Review of Progress in Implementing the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

Senior Officials Segment, ITEM-3


STATEMENT
by
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Dear Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

I’d like to present state of play on the policy developments in disability in Turkey. During the last ten years, Turkey has made great progress in disability related polices, programmes and practices. Transformation of policies both at international and regional levels and international collaboration has made significant contributions to our country especially in the last decade. Within this context, I would like to underline the positive impact of CRPD as well as Incheon Strategy and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As we all are well aware, disability is now accepted as a human rights issue. Our government also addresses disability with a rights-based approach in the light of “human first principle”. In addition to improvements achieved in the field of disability within the last decade, ratification of the Convention in 2009 and the Optional Protocol in 2015 by the Government of the Republic of Turkey clearly proves our disability perspective. The Republic of Turkey attributes great importance to mainstreaming disability into all policies with a rights based approach instead of making special arrangements for persons with disabilities and undertakes this task as a fundamental liability. This policy approach is mainly shaped by the framework Law called Turkish Disability Act of 2005 that is amended in 2014 based on CRPD.

General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly is the focal point of Turkey for promoting the implementation and monitoring of both CRPD and the Incheon Strategy at national level. As the focal point General Directorate aims at providing intersectoral coordination at national level and thus, reflecting the rights based approach to national legislation and practices. By providing public sector and civil society cooperation, EYHGM coordinates harmonization of national policy, laws, public services and resources with CRPD.
To strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the rights of persons with disabilities, Project on “Support to the Implementation and Monitoring of the CRPD in Turkey” (2013-2016) was carried out by in cooperation with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to increase the awareness of all relevant parties about their obligations prescribed in the CRPD and establish national indicators which will enable conduction of national monitoring by taking into account the rights of PwDs under the scope of human rights.

In this respect; Indicator sets and relevant questions on seven priority areas for PwDs with the participation of all relevant public authorities, civil society organizations including the ones of/ for persons with disabilities and the academia. Disaggregation of data based on variables such as different disability groups, disability types, gender, age and regional differences were also taken into account. The preparatory work for the National Strategy Paper on Disability have been initiated in the beginning of 2017 for mainstreaming disability with all its dimensions in all policies and government programmes.

To increase the institutional capacity of disability CSOs; supporting good practices and strengthening their relations with all public institutions – notably EYHGM, the Project “Improved Integration of Disabled Persons into Society”, funded under EU – IPA, was initiated in 20011. The capacity of CSOs was increased by holding 16 regional training programs and by providing grants to 23 projects of CSOs regarded as best practices. Moreover, these activities have strengthened lobbying and advocacy activities of disability CSOs. Further regional meetings will be arranged next year to promote inclusive policies and programs of local governments.

Regarding accessibility, Turkish Disability Act in 2005 imposed obligations on municipalities and relevant authorities to provide accessibility for PwDs of facilities and buildings belonging to public institutions including roads, sidewalks, pavements and public places and public transportation systems operated or audited by municipalities. In 2012, a sanction for non-compliance and
the establishment of evaluation and monitoring accessibility commissions in all provinces, in which members of civil society organizations of PwDs are represented. In this regard commissions were established and began their monitoring activities in 2013. The implementation of sanction began in 2015 as brought by the relevant legislation.

To promote implementation of accessibility, training courses were held for the technical personnel employed at related public institutions or municipalities. Within the scope of Accessibility Meetings, over 9,000 top managers and technical personnel were informed. Informational activities are currently being carried on through distance training system and training programs for the technical personnel of the relevant institutions.

To promote and disseminate good practices of accessibility, Accessibility Support Projects Program (ERDEP) has been implemented since 2012 by providing financial support from the national budget.

Finally, I want to state that international and regional cooperation and development perspective will help us accelerate disability studies in Turkey and we want to contribute to this process by active participation. Thank you.