

Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of  
the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012:  
The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action

23-25 June 2010

Conference Room 3, United Nations Conference Centre  
Bangkok

**Agenda item 5: Review of the tentative outline of the study on persons with disabilities in  
Asia and the Pacific to be launched at the 2012 High-level Intergovernmental Meeting**

The present document contains the draft outline for the study on persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific to be prepared by ESCAP for the 2012 High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. The meeting may wish to comment on the general orientation of the study and suggest ways to carried out the action research needed for the collection of data.

# **Research report on improving the livelihood and well-being of persons with disabilities**

## **Background**

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ESCAP will undertake a study on persons with disabilities as part of the preparatory activities for the 2012 “High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asia and Pacific Decade on Disabled Persons”

A general literature review indicates that there is a lack of authoritative study on the subject, particularly from the perspective of the persons with disabilities themselves. The novelty of the present study is its comprehensiveness in studying barriers to livelihood generation. First, this is achieved by capturing the voices of persons with disabilities through non-structured questionnaires which keeps the researcher open to all possible aspects that could be missed under an approach using structured questionnaires. Second, it looks at the issue of livelihood generation through a bottom-up approach, including the voices of the persons with disabilities, the implementing entities, and the policy makers. Third, it will focus on one issue, i.e. livelihoods, but include analyses of all possible relevant factors that explain it.

## **Purpose**

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The objective of this report is to bring the voices of persons with disabilities into the process of policy making and implementation for the benefit of improving their livelihoods. The report, through its bottom-up approach and use of action research, aims to empower persons with disabilities to participate in and influence effectively the processes of decision and policy making.

## **Methodology**

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A common practice in policy analysis is to look first at the “internal structure” of the policy, then at the mechanisms and gaps in its implementation, and finally at how the target group is affected. For the current report, the process has been inverted. The starting point will be the perspective of persons with disabilities, how they experience in concrete terms barriers and gaps. This, in its turn, will be the basis for examining modalities and gaps in the implementation of policies, as well as the process whereby policies are formulated.

The focus on livelihoods<sup>1</sup> of persons with disabilities has been chosen as a substantive entry point for several reasons. First, it provides a coherent framework to look at many different types

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<sup>1</sup> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.

of barriers (physical accessibility, social constraints, transport, communication, education, finance, etc.). This allows examining a wide array of issues related to livelihood development, which is an important determinant of well being. Second, it lends itself quite well to the use of a bottom-up perspective as a method of identifying barriers and examining gaps. Third, although quantitative socio-economic data on persons with disabilities is fairly rare, one exception is labour market surveys, which have at least one question on whether a person is disabled or not.

Barriers faced by persons with disabilities to improving their livelihoods will be identified from the viewpoint of persons with disabilities. The research methodology will be based on action research. This means that the stakeholders will generate the research findings themselves, guided by core researcher teams. It will include both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Moreover, it will follow a research process based on a rights-based approach studying the relations between stakeholders from the bottom to the top.

The study will explore barriers and possible solutions to, among others, accessing labour markets, starting businesses as self-employed persons, accessing education and training opportunities, accessing credits and accumulating assets. We are aware that many barriers emerge from negative social and cultural values towards persons with disabilities but, while we recognize that these stereotypes need to change, the focus of this report is on actionable policy measures aimed to reduce barriers such as infrastructure requirements, credit market regulations or training of education personnel.

The outcome of the study will be the identification of gaps in and policy recommendations for the formulation and implementation of laws, policies and programmes taking into account the different levels of development of the countries of the region. At a more general level, it will inform us on the types of social protection measures that are needed to build the capabilities of persons with disabilities to generate their own income and to protect themselves from possible future income shocks. By using a participatory approach, an intended by-product will be the promotion of a rights-based approach with clearer understanding about the duties and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders in realizing the rights of persons with disabilities.

### **Annotated outline**

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The report will be structured into four parts. Part 1 will be the core of the report presenting the voices of persons with disabilities with respect to the barriers whose reduction they perceive as most empowering to improving their livelihoods. Part 2 will feature an analysis of gaps in the implementation of policies in addressing the barriers highlighted in Part 1. Part 3 will report on the gaps at the level of policy making. Part 4 will collect the gaps identified at all levels together and provide the main recommendations for action for the different stakeholders.

#### ***Part 1: Voices of persons with disabilities***

Part 1 examines (and if necessary redefine) livelihood gaps, barriers as well as solutions to overcome them as identified by persons with disabilities themselves. In addition to the voices of the persons with disabilities, the members of households with persons with disabilities will also be interviewed on selected issues such as dependency relations, decision making and work balance within the household.

The barriers may range from physical-spatial to financial barriers. Social and cultural barriers will also be included but it is recognized that these will be more difficult to identify separately from the other types of barriers. Following the identification of barriers and gaps, the researchers with the persons with disabilities will also discuss solutions to overcome the identified barriers.

To reflect the voices of persons with disabilities, qualitative primary data collection methods will be applied, including focus group and key informant discussions. These results will be supplemented with quantitative analysis based on existing household survey data, mainly from labor force household and enterprise surveys. The analysis of data from labor force surveys could provide information on what kind of employment (own-account workers, employers, employees, or contributing family workers) persons with disabilities are usually engaged in or what kind of social protection they have, both in terms of insurance coverage and contract security.

Thus the analysis in part 1 will yield a list of the most critical barriers and possible solutions to overcome them as perceived by the persons with disabilities. It will also provide contextual information on the situation of persons with disabilities within households. In the following parts, it will be studied how these barriers can be addressed through policy making and policy implementation taking into account the solutions proposed by the persons with disabilities. This will be pursued through an analysis of gaps and solutions at each level.

## ***Part 2: Implementation gaps***

Part 2 will review implementation gaps in reducing the barriers as identified by the persons with disabilities. This will include an inquiry of service providers as well as agencies responsible for implementing, monitoring and regulating the accessibility of public and private infrastructure, social and financial services, etc.

As a first step, the prevalence in different countries of such barriers will be examined. These findings may be complemented by a study on the relevance of reducing such barriers within the larger macro context.

As a second step, the origins of these barriers will be examined. This will involve qualitative data collection from various stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies, regulations, legislations, etc. This may cover the lack of mandate from policy

makers and regulators to address the barriers, as well as situation where policy or regulation may exist but the implementing agencies lack the necessary funds, capacity or enforcement power to implement it. Finally there may be inefficiencies due to a lack of coordination between various ministries or communication to beneficiaries that leads to lack of awareness of relevant government programmes aimed to support persons with disabilities.

The analysis in part 2 will identify implementation gaps and provide recommendations based on the evidence check with implementers taking into account the solutions proposed by the persons with disabilities in part 1.

### ***Part 3: Policy making gaps***

Part 3 will examine the availability and quality of policies required to address the barriers and to enable the implementation of solutions emphasized by the persons with disabilities. This will primarily involve desk research of existing policy documents, laws and programmes at national and local levels.

It will also include an examination of the legal environment within which such laws, policies and programmes are formulated. The role of international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) in effecting such legal changes at the national level will also be analyzed.<sup>2</sup>

The analysis in part 3 will yield the gaps in policy making, including recommendations for concrete laws and policies aimed to address barriers or for institutional steps towards establishing these laws and policies.

### ***Part 4: Bringing it all together***

Part 4 will present the barriers in relation to the gaps identified in the previous two parts. It will also include a study of the linkages between the different gaps. The analysis will also yield core recommendations for action for the various stakeholders.

These core recommendations will be presented to all stakeholders during a concluding national workshop. A participatory dialogue between the administrative units of the government – that is regulatory agencies and service providers – legislative bodies of the government and persons with disabilities should be envisaged. This is a crucial final step because only if the recommendations are adopted by all stakeholders will the research create the potential for real change.

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<sup>2</sup> Results from the Expert Group Meeting on the Harmonization of National Legislations with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok in June 2009 may be used to complement the findings.