

International Disability Caucus

Intervention at the side event on the Women With Disabilities

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Women constitute 52% of the population and women with disabilities do the same in the population of persons with disabilities.

It might not come to you as news for you that women are in general discriminated against due to their gender. There are no differences when it comes to women with disabilities. But to this we must add Women with disabilities are also discriminated on the ground of disabilities.

Women with disabilities have a lower recognition than any other group in our society.

Women with disabilities are not only discriminated against in the society at large, we are also discriminated against in our own organizations. Women are the last to be asked, are rarely part of decision making in our organizations and also rarely represented in the leadership.

Other factors that appear on the scales of discrimination are: race, age, social status and so on, added to gender and disability.

Women with disabilities face discrimination world wide on the ground of disability and gender in many fields but some examples might serve as food for thoughts:

Forced sterilization on the ground of disability

Undergoing Forced abortions on the ground of disability

Forced to give up her motherhood in case of having children

Forced marriage and forced denial of marriages

Less access to justice such as:

Being able to Identifying a perpetrator

Act as a witnesses (problem for both men and women but women are less likely to be asked due to their low status) even if the case is about the woman with a disability

Prove guilt in connection of violence, in particular domestic violence

Prove cases of rape and abuse (in particular if care givers are involved)

Lack of access to various services and opportunities make us excluded in a higher degree than women in general and men with disabilities in the field of:

Labor market

Access to transportation

Health care services

Education

Civil service

Health service

Lack of statistics of women with disabilities makes it difficult to prove our needs and we are often denied the opportunity to report our invisibility and exclusion which makes us as “non-existent”. Consequently we are unable to speak for ourselves and report our experiences and knowledge to the public.

Organizations of women in general are not interested in issues of women with disabilities since disability is too specific and not of political benefits or interests.

The UN Commission on the Status of Women is not interested and rather sees us as a burden of non-disabled women’s heavy work load.

Women with disabilities are mentioned in the Beijing Platform for action but very much in the margin, despite the hard work of more than 200 Women with disabilities participating as lobbyists.

Women with disabilities are not mentioned in the follow up on Beijing plus five or Beijing plus ten. We are not thought of in the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the monitoring committee has not recognized our existence.

We are not part of important programs or activities concerning women in general such as:

Policies about Armed conflicts

Disaster and relief programs

Poverty reduction programs

Peace making programs

Girl’s education

Inherit of properties

Health care for women

Maternal and child care programs

We are exposed to trachoma and other diseases due to lack of water in higher degree than disable men

Women with disabilities are often seen as ill or carrying diseases. We spread our bad genes in the population and should be isolated and stopped from reproduction.

Contradictory, we are blamed for being the cause of the spread of HIV/Aids and other diseases and seen as a costly non- productive burden of the society.

We are targets for rape as to cure men carrying HIV/Aids, we are a target group for rape and abuse in the family and we are the silent group neglected and ignored of our needs from the society.

But still we claim - Nothing about us without us.