

7 November 2003

Beijing Declaration on Elaboration of an International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*

We, the participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam and Hong Kong, China in the *UN ESCAP Regional Meeting on an International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*, which was successfully convened at Beijing from 4 to 7 November 2003, present the following statement of recommendations on the elaboration of an international convention to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Bearing in mind the fundamental values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations that all human beings are equal in rights and dignity and equally entitled to civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights;

Taking note with concern that opportunities for full and effective participation of the estimated 600 million persons with disabilities, of whom 400 million live in Asia and the Pacific, in social, economic and cultural life and, in civil and political life remain limited due to a number of structural, environmental and attitudinal factors;

Taking further note with deep concern that obstacles to the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities have resulted in persistent poverty, social exclusion and marginalization, which impede the full and effective exercise of their fundamental rights enshrined in international instruments.

We, therefore:

1. Reaffirm that persons with disabilities, as human beings with equal status and dignity, are entitled to equal rights and fundamental freedoms as all others.

2. Urge that Governments take actions to further commitments to the eradication of all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities and continue to make concerted efforts to promote accessible environments, information and communications to support and enable the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

3. Further urge that Governments take practical action to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly as this would pertain to the urgent task

of elaborating a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. [1]

4. Note with satisfaction the efforts and work accomplished by the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, established by General Assembly resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001.

5. Further note with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) concerning regional cooperation to empower persons with disabilities, to further their full participation and equality, and to support the process of elaborating an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

6. Welcome the participation of organizations of and for persons with disabilities and human rights institutions and encourage their active and meaningful contributions to the process of elaborating the convention.

7. Call upon Governments of the Asia and Pacific region to support and participate actively in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

8. Recommend that appropriate consideration be given to the following elements in the process of elaborating an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities:

- a. Recognizing the universality of human rights and that these apply fully to persons with disabilities, the convention should build on existing United Nations human rights instruments, which should be elaborated to respond to the particular circumstances of persons with disabilities in order to further their full participation and equality.
- b. The convention should be comprehensive and provide balanced protection and promotion of both economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights.
- c. Recognizing the indivisible and interdependent relationship between human rights and development, the convention should contain enforceable rights and set forth obligations to State Parties to adopt measures, such as policies, laws, administrative guidance and programmes, paying full attention to the perspective of promoting rights based development.
- d. The convention should accord special attention to the situation of women and girls with disabilities as well as the specific needs of persons with diverse types of disabilities, and effectively promote and protect their rights.
- e. The elaboration of the convention should take appropriate account of the diverse patterns of historical, cultural and religious backgrounds and relative levels of development of countries, so that the convention sets forth obligations of State Parties that will effectively promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities.
- f. The convention should underline the necessity that State Parties establish an effective system to implement and monitor its application.
- g. The convention should provide for an appropriate international monitoring mechanism, with the aim of encouraging and assisting State Parties to implement the convention.

- h. The convention should promote international dialogue and cooperation on the promotion and protection of rights of persons with disabilities.

9. Request that the Ad Hoc Committee consider ways and means by which to accelerate the process of elaborating an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

***Adopted at Beijing, 7 November 2003**

UN ESCAP Regional Meeting on an International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities

[1] General Assembly resolutions 56/168 of 19 December 2001 and 57/229 of 18 December 2002.