

## **Results and consequences from the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Ad Hoc Committee regarding women with disabilities**

During the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Ad Hoc Committee (New York, 2005-08-01 to 2005-08-12) the second reading of the draft convention has been finished. For women with disabilities this session was of special interest. In the morning of the second day (2005-08-02) the best way to include the issues of women with disabilities was discussed. The governmental delegation of Korea proposed a separate article dealing with women's issues, the article 15bis, at the third session of the Ad Hoc Committee in June 2004. The discussion of article 15bis was used as an opportunity to discuss basically the necessity and different ways to include women's issues in the convention.

### **The plenary session on women's issues**

Several governmental delegations like Peru, Marocco, Thailand, Yemen, Kenya and Sudan supported a separate women's article as proposed by Korea. On the other hand delegations from the EU, Japan, Australia and New Zealand pleaded for a completion of article 4 (general obligations) by the principle of equality between women and men without any further mentioning of women with disabilities. The representative of Canada stood up for a strong consideration of women's issues: He spoke for the implementation of some general principles as well as an approach of gender mainstreaming. The delegates from Costa Rica, Chile and South Africa made similar statements.

At the end of the discussion of each article the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were given half an hour time for their own statements and interventions. Already since the 30<sup>th</sup> of July women had discussed in a NGO women's group to agree on common positions. The „twin track approach“, proposed in a dpi discussion paper was accepted as a common basis. That means a strategy consisting of two points: a separate women's article and the completion of all convention articles with a key position for women with disabilities by a gender perspective. In the plenary session on women's issues six NGO women had the opportunity to explain this strategy with different arguments and emphasis.

The chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, Don McKay from New Zealand, summarized the discussion on women's issues: He said that women with disabilities had been neglected so far and that a systematic and comprehensive approach is required to include their issues in the convention text. He announced to nominate a facilitator on this topic.

In the plenary session on women's issues the governmental delegate from Korea was the last speaker. Although she had disapproved the strategy of gender mainstreaming in her initial statement she now finally supported the twin track approach.

### **After the plenary session**

Theresia Degener from the German governmental delegation was nominated as the facilitator on women's issues. It was her task to elaborate a proposal on the basis of papers from the governmental delegations and to try to reach a consensus. At the same time the disabled women were working on a realization of the twin track approach in a concrete proposal. There were two side events in the lunch time of

Tuesday and Friday of the first week of negotiations. They gave the opportunity to discuss the best way how to include women with disabilities in the convention text.

Theresia Degener presented proposals at the end of the first week and in the second week and discussed them with the governmental delegations. NGOs were allowed to attend these meetings and to contribute their view. While in the first meeting the delegations of Korea, Canada, New Zealand and Costa Rica got involved with an extensive consideration of women with disabilities there was a lot of dissent at the second facilitator's meeting. Even the basic decision was not possible whether to choose a separate article or to include the gender perspective in several articles of the convention.

Nevertheless the facilitator recorded in her report some points of consensus:

- The principle of gender mainstreaming, the consideration of multiple discrimination of women with disabilities and the obligation of states parties to take particular actions to eliminate those discriminations will be included in the convention text either in the preamble or in article 4 or in a separate article 15bis.
- States Parties have to consider women with disabilities especially while implementing and monitoring the convention.
- Further topics that could or should include women with disabilities are "violence", "education", "work" and "health".

### **Perspectives**

Don McKay, the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee will consider the first and second reading of the convention and will elaborate and publish a new draft in the next 6-8 weeks. This new draft will be the basis for the debates of the third reading during the 7. session of the Ad Hoc Committee (New York, 2006-01-09 to 2006-01-27).