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High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Conclude the Asian and Pacific
Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002

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**CONSIDERATION OF A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TOWARDS AN
INCLUSIVE, BARRIER-FREE AND RIGHTS-BASED SOCIETY FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

**BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE,
BARRIER-FREE AND RIGHTS-BASED SOCIETY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The Commission, at its fifty-eighth session, adopted resolution 58/4 of 22 May 2002 on promoting an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for people with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region in the twenty-first century, by which it proclaimed the extension of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, for another decade, 2003-2012.

The present document sets out a draft regional framework for action that provides regional policy recommendations for action by Governments in the region and concerned stakeholders to achieve an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in the new decade, 2003-2012. The regional framework for action identifies seven areas for priority action in the new decade. Each priority area contains critical issues, targets and the action required.

The regional framework for action explicitly incorporates the millennium development goals and their relevant targets to ensure that concerns relating to persons with disabilities become an integral part of efforts to achieve the goals.

11. Governments should support the formation of self-help groups of persons with disabilities in rural and urban poor areas and their federations, with a view to developing their capacity in mutual support, advocacy and participation in the decision-making process.

V. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE TARGETS OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

51. The following strategies should support Governments, in collaboration with civil society organizations, in the achievement of targets cited in chapter IV.

A. National plan of action (five years) on disability

52. A national plan of action concerning disability is vital to implement the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, 2003-2012, at the national and subnational levels.

Strategy 1. Governments should develop, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations, and adopt by 2004, a five-year comprehensive national plan of action to implement the targets and strategies of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, 2003-2012. The national plan should have inclusive policies and programmes for integrating persons with disabilities into mainstream development plans and programmes.

B. Promotion of a rights-based approach to disability issues

53. A rights-based approach should be taken to advance disability issues. The civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of persons with disabilities should be addressed and protected. Disability issues should be integrated into national plans relating to development and into a human rights agenda. Globally, more than 40 countries have adopted non-discrimination laws on disability, but only 9 countries in the Asian and Pacific region have done so.

Strategy 2. Governments should examine the adoption of laws and policies and review of existing laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, especially to ensure non-discrimination. They should include a clear and specific definition of what constitutes discrimination against persons with disabilities. Such laws and policies should comply with United Nations standards on human rights and disabilities. Persons with disabilities should have equal access to effective remedies to enforce their rights under such laws.

Strategy 3. National human rights institutions should draw special attention to the rights of persons with disabilities and integrate them into the full range of their functions. Governments should consider, according to the concrete circumstances of their countries and areas, establishing an independent disability rights institution to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Strategy 4. Governments should ensure that persons with disabilities, including disability groups in civil society, fully participate from an early stage in helping to shape the laws and policies

that will affect their lives and in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these laws and policies and in recommending improvements.

Strategy 5. States should consider ratifying the core international human rights treaties.³ After consultation with disability groups, Governments should include specific information about the rights of persons with disabilities in reports submitted to treaty monitoring bodies under the treaties they have ratified.

Strategy 6. Governments should consider support for and contribute to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001 to consider proposals for a “comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities” in the elaboration of the comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and should encourage and facilitate the full participation of a wide range of disability groups from all regions of the world in contributing to the Committee’s work.

Strategy 7. Governments should include persons with disabilities and their organizations, in their procedures at the national, regional and international levels, concerning the drafting and adoption of the proposed human rights convention on disability, (as decided by General Assembly resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001) which by passing, will ensure a strong consumer-influenced monitoring mechanism on the rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities.

C. Disability statistics/common definition of disabilities for planning

54. Lack of adequate data has been one of the most significant factors leading to the neglect of disability issues, including the development of policy and measures to monitor and evaluate its implementation, in the region. In many developing countries, the data collected do not reflect the full extent of disability prevalence. This limitation results in part from the conceptual framework adopted, the scope and coverage of the surveys undertaken, as well as the definitions, classifications and the methodology used for the collection of data on disability. It is also recognized that a common system of defining and classifying disability is not uniformly applied in the region. In this connection, a wider usage of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health in countries of the region will be expected to provide a base for the development of such a common system of defining and classifying disability.

Strategy 8. Governments are encouraged to develop, by 2005, their system for disability-related data collection and analysis and to produce relevant statistics disaggregated by disability to support policy-making and programme planning.

³ Six core human rights treaties are: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Strategy 9. Governments are encouraged to adopt, by 2005, definitions on disability based on the *Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics*,⁴ which will allow intercountry comparison in the region.

D. Strengthened community-based approaches to the prevention of causes of disability, rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities

55. Many developing countries in the region are now beginning to augment and replace traditional institutional and centralized rehabilitation programmes and projects with approaches better suited to their social and economic environments of poverty, high unemployment and limited resources for social services. Community-based rehabilitation programmes form the hub of such strategies. The community-based approach is particularly appropriate for the prevention of causes of disability, early identification and intervention of children with disabilities, reaching out to persons with disabilities in rural areas, raising awareness and advocacy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all activities in the community, including social, cultural and religious activities. Education, training and employment needs could also be met by this approach. It is essential that persons with disabilities exercise choice and control over initiatives for community-based rehabilitation.

Strategy 10. Governments, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society organizations, should immediately develop national policies, if that has not yet been done, to promote community-based approaches for the prevention of causes of disability, for rehabilitation and for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. Community based rehabilitation (CBR) perspectives should reflect a human rights approach and be modelled on the independent living concept, which includes peer counselling.

**VI. COOPERATION AND SUPPORT IN PURSUANCE OF THE BIWAKO
MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

A. Subregional cooperation and collaboration

56. One of the important focuses of the new regional framework is to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among Governments at the subregional level. Countries in the same subregion share common concerns, aspirations and constraints and are in the best position to provide mutual support and collaboration. In this regard, Governments in each subregion are requested to formulate their own subregional priorities and a plan of action to seek mutual support in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.XVII.15.