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**REVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE AND CHALLENGES FACED IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, BARRIER-FREE AND RIGHTS-BASED SOCIETY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2003-2012**

(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

Note by the secretariat

* Reissued for technical reasons.

** The submission of the present paper was delayed so as to include the most up-to-date information on the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action from Governments in the region.

SUMMARY

The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific was adopted by the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, as the regional policy guideline for the new Decade, 2003-2012, which had been proclaimed by the Commission in its resolution 58/4 of 22 May 2002. The present document has been prepared by the secretariat in order to assist the members and associate members of the Commission in conducting the midpoint review.

Data at the national level reveal that significant strides have been made in the institutional commitment to implement the Framework, in the development of policies and in efforts to enhance the understanding of the importance of collecting data on disability. In particular, the concept of promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities has become increasingly prominent in laws and plans.

For the remaining five years of the Decade, the countries of the region are tasked with tackling many challenges, which include ensuring that laws and plans are buttressed with resources sufficient for their implementation and monitoring. The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, along with the recently adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, will have to be promoted in the North and Central Asian subregion. The Framework reflects the current global paradigm on disability: a rights-based approach and disability-inclusive development. Rigorously promoting its implementation will lead to the creation of a fully inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION.....	2
A. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol	2
B. Disability-inclusive development	3
C. Natural disasters.....	4
II. REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION	4
A. National commitment to disability matters.....	5
B. Development of legislation and plans.....	7
C. Developments in the Pacific	9
D. Collection of disability data.....	9
E. Achievements and challenges regarding the priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.....	11
III. CONCLUSION.....	19

INTRODUCTION

1. For more than 20 years, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been spearheading the region's efforts to promote an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities. In 1986, the disability subprogramme was created as part of the Social Development Division of ESCAP to promote the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities, a defining concept pursued during the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-1992.¹ Looking to translate the concept into action in the regional context, the Commission adopted resolution 48/3 of 23 April 1992, whereby it launched the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002.

2. While much progress was achieved during the Decade, the challenges were overwhelming. In order to give the region further impetus, the Commission 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, whereby it proclaimed the extension of the Decade for another decade, from 2003 to 2012. During the second Decade, the emphasis was on a paradigm shift from a charity-based to a human rights-based approach to disability issues with the defining slogan "inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society". The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific² has served as the region's guideline for policy development and action. The Framework encompasses 7 priority areas with 21 time-bound targets, recommendations for specific action and overarching strategies.

3. Pursuant to Commission resolution 59/3 of 4 September 2003 on the regional implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific during the Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, the ESCAP secretariat provided Governments in the region with technical advice to promote and provide monitoring tools for the implementation of the Framework, with the support of the Governments of China and Japan. In its resolution 61/8 of 18 May 2005 on the midpoint review of the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission reaffirmed the need to conduct the midpoint review, as stipulated in the Framework, and requested the Executive Secretary to organize a three-day high-level intergovernmental meeting in 2007 for the review.

¹ See General Assembly resolution 37/53 of 3 December 1982.

² E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1 (see also Commission resolution 59/3 of 4 September 2003).

4. Against this background, the ESCAP secretariat conducted a region-wide survey in 2004 and again in 2006, targeting Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).³ Both surveys compiled information indicating the commitment of Governments to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the development of major disability-specific policies and the collection of disability data. As of July 2007, information from 36 Governments had been made available.⁴

5. While the overall purpose of the present document is to summarize the achievements of the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action during the first five years of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, the secretariat also identifies challenges to implementation at the national level for the remaining five years of the Decade. The review focuses on efforts made at the national level by Governments, in particular regarding institutional commitment, the development of policies and the collection of data.

I. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

A. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

6. In its resolution 61/106 of 13 December 2006, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and an Optional Protocol. The adoption was the culmination of a five-year negotiation and drafting process. The Convention was opened for signature on 30 March 2007 and will take effect once 20 Governments ratify it.

7. The 50-article Convention translates concepts enshrined in existing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights into disability terms and obligates States parties to create enabling environments designed to realize them. As the first disability-specific human rights treaty, the Convention provides legal support for shifting from a charity-based to a rights-based approach in dealing with disability issues, which is the conceptual underpinning of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. The ongoing national-level preparations for the ratification and application of the Convention provide favourable grounds for rights-based policy development.

8. The Convention is also the first human rights treaty that emphasizes the importance of international development cooperation in realizing the rights delineated therein. It calls for all development programmes to be inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. This aspect

³ For the 2006 survey, 9 NGOs responded to the survey and more than 10 NGOs submitted summaries of their contributions to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. Those responses have been incorporated into the present paper.

⁴ The countries and areas that responded to the survey are: China; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Mongolia; and the Republic of Korea in East and North-East Asia; Cambodia; Indonesia; the Lao's People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Myanmar; the Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; Timor-Leste and Viet Nam in South-East Asia; Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; India; Maldives; Nepal; Pakistan; Sri Lanka and Turkey in South and South-West Asia; Armenia; Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in North and Central Asia and Australia; the Cook islands; Fiji, Kiribati; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Tonga and Vanuatu in the Pacific.

concur with the basic principle of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action that calls for the incorporation of disability as a development concern, also known as disability-inclusive development.

9. ESCAP played an instrumental role in the success of the drafting process. In 2003, the Bangkok Draft: Proposed Elements of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁵ was submitted to 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. It was subsequently used as the basis for the first global draft of the Convention. The Bangkok Draft was the product of the concerted efforts of Governments, organizations of persons with disabilities and others in the region. The commitments made by ESCAP and those stakeholders to the process significantly enhanced the understanding of the rights-based approach and heightened the motivation to further implement the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

B. Disability-inclusive development

10. Disability-inclusive development has been an increasingly recognized concept in the development field. Since the Millennium Development Goals were adopted in 2000, an increasing number of bilateral and multilateral development banks and international development agencies, at both the global and regional levels, have been paying attention to integrating disability concerns into their policies and projects.

11. Recognizing that the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction and primary education would not be achievable unless disability concerns were duly integrated,⁶ the World Bank established in 2002 a focal point team on disability within the Bank to conduct research and to promote disability-inclusive development. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) followed suit.

12. Policies for disability-inclusive development have been formulated by the European Commission, the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Finnish Department for International Development Cooperation (FINNIDA). Their operations cover the ESCAP region.

13. Within the region, for instance, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) established *Guidelines on Disability* in 2003 and appointed a focal point to promote disability-inclusive development the following year. In 2006, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation

⁵ The text of the Bangkok Draft is available at www.worldenable.net/bangkok2003a/bangkokdraftrev.htm.

⁶ James D. Wolfensohn, "Poor, disabled and shut out", *Washington Post*, 3 December 2002 (accessed on 30 July 2007 at www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/develop/2002/1203disabled.htm).

(JBIC) issued a paper entitled “Making development projects inclusive/accessible for persons with disabilities in ODA loan operations”.⁷ Since most of the projects financed by JBIC are for infrastructure, its activities aimed at strengthening accessibility in, for example, public transportation and public buildings can facilitate disability-inclusive development in the region.

C. Natural disasters

14. During the last five years, the region has witnessed a series of unprecedented large-scale natural disasters that inflicted substantial damage on communities in both economic and social terms, thereby posing a serious challenge for the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

15. In 2004, half of the world’s 10 most severe natural disasters occurred in Asia and the Pacific and about 70 per cent of the total global damage (\$55 billion out of \$80 billion) was inflicted on the region. Damage and disruption tends to be most significant in developing and least developed countries.⁸ Some of the most devastating natural disasters were the Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004, which caused close to 300,000 deaths and inflicted about \$4 billion worth of damage on infrastructure, and the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005, in which over 70,000 were killed.⁹

16. Natural disasters have increased the number of persons with disabilities and accentuated their vulnerabilities, leading to exacerbated poverty. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that, after the 2004 tsunami, the number of persons with disabilities would increase by 20 per cent and that one third to one half of all people affected by the disaster would suffer from mental distress. In many emergency shelters and camps, makeshift bathrooms were often inaccessible to the injured, the old and the disabled. Important information did not reach deaf people owing to the lack of accessible information. A 2005 ESCAP study of disaster-stricken communities in Sri Lanka showed that, after the tsunami, victims with disabilities had much less access to health services than non-disabled victims.¹⁰

17. Yet, the need for the reconstruction of disaster-stricken communities opened a window of opportunity for Governments, development agencies and persons with disabilities to work together to rebuild those communities in a manner that ensures accessibility for persons with disabilities.

II. REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

18. The review of the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action begins with an assessment of the strategies, in particular, as regards national commitment to disability

⁷ See www.jbic.go.jp/japanese/oec/environ/pdf/pwd.pdf.

⁸ For further information on the subject, see www.geoinfo.ait.ac.th/presentation/Nah_ACRS2005_present.pdf.

⁹ ESCAP, *Enhancing Regional Cooperation in Infrastructure Development including that Related to Disaster Management* (United Nations publication, sales No. E.06.II.F.13).

¹⁰ ESCAP, *Moving Forward Post-Tsunami: Voices of the Vulnerable* (United Nations publication, sales No. E.06.II.F.19).

matters, the extent of development of legislation and plans on disability matters, developments in the Pacific and the collection of disability data. This is followed by an examination of the achievements made in the seven priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.¹¹

A. National commitment to disability matters

19. In order to measure national commitment to disability matters, the following proxy indicators were used: (a) whether the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action was translated into the local language; (b) whether a Government signed the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region;¹² (c) whether a Government had a national year and/or decade devoted to disability matters; and (d) whether a Government had a national coordination mechanism for disability matters.

20. The information made available indicates that Governments in the region, irrespective of the level of economic development, have been seriously committed to promoting the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action through various means. With regard to institutional mechanisms, there are multiple approaches, but a common practice has been to involve representatives of various ministries and persons with disabilities. This constitutes significant progress compared with 2002.

1. Translation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action

21. During the last five years, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action has been translated into local languages by 14 Governments: Bangladesh; Cambodia; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Thailand; Turkey; Vanuatu, Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China.

2. Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region and national year and/or decade of disabled persons

22. Thus far, 46 Governments have signed the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region.¹³ Timor-Leste signed it in 2004. A total of 11 Governments (Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Turkey) have designated a national year of disabled persons. A total of 8 Governments (Australia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand) have established a framework for a national

¹¹ The seven priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework are as follows: (1) Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations; (2) Women with disabilities; (3) Early detection, early intervention and education; (4) Training and employment, including self-employment; (5) Access to built environments and public transport; (6) Access to information and communications, including information, communication and assistive technologies; (7) Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes. Overarching strategies are as follows: national plan of action on disability; promotion of a rights-based approach; disability statistics/common definition of disability for planning; community-based approach to the prevention of causes of disability, rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities; and subregional, regional and interregional collaboration.

¹² E/ESCAP/902, annex I.

¹³ The list of signatories is available at www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/decadenew/sign.html.

decade of disabled persons. A total of 11 Governments (Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vanuatu, Viet Nam) have issued a national decree on the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. Most recently, Sri Lanka designated the year 2007 as the Year of Accessibility.

3. National coordination mechanism

23. The midpoint review reveals that numerous forms of institutional arrangements on disability have been made in the region and that the involvement of multiple ministries and disabled persons is prevalent. Disability-specific national coordination mechanisms exist in at least 27 Governments: Australia; Armenia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China. Armenia and Vanuatu set up such mechanisms in 2006.

24. A total of 20 Governments reported that their national coordination mechanisms had representatives from more than one ministry and disabled people's organizations. In Japan, the Republic of Korea and Turkey, the mechanisms have been placed under the responsibility of the office of the Prime Minister. In other countries, the mechanisms fall under ministries responsible for social welfare, social development and community development.

25. In Viet Nam, the National Coordination Committee on Disability (NCCD) was established under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs in 2001 and has been instrumental in implementing the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. With representatives from 17 ministries and 5 organizations of/for persons with disabilities, NCCD has been leading the development of an action plan on disability, advocating proper budget allocation, launching a massive nationwide campaign on the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and working with international donors to develop disability-related projects. These activities have resulted in the development of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities, the introduction of the nation's first accessible buses, heightened awareness and, most recently, the adoption of the National Plan of Action, which was in line with the principles and priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

26. New Zealand presents a different approach. The Office for Disability Issues, established in 2002, is headed by the Minister for Disability Issues and supported by approximately nine government officials. It is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy and for providing other agencies with policy advice on disability matters. The Office relies on the Disability Advisory Council, which comprises 13 representatives of disabled people's organizations, in matters regarding the implementation of the Strategy.

27. Afghanistan offers an example of yet another approach. Its Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled is the focal point for labour affairs and social protection and pays special attention to providing services for persons with disabilities and the families of martyrs.

28. Although the establishment of an institutional mechanism seems to be the norm in the region, some Governments still lack the financial and human resources as well as the technical capacity to engage in policy development and implementation. The involvement of representatives from various ministries and persons with disabilities indicates progress, but the extent of involvement has not been adequately measured. The overall extent of the decision-making power given to the coordination mechanism also needs to be further examined.

B. Development of legislation and plans

29. In order to measure the extent of the development of legislation and plans on disability, the following four aspects were examined: (a) whether the Constitution had any mention of disability; (b) whether the Government had a disability-specific comprehensive law; (c) whether the Government had a disability-specific anti-discrimination law; and (d) whether the Government had a comprehensive national plan of action on disability. The existence of a theme-specific law or standard, such as accessibility standards, was examined in the section on the seven priority areas.

30. There has been steady development of legislation, ranging from constitutions to disability-specific laws and detailed plans of action on disability. The concept of promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and the related language have become more prominent in laws and plans owing to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the process of elaborating the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Some of the plans contain detailed descriptions of the intended result, the budget and the responsible agencies, demonstrating the financial and political commitment of the Government concerned. Local government level planning has developed in the region, and there has been significant progress in the Pacific subregion.

1. Constitutions

31. Constitutions in at least 20 members of the Commission (Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Viet Nam) have more than one article mentioning disability. In 2005, Armenia adopted and Bhutan drafted such a constitution. The substance of the articles falls into two major types: (a) the obligation of the State to provide welfare, prevention and rehabilitation programmes; and (b) the obligation of equal protection under the law and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

32. The Constitution of Afghanistan stipulates that services for disabled persons should be funded through national and international NGOs and that the President should nominate two disabled representatives to the Senate for five years. The Constitution of Timor-Leste, which was adopted in 2002, stipulates non-discrimination on grounds of physical or mental conditions.

2. Disability-specific comprehensive laws

33. In the ESCAP region, at least 14 Governments (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand) have a comprehensive disability law. Comprehensive laws in nine Governments cover the seven priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. China had completed a draft amendment to the law, emphasizing measures to realize all types of rights, ranging from political participation to enjoyment of cultural life. In 2006, Sri Lanka completed drafting a comprehensive law predicated on a rights-based approach.

3. Disability-specific anti-discrimination laws

34. Seven Governments (Australia; Azerbaijan; India; Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Turkey; Hong Kong, China) reported that they had a disability-specific anti-discrimination law. The New Zealand Human Rights Act, adopted in 1993, is a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that includes disability. In 2006, the Prefecture of Chiba, Japan, adopted the nation's first ordinance prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability.

35. In April 2007, the Republic of Korea adopted the Disability Discrimination Act, which is in line with the principles and underlying concepts of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It covers the areas of employment, education and public services, which includes access to public buildings and transportation.

4. National plans of action on disability

36. At least 21 Governments (Armenia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Fiji; Indonesia; Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) have a national plan of action on disability. Among them, 11 have developed it during the last five years.

37. In late 2006, Viet Nam adopted the National Action Plan to Support People with Disabilities (2006-2010). The Plan specifies action to be taken in order to achieve the targets of the seven priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, allocates budgets and designates the agencies responsible.

38. Japan adopted the Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities for the period 2003 to 2012 and furthermore adopted the Five-Year Plan for Implementation of Priority Measures for the period 2003 to 2007, drawing on the seven priority areas and emphasizing programmes for persons with psychosocial disabilities. In 2004, the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities was amended in order to give governments at the local prefecture and municipal levels a new mandate to develop action plans on disability. To date, 1,791 local governments (98.8 per cent of the total) have developed such plans.

C. Developments in the Pacific

39. In the Pacific subregion, there has been remarkable progress during the first half of the Decade. In 2002, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, for the first time, raised the issue of disability at the annual Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting, a subregional intergovernmental forum. The following year, the Forum leaders endorsed the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action¹⁴ and, in 2006, established the position of disability coordinator officer, whose tasks include providing assistance in the development and monitoring of subregional and national measures on disability. Currently, the Forum is drafting a subregional disability strategy. A network for women with disabilities was formed in 2003.

40. Propelled by high-level commitment and backed by the technical support provided by the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) and collaboration with NGOs, such as the Pacific Disability Forum, progress made at the national level is equally noteworthy. The Cook Islands established its national council in 2001 and adopted a national policy and action plan on disability in 2003 drawing on the priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. In 2004, Vanuatu drafted a national policy. The following year, Papua New Guinea adopted its five-year plan on disability and drafted a national policy statement and Solomon Islands adopted its comprehensive disability policy. Fiji and the Federated States of Micronesia drafted national policies on disability in 2006 and were expected to adopt them in 2007. Early in 2007, the National Council on Disability was formed in Tonga. Kiribati has commenced the process of developing a national policy statement and action plan and is developing a national coordination mechanism.

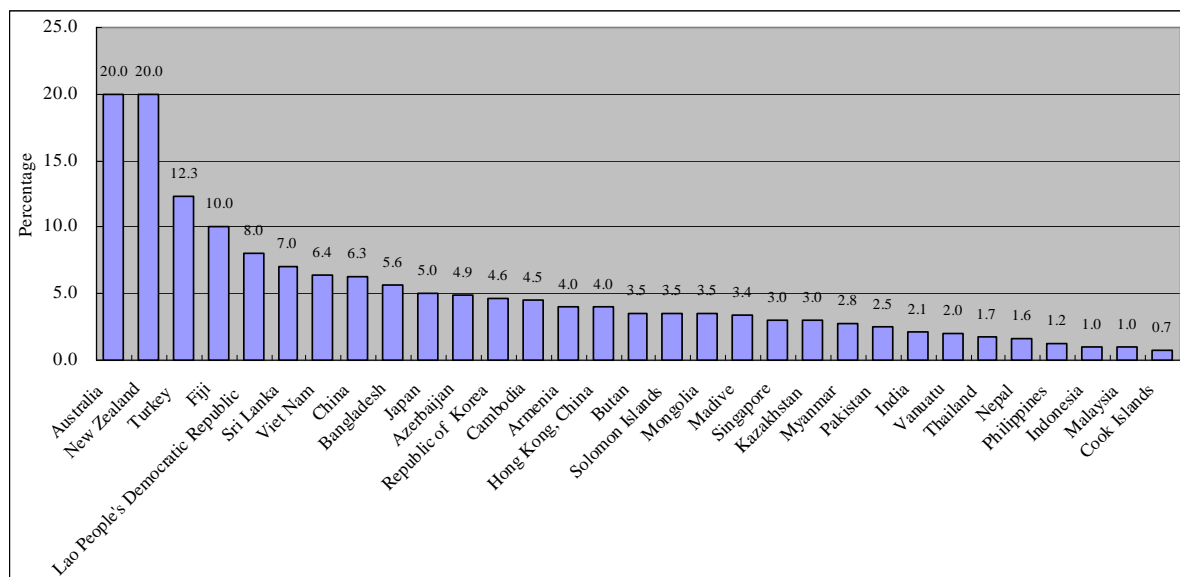
D. Collection of disability data

41. The lack of adequate and comparable data on persons with disabilities and their socio-economic status has been viewed as a major impediment in the disability field as it hinders proper evidence-based advocacy, needs assessment, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. The foregoing analysis points out that available data tend to be grossly underestimated owing to the lack of appropriate methods and institutional, financial and human resource capacities to carry out data collection. A narrower definition of disability which focuses on impairment and/or limits the categories of impairment is an additional problem.

42. More data are currently available than at the time of the conclusion of the previous Decade, indicating some improvements in data collection at the government level and allowing useful observations on socio-economic status. Data are available on the proportion of persons with disabilities from 31 Governments (figure 1), status of education from 12 Governments, employment from 11 Governments, Internet use from 2 Governments and poverty status from 4 Governments.

¹⁴ See A/58/304, annex, paras. 50-51.

Figure 1. Proportion of persons with disabilities in selected members and associate members of ESCAP



43. Figure 1 shows the proportion of disabled persons in relation to the population in 31 members and associate members of ESCAP. The proportion ranges from a low of 0.7 per cent in the Cook Islands to a high of 20 per cent in Australia, but in the majority of cases, it is below 5 per cent. A range so wide reflects varying definitions of disability and disparities in data-gathering capacity and methodology.

44. During the last five years, the Statistics Division of ESCAP, in collaboration with WHO, has been providing training for national statistical offices in the region to promote understanding of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)¹⁵ and its application to the national context. The Division undertook pilot tests of a standard questionnaire and analysed the results, which helped incorporate an Asian and Pacific regional perspective into the drafting of the revision to the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*. It also coordinated the preparation of a training manual on disability statistics, which was used as a main reference for a regional training workshop on disability statistics conducted by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. As a result, a number of countries, such as Fiji and the Philippines, have made plans to include the topic of disability in the next round of censuses, while others, such as Afghanistan, China and Thailand, have conducted or developed plans to conduct disability surveys.

45. Other Governments have already established regular mechanisms to collect comprehensive data on disability-related issues. For example, Japan has been publishing the *Annual Report on Government Measures for Persons with Disabilities* since 1994, in pursuance of the mandate given by the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities. The report gives the total number of persons with

¹⁵ Available at www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/.

disabilities, disaggregated by type of impairment, age and place of residence. The report also gives the number of children with disabilities who attend school, disaggregated by type of schooling.

46. Despite enhanced understanding and capacities regarding the collection of disability data, the majority of Governments in the region have not incorporated the disability perspective into existing censuses, labour, education or health surveys, or poverty mapping.

E. Achievements and challenges regarding the priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action

47. The following section reviews the achievement of each of the 21 targets in the seven priority areas on the basis of the responses provided by 25 Governments to the 2006 survey and other information presented at past meetings organized by ESCAP as well as reports by NGOs and other stakeholders.¹⁶

1. Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations

Target 1. Governments, international funding agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should, by 2004, establish policies with the requisite resource allocations to support the development and formation of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities in all areas, and with a specific focus on slum and rural dwellers. Governments should take steps to ensure the formation of parents associations at local levels by the year 2005 and federate them at the national level by year 2010.

48. At least 13 Governments in the region (Bangladesh; China; Nepal; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Tonga; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) have policies to support the development of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities (SHOs). Of those, 10 (Bangladesh; China; Republic of Korea; Nepal; Pakistan; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) have policies that include financial support for SHOs. A total of 10 Governments (China; Indonesia; Kiribati; Malaysia; Nepal; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China) reported that they had taken measures to support the formation of parents' associations. In Fiji and Thailand, SHOs of persons with psychosocial disabilities have been developed in the last two years.

49. In Thailand, the Nonthaburi Independent Living Center was opened in 2004 with the support of the then Office of Rehabilitation for Disabled People, the Department of Public Welfare and JICA. Later, the Bangrak Pattana Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) and the local government office developed a policy to promote and empower women, children, youth, elderly people and

¹⁶ The second survey conducted by ESCAP in 2006 asked in-depth questions regarding the implementation of each of the 21 targets. A total of 25 Governments (Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Fiji; Indonesia; Kiribati; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Tonga; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) responded.

persons with disabilities. As a result, the SAO currently provides the Center with financial assistance for the training of persons with disabilities and cooperates with them to collect data on persons with disabilities in the community.

Target 2. Governments and civil society organizations should, by 2005, fully include organizations of persons with disabilities in their decision-making processes involving planning and programme implementation which directly and indirectly affect their lives.

50. Over the last five years, the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes has been increasingly recognized and regarded as indispensable for effective policy development, delivery of services and evaluation. Their participation in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the epitome of success in this regard. Persons with disabilities were part of the delegations of the Governments of ESCAP members, such as Bangladesh, Japan and Thailand, who actively engaged in the negotiation process.

51. Thus far, at least 15 Governments (Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; Malaysia; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) in the region have measures to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes. For example, in the Republic of Korea, a person with a disability was included in a governmental rehabilitation service team to undertake research on issues of community living, which led to the country's first system of financial assistance for personal assistants for persons with severe disabilities.

2. Women with disabilities

Target 3. Governments should, by 2005, ensure anti-discrimination measures, where appropriate, which safeguard the rights of women with disabilities.

52. At least 10 Governments (Azerbaijan; Cambodia; Indonesia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) in the region have anti-discrimination measures to safeguard the rights of women with disabilities. The New Zealand Human Rights Act of 1993 prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender or disability. Likewise, section 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act adopted in April 2007 by the Republic of Korea prohibits discrimination against women with disabilities. In Malaysia, a technical working group on women with disabilities was established under the National Advisory and Consultative Council to take measures to safeguard the rights of women with disabilities.

Target 4. National self-help organizations of persons with disabilities should, by 2005, adopt policies to promote the full participation and equal representation of women with disabilities in their activities, including in management, organizational training and advocacy programmes.

Target 5. Women with disabilities should, by 2005, be included in the membership of national mainstream women's associations.

53. Over the last five years, Governments and NGOs have organized a number of workshops and seminars focusing on the theme of women with disabilities. In at least 15 Governments (Bangladesh; Cambodia; Indonesia; Lao People's Democratic Republic; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Tonga; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China), the participation and equal representation of women with disabilities has been promoted by either law or SHO policy. In addition, 15 Governments (Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Fiji; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Thailand; Tonga; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) reported that their women's associations included women with disabilities in their membership.

54. In China, national women's associations, such as the All-China Women's Federation, have recruited women with disabilities. When the Federation adopts policies or regulations concerning disabled women, the relevant disabled people's organizations are consulted. In Viet Nam, in March 2007, one disabled woman, for the first time, became a member of the Standing Committee of the Central Women's Union of Viet Nam at its tenth Congress.

55. Despite increasing attention to this area, many women with disabilities are still unable to play leadership roles owing to continuing social exclusion and a lack of empowerment training and opportunities.

3. Early detection, early intervention and education

Target 6. Children and youth with disabilities will be an integral part of the population targeted by the millennium development goal of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls will complete a full course of primary schooling.

Target 7. At least 75 per cent of children and youth with disabilities of school age will, by 2010, be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

56. Targets 6 and 7 are derived from Millennium Development Goal 2 on achieving universal primary education. At the onset of the Decade, less than 10 per cent of children and youth with disabilities had access to any form of education. A total of 18 Governments (Armenia; Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Fiji; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Myanmar; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Tonga; Viet Nam; Cook

Islands; Hong Kong, China) reported that they had children and youth with disabilities as the integral part of their measures to attain Goal 2. India adopted Education for All, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, an initiative that prohibits the rejection of children from school on the basis of disability. Some data on the status of children with disabilities are available from 12 Governments (Armenia; Australia; Bangladesh; China; Mongolia; New Zealand; Philippines; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China).

57. Although the problem of lack of definitional and methodological clarity and comparability arises in the data that are available, they seem to corroborate the foregoing analysis that the rate of access to education for children and youth with disabilities is significantly lower than for those without disabilities. For instance, in Armenia, the primary school completion rate of children in general is 14 per cent, but for disabled children it is 1 per cent. In the Republic of Korea, the corresponding rates were 99 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively.

58. While the general assessment on the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 2 was positive with most countries in the region having a primary enrolment rate above 80 per cent,¹⁷ the majority of data available indicate lower rates for children and youth with disabilities.

Target 8. By 2012, all infants and young children (birth to four years old) will have access to and receive community-based early intervention services, which ensure survival, with support and training for their families.

Target 9. Governments should ensure detection of disabilities at as early an age as possible.

59. At least 13 Governments (Armenia; Bangladesh; Cambodia; Fiji; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; New Zealand; Republic of Korea; Solomon Islands; Thailand; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) have taken measures to provide community-based early intervention services and training programmes. A total of 19 Governments (Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; Fiji; Indonesia; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Myanmar; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) provide services for the early detection of disability in infants and young children. Bangladesh introduced social service units in 87 government hospitals to ensure that people with disabilities could have access to a team of social workers.

4. Training and employment, including self-employment

Target 10. At least 30 per cent of the signatories (Member States) will ratify the International Labour Organization Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (No. 159), 1983, by 2012.

¹⁷ See www.mdgasiapacific.org.

60. At the onset of the Decade, 43 Governments had signed the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. Since then, Papua New Guinea (2003), Turkey (2003) and Timor-Leste (2004) have signed it, bringing the total to 46. ILO Convention No. 159 has been ratified by 10 of those 46 Governments, including Fiji, which ratified it in 2004. Thus, to date, 22 per cent of the signatories have ratified ILO Convention No. 159. Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan ratified the Convention but are not signatories to the Proclamation.

Target 11. By 2012, at least 30 per cent of all vocational training programmes in signatory countries will be inclusive of persons with disabilities and provide appropriate support and job placement or business development services for them.

61. Six Governments in the region (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, Republic of Korea, Thailand) reported that they had disability-inclusive vocational centres. In Azerbaijan, the training for entrepreneurship development is open to interested disabled applicants. In China, the massage training centre for blind people accepts trainees with and without disabilities.

62. In Australia, the Department of Education initiated the “Bridging Pathways” strategy in 2000 with the aim of integrating persons with disabilities into general vocational educational training (VET) nationwide. In 2005, the Government enacted new disability standards to further promote the integration of persons with disabilities into educational and training institutions, both public and private.

63. In 2005, the Philippines issued an executive order mandating national government agencies to use 10 per cent of their budgets to procure products made and services provided by persons with disabilities.

Target 12. By 2010, reliable data that measure the employment and self-employment rates of persons with disabilities will exist in all countries.

64. The secretariat obtained data on the employment status of persons with disabilities from 11 Governments (Australia, Azerbaijan, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Viet Nam). The data indicate a disparity in the employment rate of persons with and without disabilities. In Australia, 81 per cent of the general population from 15 to 64 years old is employed, in comparison with only 53 per cent for persons with disabilities. A Sri Lankan survey indicates an alarmingly low rate of employment, particularly among persons with intellectual disabilities (1 per cent) and psychosocial disabilities (7 per cent) compared with the rate for persons with mobility disabilities (26 per cent).¹⁸

¹⁸ Sri Lanka, Ministry of Social Welfare, “Social research study on disability” (2003).

65. The definitions used in producing these statistics remain ambiguous, however. The denominator population and/or types of work place (i.e., sheltered workshops, companies, self-employment) are unclear. In fact, 10 Governments (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam) indicated the need to improve the reliability of data, which suggests that statisticians in the labour area and policymakers may need to take urgent action.

5. Access to built environments and public transport

Target 13. Governments should adopt and enforce accessibility standards for planning of public facilities, infrastructure and transport, including those in rural/agricultural contexts

Target 14. All new and renovated public transport systems, including road, water, light and heavy mass railway and air transport systems, should be made fully accessible by persons with disabilities and older persons; existing land, water and air public transport systems (vehicles, stops and terminals) should be made accessible and usable as soon as practicable

Target 15. All international and regional funding agencies for infrastructure development should include universal and inclusive design concepts in their loan/grant award criteria.

66. At least 23 Governments in the region (Afghanistan; Armenia; Azerbaijan; China; Fiji; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Tonga; Turkey; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Hong Kong, China) have accessibility standards for either the built environment or public transport or both.

67. Significant progress has been made during the last two years. For instance, in 2005, the Republic of Korea adopted a mobility promotion act and Thailand passed a Ministry of Interior regulation on accessibility. In 2006, Armenia adopted a law to ensure accessibility for the disabled and people with mobility impairments. In the same year, Sri Lanka adopted regulations on accessibility for disabled persons and the Malaysia Department of Standards introduced accessibility standards for public toilets.

68. As a result of the introduction of regulations on accessible infrastructure and public transport in 2005, Viet Nam started testing lift-equipped buses. Moreover, persons with disabilities can use buses free of charge. China promotes its 100 accessible model cities for a better accessible built environment. Likewise, Pakistan has disabled-friendly cities in each province. In India, the national policy for persons with disabilities, adopted in 2006, contains mandates to make the built environment accessible. Through concerted efforts by the Government and NGOs, 1,250 accessible railroad coaches have been manufactured for nationwide use and 625 low-floor buses have been ordered by the Delhi Transport Department.¹⁹

¹⁹ Access Exchange International, *Accessible Transportation Around the World*, June 2007 (accessed on 30 July at www.globalride-sf.org/newsletters/0706.html).

69. Increasing attention has been paid to “accessible tourism” as a useful means to bring benefits not only to persons with disabilities but also to the tourism industry. For instance, the Mayor of Takayama City in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, has been promoting the concept since 1996 and the number of visitors has increased by 50 per cent.²⁰ In 2007, Thailand developed accessibility guidelines for restrooms and hotels, and Turkey has published an accessible guide map to attract more tourists with disabilities and older tourists.

70. While the efforts towards barrier-free environments and transportation are commendable, the remaining challenge in the region is to ensure that the existing built environment and transport remain accessible, and to pay attention to accessibility needs in rural and remote areas.

6. Access to information and communications, including information, communications and assistive technologies

Target 16. By 2005, persons with disabilities should have at least the same rate of access to the Internet and related services as the rest of citizens in a country of the region.

Target 17. International organizations (e.g., International Telecommunication Union, International Organization for Standardization, World Trade Organization, World Wide Web Consortium, Motion Picture Engineering Group) responsible for international ICT standards should, by 2004, incorporate accessibility standards for persons with disabilities in their international ICT standards.

Target 18. Governments should adopt, by 2005, ICT accessibility guidelines for persons with disabilities in their national ICT policies and specifically include persons with disabilities as their target beneficiary group with appropriate measures.

71. As many persons with disabilities in the region do not have access to computers, the region is faced with many tasks to attain targets 16 to 18. The development of policies and data in the area of ICT is the weakest of the seven priority areas. Data on access to the Internet by persons with disabilities are available from two Governments (New Zealand, Republic of Korea), and it indicates a disparity between those with disabilities and those without. For instance, in the Republic of Korea, the rate of access to the Internet by persons without disabilities is 75 per cent, but among those with disabilities it is 46 per cent.

72. Nonetheless, there have been some encouraging developments in the region. Four Governments (New Zealand; Republic of Korea; Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China) have ICT accessibility guidelines for persons with disabilities. Viet Nam adopted a law on ICT in 2006, article 74 of which is devoted to assistance for persons with disabilities. In accordance with the law, the Government embarked on many initiatives, including the provision of computers for persons with disabilities and preferential inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and training programmes related to ICT.

²⁰ Further information is available at www.hida.jp.

73. Some Governments have applied global standards to the national context. In 2001, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and its partner, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), published ISO/IEC Guide 71, "Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities". In 2004, Japan adopted Japan Industrial Standard (JIS) Z8071, which applied ISO/IEC Guide 71 to the national context.

Target 19. Governments should develop and coordinate a standardized sign language, finger Braille, tactile sign language, in each country and to disseminate and teach the results through all means, i.e. publications, CD-ROMs, etc.

Target 20. Governments should establish a system in each country to train and dispatch sign language interpreters, Braille transcribers, finger Braille interpreters, and human readers and to encourage their employment

74. At least eight Governments (Azerbaijan, China, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand) in the region have standardized sign language. Eight Governments (Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China) reported that they had finger Braille, and one government (Hong Kong, China) reported the existence of tactile sign language. A total of 12 Governments (Armenia; Bangladesh; China; Malaysia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Hong Kong, China) reported having some system of training or dispatching sign language interpreters; some of them were funded by Governments and run by NGOs, while others were managed by universities.

75. In 2006, the Regional Secretariat for Asia and the Pacific of the World Federation of the Deaf conducted a survey of the use of sign language in the region. The results indicate that many countries and areas in the region suffer from a dearth of sign language interpreters. For instance, there are 964 official sign language interpreters in the Philippines, 50 in Thailand, 40 in Nepal, 4 in Cambodia, only 2 in Sri Lanka and none at all in Indonesia. By contrast, there are 18,161 in Japan.

76. The level of knowledge and awareness of the presence and needs of deaf-blind persons is still quite low among policymakers and teachers.

7. Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes

Target 21. Governments should halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of persons with disabilities whose income/consumption is less than one dollar a day.

77. At the onset of the Decade, over 40 per cent of persons with disabilities lived in poverty in the region. To tackle the problem, target 21 was created from Millennium Development Goal 1, on poverty reduction. Over the first half of the Decade, the increasing recognition of the concept of disability-inclusive development has drawn the attention of policymakers and other stakeholders to the link between poverty and disability.

78. Governments in the region have been making efforts. For instance, China has taken measures to include persons with disabilities in the overall poverty alleviation strategy of governments at various levels and has established rehabilitation and poverty alleviation funds, such as those co-financed by the Agricultural Bank of China in cooperation with disabled people's federations. As a part of these measures, the training of sheep or potato farmers with disabilities is now an integral part of agricultural development in many villages. The Government reported that this and other measures resulted in the lifting of 10 million persons with disabilities out of poverty.

79. Bangladesh had introduced a number of concrete measures, namely, interest-free microcredit schemes for persons with disabilities, monthly cash assistance for severely disabled persons over 30 years old and education subsidies for students with disabilities at all schooling levels. In 2005, Bangladesh incorporated the disability perspective in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

80. Data from four Governments (Azerbaijan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam) indicate a marked disparity between persons with and without disabilities, irrespective of the country's economic status. For instance, in Sri Lanka, the poverty rate among persons with mobility impairments is 45 per cent as compared with 25 per cent for the general population. The poverty rate among persons with speech impairments is 88 per cent. In New Zealand, the proportion of adults with disabilities having an annual income of less than US\$ 15,000 is 49 per cent as opposed to 35 per cent for those without disabilities. The lack of data itself, as mentioned above (see paras. 41-46), continues to be a problem.

III. CONCLUSION

81. The data collected by the secretariat reveal that, irrespective of the level of economic development, significant strides have been made in the institutional commitment to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, policy development and enhanced understanding of the importance of the collection of disability data. In particular, the concept of promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities has become increasingly prominent in laws and plans. There has been noteworthy progress in policy development in the Pacific subregion and in the area of accessible built environments and public transport as well as the involvement of local governments in the development of disability policies. Persons with disabilities have been increasingly and effectively involved in decision-making processes that affected them. The global development of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the involvement of ESCAP in its drafting as well as the encouraging trend regarding disability-inclusive development have provided favourable grounds for the overall implementation of the Framework.

82. For the remaining five years, the countries of the region are tasked with tackling many challenges, crucial among which is ensuring that laws and plans are buttressed with resources sufficient for their implementation and monitoring. Urgent action should be taken to reduce poverty and improve educational and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Similarly, measures to ensure that disabled persons have access to information, in particular, the use of sign language, and access to ICT have to be taken. Disability-specific data collection systems as well as the mainstreaming of the disability perspective into existing censuses, regular labour, education and health surveys, and poverty mapping should be further promoted. Enhanced support for women with disabilities, persons with disabilities in rural and remote areas, deaf-blind persons, persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with psychosocial disabilities is required. Disaster-resilient accessible communities have to be built and disability-inclusive disaster preparedness has to be promoted. The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the Convention must both be actively promoted in the North and Central Asian subregion.

83. The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action reflects the current global paradigm on disability: a rights-based approach and disability-inclusive development. Rigorously promoting its implementation will lead to the creation of a fully inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society.

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