree on a Action Plan on how EU Member States and EU institutions can move forward to comply with the terms of Article 32;
- The forthcoming EU Presidencies should play an active role in encouraging signature, ratification and implementation of the UN Convention;

Specific recommendations towards the European Commission

- Increase in human resource provisions inside the External General Directorates of the European Commission working on 'disability and development' and facilitating the inclusion of persons with disabilities in policies and programs of the EU development co-operation and humanitarian aid;
- Increase in technical resource provisions on inclusive sector policies inside the External general Directorates of the European Commission;
- Follow-up the EU Guidance Note on Disability & Development; the Guidance Note should be updated and transformed into a stronger tool which gives clear guidelines for practical application, e.g. in the context of the PCM Planning Guide;

Specific recommendation towards the European Parliament

- The European Parliament must continue to call for the implementation by the Commission and Council of the demands made by the Resolution on Disability and Development - P6_TA-PROV(2006)0033 (19 January 2006).

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