



Draft

TOWARDS VISIBILITY OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE UN CONVENTION

**A discussion paper on the integration of women´s issues in
the “Comprehensive and Integral International Convention
on the Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with
Disabilities“**

edited by Disabled Peoples´ International (dpi)

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0. Summary

Women with disabilities face severe violations of human rights standards in their daily lives. Though as persons, of course, they should enjoy human rights on the same basis with disabled men and non-disabled men and women, they yet have been marginalized and rendered almost invisible in all aspects of their lives – and in the work of UN bodies and Member States. The reason: Most UN documents do not refer to people with disabilities, and not at all to women with disabilities. Also, the UN documents in which disabled women are mentioned are not legally binding for States Parties.

Therefore, it is essential that women with disabilities obtain a strong position in the „Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities“. A single article referring to women’s issues is insufficient, and, in fact, may be counterproductive, as the example of the CRC strongly indicates. In fact women’s issues need to be covered throughout the Convention.

Considering all proposals the authors suggest a strategy consisting of two points (a twin-track approach) and the authors regard the second point as indispensable:

1. The principles of gender mainstreaming, the principle of equality between men and women and the need for particular actions to eliminate the discriminations of women with disabilities must be mentioned in the beginning of the Convention either in a separate article or integrated in the articles 2 and 4.
2. All draft articles of the Convention having a key position for women with disabilities must be complemented by the gender perspective. To identify and address the needs of women with disabilities, the Convention must include the gender aspect as intended in UN Resolution 52/100 from 1997/98. It is the only way to motivate States Parties to consider gender issues, and specifically women’s issues while taking action and reporting.

1. The situation of women with disabilities worldwide

A short review

1a. „Invisible citizens“ – an introduction

There are no exact data concerning the number of women with disabilities worldwide. According to publications of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations (UN) 7 – 10 % of the world`s population have disabilities and about 80 % of these live in the developing countries¹. According to figures of the World Bank disability affects the lives of more than 600 million people globally². This means that there are estimated 300 million of women with disabilities worldwide and 240 million of them living in developing countries. This is a large and very diverse group that includes women with physical, sensory and mental impairments whether visually apparent or not. For comparison: the total number of all US-Citizens was 281 million people in 2000³.

The situation of women with disabilities worldwide is characterized by two aspects: As a group they face double discrimination because of their disability and their gender and often triple discrimination in developing countries because of their poverty. Furthermore there is a general lack of data broken down to gender and disability and the research concerning the issues „women and disability“ is just in the early stages. So women and girls with disabilities often remain „invisible citizens“ in the mainstream policy and often unconsidered in disability affairs as well as in women affairs.

The following short review is predominantly based upon three sources: „The World Disability Report: Disability `99“⁴, „Harilyn Rousso: Girls and women with disabilities: An international overview and summary of research“⁵ and Council of Europe: „Discrimination against women with disabilities“⁶.

1b. An unknown reality: Being female is a risk factor for disability

If we take a close look to the situation of women with disabilities and the connectivity between „gender“ and „disability“ we will first find an almost unknown reality: When the sex of a person is „female“ she is more likely to become disabled than a „male“ person. Why is this?

¹ Press Release WHO, cited in Rousso 2000

² www.worldbank.org/disability

³ U.S. Census Bureau (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>)

⁴ The World Disability Report: Disability `99. The International Disability Foundation, Geneva 1998

⁵ Rousso, Harilyn: Girls and women with disabilities: An international overview and summary of research“, Disability Unlimited Consulting Services, New York 2000

⁶ Council of Europe: „Discrimination against women with disabilities“, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2003

Malnutrition

When money is short, a son or a man will get more food than a daughter or a woman. A study in India found girls were four times more likely to suffer acute malnutrition⁷, which can lead to chronic illness or physical and mental disabilities.

Medical Care

When ill, girls and women are less likely to receive medical attention or to be taken to hospitals, especially in developing countries. An untreated earache for example can result in acute hearing loss.

Environmental and occupational hazards

Many poor women work at home and face risks caused by inadequate water or poor sanitation. In the workplace, because of their lower education they often work in unregulated industries with unsafe working conditions causing accidents and injuries.

Gender based violence

At least one in three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused⁸. Physical and sexual violence is a significant cause of mental and physical disabilities. Studies found, that 40 % of disabled women seeking domestic violence services were disabled as a result of violence⁹. Childhood sexual abuse has been found the most powerful predictor of later psychiatric symptoms and disorders.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM affects roughly 130 million of girls and young women¹⁰, two million girls become at risk each year¹¹. This cultural practice has dangerous consequences: excessive bleeding, trauma, difficulties in childbirth and lifelong pain. When performed with unsterilized instruments it may cause blood poisoning, tetanus and AIDS. So FGM not only restricts the sexual feelings, it is also a risk for a variety of health conditions throughout the lifespan of women.

AIDS/HIV

40 million people worldwide are infected by HIV¹². When the epidemic began, one third were women, now nearly the half are women and the rates are increasing¹³: large numbers of women are infected by their husbands. In 1997 for example, about three million youth ages became infected, two thirds of them girls because of their lack of knowledge of reproductive health and lack of control over sexual activity¹⁴.

Depression

Studies, mainly in industrialized countries, found that disorders such as depression, panic or eating disorders affect women more than men. After age of 15, depression is twice as common in women and girls than in men and boys¹⁵.

⁷ UN Wire, 11/22/99 cited in Rousso 2000

⁸ UN Wire, January 20, 2000 cited in Rousso 2000

⁹ Waxman, Fiduccia & Wolfe 1999 cited in Rousso 2000

¹⁰ Frankfurter Rundschau, 2005-04-06

¹¹ ICRW n.d. cited in Rousso 2000

¹² Der Tagesspiegel, 2004-11-24

¹³ ICRW n.d. cited in Rousso 2000

¹⁴ Gupta 1998 cited in Rousso 2000

¹⁵ Surgeons General's Report on Mental Health, 1999 cited in Rousso 2000

Armed conflicts

Civilian casualties in armed conflicts are very often girls and women. When injured they have less access to medical and rehabilitative services than (the male) veterans. Women and girls are also object to sexual violence as a wartime strategy. This causes trauma and the risk of HIV infection.

Landmines

Between 80 and 120 million landmines are buried in at least 70 countries of the world. In an average day over 70 persons are mutilated by landmines, especially civilians and mostly women and children. There are between 250,000 and 300,000 disabled survivors of landmine blasts alive today, the majority amputees¹⁶.

1c. Unique barriers for girls and women with disabilities

If we now take a close look to the multiple discriminations of women who live with disabilities we will find many unique barriers for their equal participation or sometimes even for their equal chance to survive:

Selective abortion

In those countries where prenatal screening is available, fetuses identified as female and disabled may be more readily aborted than those that are male and disabled.

Literacy and education

Many parents, unable to envision a future for their disabled daughter as a wife, mother or worker, may see little need to send her to school. So the education levels and the literacy rates tend to be lower than those for men. The estimated literacy rate for people with disabilities worldwide is 3%, with the rates for disabled women and girls being about only 1%¹⁷!

Health care

Women and girls with disabilities face many barriers to basic health care. Medical research is often based on studies of men and disabled women are not included in the mainstram health care programs, particularly maternal and gynecological issues. They are often sent to poorly equipped rehabilitation-focused facilities. Additionally they face stereotypes concerning their sexuality and parenting ability.

Rehabilitation services

Women with disabilities receive only one fifth of the rehabilitation services in the world¹⁸. In some countries, recovering from war, such services are restricted to males. Disabled women and children in developing countries are less likely to have access to prosthetic and orthotic services than disabled men.

¹⁶ The World Disability Report: Disability `99. The International Disability Foundation, Geneva 1998

¹⁷ Groce 1997a cited in Rousso 2000

¹⁸ The World Disability Report: Disability `99. The International Disability Foundation, Geneva 1998

Vocational training

Existing statistics on vocational training indicate that the percentage of women trainees is low. Studies carried out in Switzerland¹⁹ have shown, for example, that more effort is invested in vocational rehabilitation for men than for women.

Employment/Income

Three quarters of women with disabilities worldwide and up to 100% in the developing countries are excluded from the workforce - though the majority contribute significantly to their families through cooking, cleaning, caring for children and relatives²⁰. So the vast majority of women with disabilities live in poverty. According to a Spanish study, throughout the European Union 35% of men with disabilities have jobs, while the corresponding figures for women with disabilities were 25%²¹. Disabled women are twice as unlikely to find work as disabled men²². Studies in the US found, that severely disabled women have an average monthly income of only 1000 \$, compared to 2190 \$ for a nondisabled man. Disabled men earned 55% more than disabled women²³. In Canada, disability benefits are lower for disabled women (\$596.98) than for disabled men (\$726.23)²⁴.

Cultural and social status

For many women with disabilities, both in industrialized and developing countries, neither marriage nor childbearing and motherhood is a viable option. Studies found, that 50% of women with activity limitation were married, compared to 68 % of men with activity limitation²⁵. Women who became disabled after marriage are at higher risk for divorce than disabled men and have often problems to maintain custody of their children or to adopt children.

Forced sterilization

In various countries, women with disabilities are prevented from or pressured against having children through sterilization, unauthorized hysterectomies, medical procedures or abortion. If they do bear children, they may be forced to give up children through adoptions. Women with mental disabilities have got a particularly high risk for involuntary sterilization.

Physical and sexual violence

Women with disabilities are at high risk from physical and sexual violence, at least at double the rate of their non-disabled peers²⁶. They are viewed as „easy targets“. Studies from industrialized countries suggest that 39 to 68% of girls and 16 to 30 % of boys with developmental disabilities will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday²⁷. Women with psychiatric disabilities or women in institutions are also at

¹⁹ Council of Europe: „Discrimination against women with disabilities“, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2003

²⁰ The World Disability Report: Disability `99. The International Disability Foundation, Geneva 1998

²¹ Council of Europe: „Discrimination against women with disabilities“, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2003

²² The World Disability Report: Disability `99. The International Disability Foundation, Geneva 1998

²³ Asch, et. al reporting the US Census Bureau 1999 cited in Rousso 2000

²⁴ Doe & Kimpson 1999 cited in Rousso 2000

²⁵ Asch, et. al cited in Rousso 2000

²⁶ Waxman, Fiduccia & Wolfe 1999 cited in Rousso 2000

²⁷ Sobsey, 1994, as reported in Reynolds, 1997 cited in Rousso 2000

high risk for violence. Even if a disabled women does escape from the violence, very few shelters are accessible.

1d. Conclusions

The all above points indicate severe violations of human rights standards as all humans are guaranteed under the international human rights treaties. It is more than obvious that a „Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities“ has to address the situation of girls and women with disabilities throughout the entire document – making 300 million women „visible citizens“.

2. Existing UN human rights instruments Effective for women with disabilities?

Over the past 25 years a dramatic shift in perspective towards disabled people has taken place: It is the shift from an approach motivated by charity to one based on rights²⁸. It means viewing people with disabilities not as objects but as subjects. People with disabilities are no longer primarily seen as problems but as holders of rights.

At the same time, people with disabilities have become more and more visible in UN human rights documents: Whereas people with disabilities are not mentioned in the „Universal Declaration of Human Rights“ from 1948, the General Assembly adopted several documents referring to people with disabilities from the 1970's on.

Nevertheless women with disabilities remained almost invisible in UN human rights policy until the 1980's, when they finally became more visible.

2a. Documents referring to disability

- 1971 Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons
Women with disabilities are not specifically mentioned and hence remained invisible.
- 1975 Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons
Women with disabilities are mentioned only indirectly since discrimination on the basis of sex is forbidden.
- 1982 World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (WPA)
Women with disabilities are referred to as one of seven special groups. There is a special women's paragraph:

„The consequences of deficiencies and disablement are particularly serious for women. There are a great many countries where women are subjected to social, cultural and economic disadvantages which impede their access to, for example, health care, education, vocational training and employment. If, in addition, they are physically or mentally disabled, their chances of overcoming their disablement are diminished, which makes it all the more difficult for them to take part in community life. In families, the responsibility for caring for a disabled parent often lies with women, which considerably limits their freedom and their possibilities of taking part in other activities.“

Additionally women with disabilities and mothers are mentioned in connection with prevention of disability. On the one hand the main focus is the prevention of impairment in unborn children through periodic health examinations of pregnant women. On the other hand, there is commitment to

²⁸ Quinn, Gerard and Theresia Degener: Human rights and disability. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002

improving the health situation of women:

„Co-ordinated programmes of prevention at all levels of society are needed. They should include:

...

Effective maternal and child health care and counseling ...

Education in nutrition and assistance in obtaining a proper diet, especially for mothers and children, ...“

(1983) ILO Convention No. 159 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

This is not a UN document but rather a convention of the International Labour Organisation – ILO. Convention No. 159 was adopted by the General Conference of ILO in 1983 and came into force in 1985. It is the only binding international treaty mentioning women with disabilities²⁹ in Article 4:

„The said policy ...

Equality of opportunity and treatment for disabled men and women workers shall be respected. ...“)

1993 Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Women with disabilities are mentioned twice in chapter II „Target Areas for Equal Participation,“ specifically in rule 6 „Education“ and rule 9 „Family life and personal integrity“.

Rule 6. Education

„States should ...

Special attention should be given in the following areas:

- *Very young children with disabilities;*
- *Pre-school children with disabilities;*
- *Adults with disabilities, particularly **women**. ...“*

Rule 9. Family life and personal integrity

„States should ...

*States should promote measures to change negative attitudes towards marriage, sexuality and parenthood of persons with disabilities, especially of girls and **women** with disabilities, which still prevail in society. The media should be encouraged to play an important role in removing such negative attitudes. ...“*

2000 Special Rapporteur’s second final report

A UN Special Rapporteur was assigned the task of monitoring the implementation of the standard rules. In his second final report which covers the period from 1997 to 2000 he draws attention to gaps that need to be filled:

²⁹ Morgan, Michelle: Women with Disabilities: From Invisible to Visible Citizens. NGO Bulletins, Disability Negotiations Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 9, June 26, 2003

„Some dimensions of disability policy have not been treated sufficiently. This is true concerning children with disabilities, in the gender dimension and for certain groups, ...“

2004 Report of the Special Rapporteur on Disability to the 42nd Session of the Commission for Social Development
Hissa Al-Thani was appointed to fulfill the fourth mandate (2003-2005) of the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability. One of her specific topics is the gender issue.

2005 Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability on the occasion of International Women´s Day (March 8, 2005)
In this document Hissa Al-Thani summarizes the situation of girls and women with disabilities and makes 11 recommendations. The last recommendation is related to the UN Convention:

„The International, Comprehensive and Integral Convention to Protect and Promote the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, needs to take into consideration the double and triple forms of discrimination that girls and women with disabilities suffer and make allowances for their protection.“

2b. Documents and Conferences referring to women

1975 First World Conference on Women in Mexico City
This conference did not mention women with disabilities at all.

1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
In 1979 the CEDAW was adopted by the General Assembly and it came into force in 1981. It doesn´t explicitly mention women with disabilities.

1980 Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen
This conference only asked governments to „Direct special attention to the needs of elderly women, women living alone and disabled women“.

1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi
The „Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace“ contains a special paragraph referring to „Women with physical and mental disabilities“.

1990 UN Seminar on disabled women in Vienna
For the first time the UN organized a technical meeting on women with disabilities. A list of recommendations was adopted.

1991 CEDAW Recommendation No. 18
This recommendation urges States parties to provide information on the situation of women with disabilities in their periodic CEDAW reports,

„and on measures taken to deal with their particular situation, including

special measures to ensure that they have equal access to education and employment, health services and social security, and to ensure that they can participate in all areas of social and cultural life“.

General recommendations are not legally binding. Thus States Parties of CEDAW are not obliged to report on the situation of disabled women.

1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing

At this conference the „Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action“ were adopted. The Platform for Action contains 361 separate paragraphs. Thirty-eight of these 361 Articles make specific reference to women and girls with disabilities, in such areas as education and training, health, violence against women, the economy, and the girlchild.

1997/98 UN Resolution 52/100

Referring to the World Conference on Women in Beijing and to the Platform of Action the General Assembly adopted the resolution 52/100:

„The General Assembly ...

4. Calls once again upon States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform of Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform of Action.“

Thus all UN members avowed themselves to the principles of gender mainstreaming.

2000/2005 Beijing plus5/Beijing plus10: two Conferences in New York

Both conferences emphasized the „Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action“ and adopted additional declarations. Women with disabilities and their issues were included.

2c. Other human rights documents and instruments

1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

In 1965 the ICERD was adopted by the General Assembly and it came into force in 1969. It doesn't contain either the disability or the gender perspective. In 2000 the general recommendation XXV was adopted which acknowledges a double discrimination based on race and gender³⁰.

1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

This convention was adopted by the General Assembly in 1989 and it came into force in 1990. Article 23 directly concerns children with disabilities, which

³⁰ Castellino, Joshua: Disability and racial discrimination: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). In: Quinn, Gerard and Theresia Degener: Human rights and disability. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002

is an unusual provision among human rights treaties. But it lacks the gender perspective since it doesn't differentiate between issues of girls and boys with disabilities. Furthermore the CRC clarifies the problem of including one specific article on disability rather than integrating disability throughout since States parties tend to report about children with disabilities only with respect to this specific article and disregard the fact that all articles of the convention also apply to children with disabilities.

„The States parties should report more fully on children with disabilities under the CRC. Moreover, they should do so under all the rights protected and not just under article 23.³¹“

2d. Conclusions

For a long time women with disabilities were invisible in UN human rights documents. As a result, they are not mentioned in the CEDAW (1979). Since the 1980's, they have become more visible. Yet problems still exist. Women with disabilities remain marginalized in documents referring to disability although they have somewhat greater prominence in documents referring to women's issues. Also, the documents in which they are mentioned are not binding. The only binding international treaty specifically including women with disabilities is the ILO Convention No. 159 which is not a UN document.

Therefore it is essential that women with disabilities obtain a strong position in the „Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities“. UN resolution 52/100 (1997/98) must be realized: A gender perspective must be integrated throughout the document. A single article referring to women's issues is insufficient, and, in fact, may be counterproductive, as the example of the CRC strongly indicates.

³¹ Kilkelly, Ursula: Disability and children: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In: Quinn, Gerard and Theresia Degener: Human rights and disability. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002

3. Analysis of the draft convention with respect to women with disabilities: Synopsis and evaluation of existing proposals to complement the draft convention

The following synopsis of proposals includes texts and demands that have been available to the authors. Thus, especially informal proposals done by States during the process of negotiations have not been available or States do not want to have them published before negotiations within EU are terminated. Furthermore, there might be, of course, many other proposals done by women with disabilities and their NGOs that are not included. Nevertheless, the following synopsis should help to give a survey of existing proposals, ideas and thoughts in the context of including disabled women in the Convention.

3a. Language and gender perspective throughout the Convention

Many women with disabilities claim that the Convention should not talk about “persons with disabilities”, but of “women and men with disabilities”.

Disabled women and men argue that the fact that disabled people are generally seen as a homogenous group – without sex – is the reason, why the individual, the gender and personality of people with disabilities is ignored to a large extent. And this is furthermore considered to be one of the main reasons why disabled women have been more isolated, underprivileged, invisible and ignored than disabled men and also more than able women.

Language is an important instrument to make women visible at all. Neutral language used by authorities, in legislation and in policies is one of the reasons why responsible persons easily overlook specific needs of disabled women and men. In addition, in many States – due to historical or cultural backgrounds – laws are tailored to cover the needs during the typical live of men.

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 the policy of Gender Mainstreaming has become an important instrument for achieving gender equality for the United Nations and Member States. Considering official announcing since then there exists an international consensus concerning the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of work. In 1997/1998 the General Assembly has adopted the Resolution 52/100. Therein the General Assembly has been “deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women are important contributions to the advancement of women worldwide and must be translated into effective action by all States, the United Nations system and other organizations concerned”³². The quoted “Platform for Action” contains “Institutional Mechanisms for

³² A/RES/52/100, 26 January 1998, Preamble

the Advancement for Women” including strategies to integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects: Actions to be taken by governments are inter alia the work with members of legislative bodies, as appropriate, to promote a gender perspective in all legislation and policies. The Resolution furthermore called “once again upon States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action”.

A visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in legislation is for sure not to talk about “people”, but to talk about women and men, girls and boys.

And furthermore a visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in legislation is to include a gender perspective in every article of this Convention as appropriate.

Discussing whether there should be a clear gender perspective throughout this Convention many States refer to older treaties. But political developments and achievements during the last years can not be ignored. The Fourth World Conference on Women took place in 1995, the General Assembly adopted the resolution 52/100 in 1997/1998 and worldwide Member States committed themselves to the strategy of Gender Mainstreaming. Thus, there is an international consensus that must have influence also on binding international legislation.

3b. Preamble

The preamble of a multilateral treaty has great significance. It reflects the spirit and purpose of the treaty, and under the rules of international law, the treaty’s articles have to be interpreted within the context of the preamble. Therefore, it is significant that the convention’s preamble refers to the situation of disabled women worldwide, the problem of multiple discrimination, the danger of suffering disadvantages and the need for specific measures to ensure the full enjoyment of their human rights.

It is doubtful whether the Preamble should refer to concrete disadvantages and risks women with disabilities are suffering of, e.g. the risk of violence. A better choice would be to include these into the specific articles describing the human rights that should preserve women with disabilities from being subjected to these discriminations. The preamble helps interpreting the Convention, but States Parties primarily act and report on the basis of the specific articles.

Proposals

EU, 3rd session of AHC 2004	(n bis) Recognizing that women and girls with disabilities are often subject do multiple discrimination and therefore suffer particular disadvantages. (n ter) Recognizing that persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls, are at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury of abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual exploitation and abuse
Kenya, 3rd session of AHC 2004	(s) Recognizing that many persons with disabilities suffer double or multiple discrimination because of their status as children, women, refugees or internally displace, older persons, people living in rural areas and people living in informal settlement. ...
Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004 ³³	(o) Recognizing that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination and therefore suffer particular disadvantages and that specific measures are needed to ensure full enjoyment of their human rights, their fundamental freedoms and full participation (and) of all rights set forth in this convention on the basis of equality,
Lydia la Rivière- Zijdel, Amsterdam, Member of EDF Women’s Committee Nov. 2004	(o) Recognizing that disabled women of all ages form half of the universe and that due to the patriarchal cultures and structures in our societies women’s human rights and disabled women and mothers of disabled children alike are systematic oppressed, it is essential to focus on the intersectional discrimination that disabled women of all ages are subjected to on the basis of their impairment, gender and or belonging to a minority group. Specific measures are needed to ensure full enjoyment of their human rights, their fundamental freedoms and full participation (and) of all rights set forth in this convention on the basis of equality, Comment of Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel: First it should made clear that women and girls are not a group. Otherwise there is the danger that disabled women and girls are linked to oppressed groups of disabled people like black, migrant, lesbian, older, young etc. From a disability science perspective it is better to speak in the English version about disabled people or disabled men and women as a social construct indicating therewith that society is obstructing, or dis-abling people to fully participate in society on the basis of having an impairment of chronic illness.

³³ The Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention” was initiated by two German NGOs in autumn 2004. It is supported by the German organisations of disabled people and women, by many European organisations, outside of Europe and many individuals worldwide. Information on: www.un-disabledwomen.org

3c. Relevant Articles

Draft Article 2 – General Principles

Proposals

Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Norway 3rd session AHC June 2004	The fundamental principles of this Convention shall be: (a) ... (f) equality between women and men.
Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, 2005	Comment: Either draft article 2 or 4 should include the prohibition of multiple discrimination, the principle of equality between men and women and the request to undertake particular efforts to eliminate the discrimination of women with disabilities.

Draft Article 4 – General Obligations

Draft Article 4 is seen as one of the key articles within the convention. These general obligations are legally binding and are imperative to make the convention work. Thus, it is important to include a specific reference to the protection of the rights of women with disabilities.

Proposals

Kenya 3rd session AHC, June 2004	(g) ...; to provide particular protection and support for persons with disabilities who are vulnerable on account of situations such as conflict and natural disasters or because of their status as children, women and persons living with HIV/AIDS.
Rep. of Korea, 3rd session AHC, June 2004: Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities	(..)To include a separate reference to the protection of the rights of women with disabilities in laws pertaining to women and persons with disabilities, Comment: This proposal is included in “Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities” as it has been proposed by the Republic of Korea during the 3rd session of AHC. It could be integrated in article 4.
Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	(...) to mainstream gender issues into all disability policies and programmes

Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, 2005	Comment: Either draft article 2 or 4 should include the prohibition of multiple discrimination, the principle of equality between men and women and the request to undertake particular efforts to eliminate the discrimination of women with disabilities.
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Draft Article 5 – Promotion of positive attitudes to persons with disabilities

Proposals

Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	<p>1. States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures to: ...</p> <p>(b) Combat stereotypes and prejudices about persons with disabilities, especially about girls and women with disabilities, in all areas of life; ...</p> <p>2. These measures shall include, among others: ...</p> <p>(b) promoting awareness, including in all girls and boys from an early age and at all levels of the education ...</p> <p>(e) promoting awareness about existing and possible contribution of women with disabilities to the development of society, the welfare of the family, the social significance of maternity of women with disabilities and their role in the upbringing of children;”</p> <p>Comment of campaign: Paragraph 2. (e) complies with the penultimate paragraph in the preamble of CEDAW. Besides the general prejudices people with disabilities have to face, disabled women in addition encounter prejudices precluding them from their self-determined lifestyle as women, e.g. concerning issues of partnership, motherhood, design of their professional life and other women-specific needs. To fight discrimination against disabled women it is therefore crucial to include them into public awareness campaigns and to raise attention on their situation.</p>
Qatar 3rd session AHC June 2004, Draft article 14	<p>1. (...) change prevailing negative attitudes towards the marriage and sexuality of persons with disabilities, especially girls and women with disabilities, and their founding a family, and the encouragement of the media to play an important role in removing such negative attitudes;</p> <p>Comment: This proposal was made by Qatar during the 3rd session of AHC for draft article 14 paragraph 2 (a), but it could also be well placed in draft article 5.</p>

Draft Article 6 – Statistics and Data Collection

Already the “Platform for Action”, developed during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 and confirmed by Resolution 52/100, includes the strategy to “generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation”³⁴.

³⁴ FWCW Platform for Action, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, Strategic objective H.3.

But due to the report of the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Committee, the draft article has been shortened and the gender-disaggregated data collection requirement has been omitted. This is a major mistake that must be corrected. Without gender-disaggregated data, it is impossible to develop specific, appropriate measures to address the needs and issues of women and girls.

Proposals

<p>Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004</p>	<p>6 (a) Where necessary, States parties undertake to collect appropriate and gender-disaggregated information to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to this Convention ...</p>
<p>Rep. of Korea, 3rd session AHC, June 2004: Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities</p>	<p>(..) Incorporate women with disabilities in social surveys and statistics collection efforts and collect gender-disaggregated data on persons with disabilities; Comment: This proposal is included in “article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities” as it has been proposed by the Republic of Korea during the 3rd session of AHC. With a mainstreaming approach this could be integrated in article 6.</p>

Draft Article 7 – Equality and Non- Discrimination

Draft article 7 gives a definition of discrimination and therewith has a key position within the convention. Draft paragraph 1 includes the protection from double discrimination. The AHC’s working group formulated this article with a catalogue of grounds for double discrimination: “States Parties shall also prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons with disabilities equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, source or type of disability, age, or any other status.”

Then, according to the report of the fourth session, there was agreement to delete the list of grounds for discrimination and instead, to include it in the preamble, consistent with existing human rights treaties.

The topic was discussed during the conference “Human Rights and Disability” on November 22nd 2004 in Berlin, Germany, which was organized by the German Ministry of Health and Social Security. While representatives of the German ministries stated that it is very difficult to agree on a list of grounds for discrimination among UN Member States, members of NGOs argued that it has to made clear that disabled women always and everywhere face double discrimination and for this reason, the list of grounds for discrimination shall be included.

Draft Article 8 – Right to life

Proposal

International Disability Caucus August 2004	State Parties reaffirm the inherent right to life of all persons with disabilities, and shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by girls and boys, women and men in all stages of life.
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Draft Article 10 – Liberty and security of the person

Proposal

Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004, in consideration of the current text after the 5th session	„2. States Parties shall ensure that if persons with disabilities are deprived of their liberty..., they have at least the following guaranties: To be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity and worth of the human person, and in a manner that respects their human rights, conforms with the objectives and principles of this convention, and reasonably accommodates their disability and their sex; Comment of campaign: If women with disabilities are deprived of their liberty they have to be treated according to their specific needs.
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Draft Article 12 – Freedom from violence and abuse

According to the report of the 5th session of the AHC, there was a broad agreement among delegations that “women and girls” or “women and children” were particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse, but no agreement about where and how a reference to this issue should be included. Interested delegations were invited to confer about an appropriate way to deal with the issue.

As pointed out in the first part of this contribution, women with disabilities are at great risk of gender based violence. It is not enough to indicate this scandal generally in the preamble or to leave it invisible by a neutral language, but Article 12 should clarify this risk for disabled women and girls and oblige States Parties to undertake appropriate measures.

Discussing the following list of proposals the currently reading of the text of draft article 12 as it was agreed during the 5th session in January 2005 has to be taken into account.

Proposals

<p>India 3rd session AHC, June 2004</p>	<p>3. States Parties shall also take all appropriate measures to prevent violence injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual exploitation and abuse, especially against children and women with disabilities, ...</p>
<p>EU, 3rd session AHC, June 2004, For preamble</p>	<p>States Parties recognise that persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls, are at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual exploitation and abuse –</p> <p>Comment: Besides EU proposed this text for the preamble it should be included into article 12.</p>
<p>Rep. of Korea, 3rd session AHC, June 2004: Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities</p>	<p>States Parties shall ...</p> <p>Ensure that women with disabilities are protected from sexual exploitation, abuse and violence at home, institutional facilities and communities.</p> <p>Comment: This proposal is included in “Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities” as it has been proposed by the Republic of Korea during the 3rd session of AHC. With a mainstreaming approach it could be integrated in article 12.</p>
<p>Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004</p>	<p>States Parties recognise that persons with disabilities are at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including gender based forms of violence such as sexual exploitation, abuse, forced sterilization, forced marriage and isolation.</p> <p>“3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent violence, ..., by ensuring ... support ..., including the provision of information and the promotion of exercises for women and girls with disabilities to strengthen their self-confidence.”</p> <p>Comment of campaign: Paragraph 3 codifies measures to prevent violence. The campaign encourages complementing this article with measures to strengthen the self-confidence of women in order to put them in a position to fend off violence and abuse.</p>
<p>Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel, Amsterdam, Member of EDF Women’s Committee, Nov. 2004</p>	<p>States Parties recognise that persons with disabilities are at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including gender based forms of violence such as sexual exploitation, abuse, forced sterilization, forced marriage and isolation, genital mutilation, rape and genital maiming as a war instrument.</p> <p>Comment of Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel: Especially in those areas where wars are taking place many women either become disabled due to rape and genital maiming. Also genital mutilation is carried out on disabled women and girls or women and girls become disabled as a result of such. (Disabled) women and girls suffer from all these forms of violence that are carried out to them by 95% male perpetrators and this type of violence carried out by men form an obstacle to the empowerment of disabled women/girls to the full achievement of women’s human rights.</p>

Draft article 14 and 14bis – Respect for privacy, the home and the family

According to the report of the AHC’s 5th meeting in January 2005 draft article 14 is going to be separated into draft Article 14 (private matters) and draft Article 14bis (matters related to home and the family).

Women with disabilities face multiple prejudices and barriers regarding their roles as partner, wife, mother, and contributing member of the family. Therefore, it is essential to make women in their diverse roles visible in Article 14bis.

Proposals

<p>AHC’s Working Group, Jan. 2004</p>	<p>2. (14bis) States Parties ... shall ensure: (b) The right of all men and women with disabilities who are of marriageable age to marry on the basis of free and full consent of the intending spouses, and to found a family.</p> <p>Comment: During the 5th session in January 2005 delegations tended to support the phrase “persons with disabilities” rather than the phrase “men and women”.</p>
<p>Qatar 3rd session AHC June 2004</p>	<p>2. (14bis) the promotion of measures to change prevailing negative attitudes towards the marriage and sexuality of persons with disabilities, especially girls and women with disabilities, and their founding a family, and the encouragement of the media to play an important role in removing such negative attitudes;</p>
<p>Rep. of Korea, 3rd session AHC, June 2004: Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities</p>	<p>2. States Parties ... shall ensure: (g) The protection of the motherhood of women with disabilities by developing and disseminating policies and programs for assistance based on the recognition of the special needs of women with disabilities in pregnancy, childbirth and post-partum health care and child care;</p> <p>Comment: This proposal is included in “Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities” as it has been proposed by the Republic of Korea during the 3rd session of AHC. With a mainstreaming approach this could be integrated in article 14bis.</p>
<p>Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel, Amsterdam, Member of EDF Women’s Committee, Nov. 2004</p>	<p>2. (14bis) States Parties ... shall ensure: That all disabled women, regardless of their impairment, their sexual orientation, their ethnicity and their religion shall not be deprived of their sexual and reproductive rights, including motherhood and prevention of such with her consent.</p>

Draft Article 15 – Living independently and being included in the community

Proposals:

<p>Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004</p>	<p>1. States Parties to this Convention shall take effective and appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and be fully included in the community, including by ensuring that: (c) That persons with disabilities have access to a range of ... support and that special attendance is given to mothers and fathers with disabilities.” Comment of campaign: Draft paragraph 1 (c) could be complemented by emphasizing the need of community support for mothers and fathers with disabilities.</p>
<p>Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel, Amsterdam, Member of EDF Women’s Committee, Nov. 2004</p>	<p>(c) That disabled persons have access to a range of ... support and that special attendance is given to disabled mothers and fathers and to mothers of disabled children. Comment of Lydia la Rivière-Zijedel: The situation of especially mothers with disabled children is not recognised in any of the other conventions specifically and is so much different than that of fathers. Most marriages break up (74% recent researches) of couples having or becoming a disabled child. The same inequality that disabled women face is than also seen with mothers of disabled children. Moreover the article should address to the life-long poverty that disabled women are more subjected too than disabled men. Most benefit systems, pension systems and unemployment or disability benefit systems are either means-tested or focussed on the breadwinner model, or not meant for women in the first place. This means life-long poverty for those disabled women not being able to get economic independence via employment, or married and becoming disabled, of divorced and being disabled after dependent on the income of thir partners, disabled widows etc.</p>

Draft Article 15bis – Women with Disabilities

A specific article on women with disabilities was not drafted by the working group of the AHC but brought into discussion by the Republic of Korea. Korea’s proposal is concentrating on specific measures in order to ensure women with disabilities a life in “dignity in freedom, safety, and autonomy”.

During the 5th session of AHC, the International Disability Caucus (IDC) discussed the idea of a specific draft article on women with disabilities, but focused on introducing a text which would integrate the concept of mainstreaming: that is, to mainstream women’s issues throughout the convention and other human rights instruments referring to people with disabilities as well as to mainstream disability issues throughout human rights instruments referring to women, specifically CEDAW.

Proposals:

<p>Rep. of Korea, 3rd session AHC, June 2004</p>	<p>Proposed Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Parties undertake to ensure the enjoyment of full and equal rights and freedoms by women with disabilities and their equal participation in political, economic, social and cultural activities without any discrimination on the basis of their gender and/or disabilities. 2. State Parties shall take the following steps from a gender perspective so as to ensure that women with disabilities are able to live with dignity in freedom, safety, and autonomy. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Include a separate reference to the protection of the rights of women with disabilities in laws pertaining to women and persons with disabilities; (b) Incorporate women with disabilities in social surveys and statistics collection efforts and collect gender-disaggregated data on persons with disabilities; (c) Protect the motherhood of women with disabilities by developing and disseminating policies and programs for assistance based on the recognition of the special needs of women with disabilities in pregnancy, childbirth and post-partum health care and child care; (d) Ensure that women with disabilities are not deprived of their right to work due to their pregnancy or childbirth, and provide the necessary assistances in this regard; (e) Ensure that women with disabilities are protected from sexual exploitation, abuse and violence at home, institutional facilities and communities.
<p>Discussion basis for IDC during 5th session of AHC</p>	<p>Draft Article 15 bis : Women and Girls with disabilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. States Parties undertake to ensure that each girl and woman with a disability within their jurisdiction shall enjoy, without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability, the same rights and fundamental freedoms as girls and women without disabilities and boys and men with and without disabilities. 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, for the purpose of guaranteeing women and girls with disabilities the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality of women and men, in the application of the provisions of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the present Convention, b) the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, c) the provisions in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment d) any other Human rights Convention to which they are party. 3. States parties recognize the need to take specific measures to ensure a gender aware approach in the application of the provisions of the present Convention and other Human rights conventions, and undertake to provide gender specific information on measures taken to deal with the situation of persons with disabilities in their periodic reports to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee which is established to monitor the implementation of the present Convention, as well as by the Committees established to monitor the implementation of other Human Rights Conventions to which they are party.

So far there is no agreement among delegations nor among NGOs of disabled women about whether there should be a separate article on women with disabilities, a mainstreaming of women's issues throughout the convention, or a combination of both.

The proposal of the Republic of Korea:

The overall advantage of a specific article is that it would call the States' attention on the disadvantaged situation of women with disabilities. The Korean proposal includes important demands that are basic for the advancement of the situation of disabled women. And all these points are excellently suited to fulfil human rights for women, as mentioned in the draft convention.

But considering experiences with the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (CRC), a specific article could unwittingly serve to limit the benefits of the Convention for women and girls: As described before (cp. 2 c,) the CRC contains a specific article on children with disabilities. Evaluating the work with the children's convention, we must recognize that a separate article allows States Parties to report on their work only with regard to that article but not on how disabled children are faring in all the human rights areas listed throughout the convention. Bearing in mind the UN's documents on women with disability and the principle of gender mainstreaming, it would be a step backward, if States Parties acted similar when reporting about the situation of women with disabilities based on this Convention protecting the rights and the dignity of (all) people with disabilities.

The proposal for the discussion at IDC:

Designing a specific article on women with disability as it has been proposed for IDC has the advantage of not concentrating on specific measures but rather referring to the principles of gender and disability mainstreaming throughout all human rights conventions. And with a specific article like this, specific measures concerning women with disabilities could still well be included into all other relevant articles in the convention.

But there could be a problem when it comes to achieve the states consent on an article like this. Within existing UN treaties on human rights, it is not conventional to include legally binding references in one convention for existing conventions that have already been signed and ratified by States Parties. If the UN wants to complement a certain convention, customarily optional protocols are designed, that have to be signed and ratified. Or alternatively, guidelines and general recommendations are adopted by the responsible monitoring committee.

After all, if we want to achieve the full enjoyment of all human rights by disabled women and girls there is no alternative to the inclusion of a gender perspective throughout the whole treaty. We have to demand that every single article in the convention, including the preamble, refers to and includes both men and women with disabilities. And it must be clear that measures and policies taken by States Parties have to be tailored to the different situations encountered by women and men with disabilities.

Draft Article 16 – Children with disabilities

Proposal:

Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	The headline should be changed to „Girls and Boys with Disabilities“. Comment of campaign: Considering the barriers girls with disabilities have to face they should be made visible in article 16.
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Draft Article 17 – Education

Proposal:

Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	In paragraph 1, the word ”children“ should be replaced by „girls and boys“. 1. States Parties recognize the right of all persons with disabilities to education on a basis of equality of men and women Comment of campaign: The equality of chances between girls and boys, men and women should be codified comparable to Art. 10 of CEDAW.
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Draft Article 21 – Right to health and rehabilitation

Proposals:

New Zealand 3rd session AHC, June 2004	(l) ... Equal access to public health programmes e.g. programmes aimed at preventing HIV/AIDS, ensuring provision of safe and potable water and sanitation and cervical and breast screening for women; ...
Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	... In particular, States Parties shall (a) Provide persons with disabilities, on a basis of equality of men and women, with the same range and standard of health and rehabilitation services as provided other citizens, including sexual and reproductive health services

Draft Article 21bis – Rehabilitation

During the 3rd session of AHC, some delegations proposed a specific article on rehabilitation, arguing that rehabilitation includes more aspects than health. Out of the proposed texts for such a specific article, Israel’s proposal included a paragraph referring to women:

Israel, 3rd session AHC, June 2004	... States Parties undertake: 4. To take steps to ensure that the specific rehabilitation needs of women, girls, children, the elderly, and family members of persons with disabilities are appropriately addressed in order to ensure respect for their dignity and particular needs.
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Draft Article 22 – Right to work

Proposals:

Report of 3rd session AHC, June 2004	Footnote 89: Some members of the Working Group raised the issue of a need to address the special circumstances of women with disabilities in fulfilling this right.
Rep. of Korea, 3rd session AHC, June 2004: Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities	2. (d) Ensure that women with disabilities are not deprived of their right to work due to their pregnancy or childbirth, and provide the necessary assistances in this regard; Comment: This proposal is included in “Article 15 bis: Women with Disabilities” as it has been proposed by the Republic of Korea during the 3rd session of AHC. With a mainstreaming approach this could be integrated in article 22.
Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	(g) promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programs for both women and men;“
Lydia la Rivière- Zijdel, Amsterdam, Member of EDF Women’s Committee, Nov. 2004	Comment of Lydia Rivière-Zijdel: The right to work may be also something on life-long poverty and/or the aspect of pension programs for disabled women and disability allowances not being means tested to secure economic independence of disabled women.

Draft Article 23 – Social security

Campaign “Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention”, Nov. 2004	Comment of campaign: The draft of the AHC’s working group specifically refers to women and girls in paragraph 1. (b). This must not be changed.
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Draft Article 25 - Monitoring

<p>UN ESCAP Workshop on Women and Disability, Bangkok, August and Oct. 2003, Final Report; Supported by German NGOs</p>	<p>Final report: An independent, effective and dynamic monitoring mechanism must be an integral element of the new Convention. The composition of the structure should ensure disability, gender and regional balance, with particular emphasis on the participation of women with disabilities. The guidelines for the preparation of reports must be evolved to ensure gender disaggregated reporting by the State Parties. This approach must be consistently maintained and adequately resource in the national monitoring mechanisms. The equal participation of women with disabilities throughout the treaty elaboration, implementation and monitoring process is strongly recommended.</p>
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3d. Conclusions

As discussed, a specific article on women with disability could well serve to call the States Parties’ attention and to include the principle of gender mainstreaming, the principle of equality between men and women and the need for particular actions to eliminate the discrimination of women with disabilities.

But considering all proposals both for a specific article on women with disabilities and for many draft articles of the Convention having a key position for women with disabilities, it has become obvious that women’s issues need to be covered throughout the convention. Disabled women and girls represent at least half of “people with disabilities” and not a separate group. But because of various reasons, as they have been described in Part I of this paper, there is a great need for actions in order to achieve the full enjoyment of their human rights. To identify and address the needs of disabled women, the Convention must include the gender perspective. It is the only way to motivate States Parties to consider gender issues, and specifically women’s issues while taking action and reporting.

If a specific article is considered to be indispensable it should be positioned at the beginning of the Convention as it would contain basic principles and obligations. Or these issues are integrated in article 2 and 4.

But beside this, disabled girls and women have to be mentioned in the preamble, to highlight their importance, and then their issues must be specifically addressed in all articles.

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6. Editor/the Authors

Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) is a network of national organizations or assemblies of disabled people, established to promote human rights of disabled people through full participation, equalization of opportunity and development. On behalf of DPI Dr. Sigrid Arnade and Sabine Häfner wrote this discussion paper.

In November 2004 Dr. Sigrid Arnade and Sabine Häfner founded the initiative "Towards visibility of disabled women in the UN Convention!" (<http://www.un-disabledwomen.org>).

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