



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the  
Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012

19-21 September 2007  
Bangkok

**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)

**PARTNERSHIP: KEY TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIWAKO  
MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION\***

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

Governments, the United Nations system, disabled people's organizations and other civil society organizations have played important roles in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. While each of them has made significant contributions individually, collaboration among themselves has had added advantages as well. It enabled increased financing for projects and enhanced knowledge on and solutions to issues faced by persons with disabilities in the region. The private sector's role has also been crucial in the endeavours.

For the remaining five years of the Decade, partnership among the stakeholders should continue to be a key strategy for the successful implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

\* This paper has been reproduced without formal editing.



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
I.    ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC .....	1
II.   UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND PROJECTS .....	5
A.    International Labour Organization .....	5
B.    United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization .....	6
C.    Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations .....	7
D.    Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team .....	8
III.  ASIA-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON DISABILITY .....	8
IV.  DISABLED PEOPLE’S ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS .....	10
A.    Asia and Pacific Disability Forum .....	10
B.    Disabled Peoples’ International .....	11
C.    Inclusion International .....	11
D.    Rehabilitation International .....	12
E.    World Blind Union .....	12
F.    World Federation of the Deaf .....	13
G.    World Federation of the Deafblind .....	13
H.    World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry .....	14
I.    Handicap International .....	14
V.   CONCLUSION .....	15

## INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this paper is to review contributions made by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations agencies, disability related projects, disabled people's organizations and other civil society organizations (CSOs) to 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 regional policy guideline for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

2. The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action recommends that Governments take actions towards its implementation in collaboration with the United Nations system, disabled people's organizations and other CSOs at the national, subregional, regional and interregional levels. In particular, it stipulates a need for collaboration with two entities: the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), which is a Japan-Thailand bilateral project on disability, and the Asia and Pacific Disability Forum (APDF), which is a regional coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the promotion of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.<sup>1</sup> It also calls for a regular meeting of a regional working group comprising the United Nations system, Governments and CSOs to promote the coordination of its implementation.<sup>2</sup>

3. Furthermore, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action attaches prime importance on participation of persons with disabilities in the decision-making processes that would directly and indirectly affect them. Thus, the empowerment and growth of disabled people's organizations itself is regarded as its achievement.

4. While many organizations have been contributing to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the present review focuses on summaries of activities undertaken by agencies and organizations that are relevant to the recommendations mentioned above. The review is on the basis of summaries of each entity's activities that were submitted to the ESCAP secretariat by August 2007.

### I. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

5. Since 1986, ESCAP has been the regional engine towards creating an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities. To promote the effective implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, ESCAP has fully utilized its strengths as the regional catalyst on development issues and facilitator of normative development, and knowledge management. The majority of the activities undertaken by ESCAP have been supported by the Governments of China and Japan. ESCAP's activities on disability statistics have been supported by the Government of the Republic of Korea. In addition, the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea fund a post of disability expert, respectively.

---

<sup>1</sup> See paragraph 56 and 57 of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. The text of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action is available at <<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/index.asp>>.

<sup>2</sup> See Strategy 11 of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

6. With regard to normative development, ESCAP played an instrumental role in stepping up the momentum in the global drafting process of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2003, ESCAP facilitated the formulation of a regional draft of the Convention, entitled Bangkok Draft: Proposed Elements of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>3</sup> by synthesizing inputs from Governments, disabled people's organizations and other CSOs. The draft was subsequently 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,<sup>4</sup> the global drafting committee of the Convention, and was used as the basis of the Ad Hoc Committee's first draft. Following the submission of the draft, ESCAP organized an annual seminar on the Convention to provide up-to-date information on its drafting process and its content.

7. At the regional level, in early 2007, ESCAP facilitated the drafting of the supplementary document to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action to enhance its effective implementation for the remaining five years of the Decade. The draft supplementary document entitled Biwako Plus Five: Further Efforts towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific was also formulated through the concerted efforts of Governments and CSO representatives.

8. As a regional catalyst on development issues, ESCAP organized 33 regional seminars and workshops involving a majority of its members and associate members and approximately 100 CSOs. While a majority of the meetings were convened solely by ESCAP, others were organized in partnership with other organizations or agencies. The meetings organized solely by ESCAP covered the priority areas and strategies of the Biwako Millennium Framework, ranging from self-help organizations of persons with disabilities, women with disabilities, disability data collection, community-based rehabilitation to national plan of action on disability and effective monitoring indicators of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

9. ESCAP collaborated with Governments, United Nations agencies and CSOs in organizing the meetings. With regard to Governments, ESCAP has partnered with the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) and the Colombo Plan Secretariat. As for United Nations agencies, ESCAP organized a meeting with the International Labour Organization (ILO). With regard to CSOs, ESCAP has worked with organizations such as Art for All, Asia and Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) and Leonard Cheshire International (LCI). The present section briefly reviews the activities with each partner except APDF, APCD and the ILO, whose activities are reviewed later in the sections pertaining to each organization or agency.

---

<sup>3</sup> The text of the Bangkok Draft is available at <<http://www.worldenable.net/bangkok2003a/bangkokdraftrev.htm>>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*, General Assembly Resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001, for more details see <<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/adhoccom.htm>>.

10. The China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) is a national organization of and for persons with disabilities, which serves as the secretariat of the State Council Working Committee on Disability. The CDPF has played an instrumental role in developing and implementing policies on disability in China. ESCAP and CDPF have co-organized annual workshops in various parts of China for more than five years, covering topics such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, poverty alleviation, self-help groups of persons with disabilities and accessible tourism. The support of the Government of China on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2003 was significant in taking forward the regional drafting process. The Colombo Plan is the intergovernmental forum to promote social and economic technical cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>5</sup> In 2003, ESCAP and the Colombo Plan Secretariat co-organized a meeting to raise awareness on mainstreaming the disability perspective in local government community development projects.

11. Art for All is a Thai NGO, which has annually organized a summer art camp since 2000 with the aim to empower youth with disabilities through their participation in art activities. ESCAP has collaborated with Art for All by organizing the launching ceremony at the United Nations Conference Centre and participating in the camps since the inception of the programme.

12. Leonard Cheshire International (LCI) is one of the major internationally well-known NGOs on disability. In 2005, ESCAP and LCI co-organized an international seminar, which highlighted common issues of concerns regarding persons with disabilities, in particular, ensuring sustainable livelihood and access to education. The seminar was attended by Government, CSO and private sector representatives from 54 countries worldwide.

13. Between 2000 and 2005, ESCAP organized and convened the Thematic Working Group on Disability-related Concerns (TWG-DC), a regional inter-agency working group to promote and coordinate activities concerning the development and the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. During the five-year period, a total of more than 400 representatives from Governments, the United Nations agencies and CSOs had been involved in the TWG-DC meetings and multiple task forces were formed to exchange information and implement the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

14. In 2006, the TWG-DC was replaced by the Biwako Millennium Framework Stakeholders' Coordination Meeting (BMF-SCM). The BMF-SCM was organized with the same goal as the TWG-DC, but with a special emphasis on providing inputs to the draft Biwako Plus Five document. BMF-SCM has benefited from the active involvement of United Nations agencies and many CSOs.<sup>6</sup>

15. Additionally, ESCAP has responded to the serious regional need to improve availability and quality of data collection on disability. During the last five years, the Statistics Division of ESCAP, in

---

<sup>5</sup> For more details of the Colombo Plan, see its website at <<http://www.colombo-plan.org/mcountries.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> For more details of the meeting, see the ESCAP Disability sub programme website at <<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/decadenew/newdecade.asp>>.

collaboration with WHO, has been providing a series of training for national statistical offices in the region to promote understanding of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)<sup>7</sup> 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 the training manual on Disability Statistics, which was used as a main reference for the United Nations 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 census while others such as Afghanistan, China and Thailand have conducted or developed plans to conduct disability surveys.

16. With regard to knowledge management, ESCAP has made extensive efforts in the area of data collection on disability. Through the region-wide surveys conducted twice in 2004 and 2006, ESCAP was able to collect basic national data on the percentage of populations who are disabled and information on the existence of policies and plans on disability. In 2006, this led to a publication entitled *Disability at a Glance: A Profile of 28 Countries and Areas in Asia and the Pacific* in 2006.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, an additional eight Governments submitted their responses to the surveys. By mid-2007, therefore, there was available data and information from a total of 36 Governments region-wide. For the remaining five years of the Decade, ESCAP intends to publish a series of updated editions of *Disability at a Glance* to build a comprehensive body of knowledge on disability in the region.

17. From the onset of the Decade, ESCAP has paid particular attention to the dissemination of information on its activities through its homepage. The ESCAP disability subprogramme website is accessible to persons with disabilities, providing detailed information on all the meetings and activities organized by ESCAP as well as its publications.<sup>9</sup>

18. As the result of all these activities, policy-makers, United Nations agencies, disabled people's organizations and other CSOs have been able to network with one another and keep abreast of current disability issues and relevant policy developments. The region has also enjoyed enhanced capacity on data collection on disability and the steady development of institutional mechanisms, policies and plans. For instance, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action has been translated into local languages by at least 14 Governments in the region. Disability-specific national coordination mechanisms exist in at least 27 Governments and national plans of action on disability exist in at least 21 Governments.

---

<sup>7</sup> WHO, *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)*, available at: <<http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>>.

<sup>8</sup> ESCAP, *Disability at a Glance: A Profile of 28 Countries and Areas in Asia and the Pacific* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.II.F.24).

<sup>9</sup> See the disability subprogramme website at <<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/index.asp>>.



## II. UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND PROJECTS

### A. International Labour Organization

19. As a tripartite organization, whose membership comprises Governments and representatives of workers' and employers' agencies, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has contributed significantly to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action through its activities in its three modes of action: knowledge development; advocacy and technical cooperation.

20. In the area of knowledge development, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has conducted numerous research projects and produced publications on good practices. In 2003, it conducted a research on the training and employment of persons with disabilities in 15 countries, which resulted in a compilation of 25 examples of good practices from NGOs, Governments, private sector, trade unions and self-help groups of persons with disabilities.<sup>10</sup> It also compiled examples of good practices from the perspective of the employer.<sup>11</sup> The ILO also recently completed a research on trade unions and global initiatives to promote equal rights and opportunities for disabled persons, which resulted in an information sheet and a video, entitled *From Rights to Reality*.<sup>12</sup> *The Employment Situation of People with Disabilities: Towards Improved Statistical Information and Statistics on the Employment Situation of People with Disabilities: A Compendium of National Methodologies* is another ILO publication, which includes statistical information on the employment situation of persons with disabilities. The ILO has also developed an *Ability Asia Country Study Series*, with country reports on issues related to statistics, policy, legislation, vocational training, employment opportunities, services and outcomes for persons with disabilities.<sup>13</sup>

21. Several of the ILO's publications have been supported by the Irish funded ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme entitled Promoting Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation (PEPDEL). The current phase of the PEPDEL project covers four countries in the Asian region – China, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam. Under the project, the ILO has implemented a wide range of country activities in China, Mongolia and Viet Nam. These include Employer Disability Awareness Seminars in Viet Nam, development of employer good practice case studies in Mongolia, workshops for trade union members on new disability employment regulations in China, research into employment for persons with intellectual disabilities and psychosocial disabilities in China, and national tripartite seminars on disability and employment in Mongolia and Viet Nam. The PEPDEL project has also helped in advocating for the training and employment rights of persons with disabilities.

---

<sup>10</sup> International Labour Organization publication, *Moving Forward: Toward Decent Work for People with Disabilities-- Examples of Good Practices in Vocational Training and Employment from Asia and the Pacific*

<sup>11</sup> International Labour Organization publication, *Employability: A resource guide on disability for employers in Asia and the Pacific*

<sup>12</sup> The video will be available by the end of 2007.

<sup>13</sup> The ILO publications are available on the website, <<http://www.ilo.org/abilityasia>> maintained by the ILO, which serves as a tool for disseminating information about employment and disability issues, and in particular the activities and research of the ILO.

22. In the area of advocacy, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has promoted equality of opportunity, equal treatment and access to mainstream services for persons with disabilities. The ILO had been organizing regional meetings, providing technical advice to Governments, workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs and disabled people's organizations and in its promotion of international standards, in particular, the International Labour Organization Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (No. 159), 1983, and the ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace. In 2003, the ILO organized a regional workshop, Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok, to build capacities of vocational training officials and promote mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in general vocational training schemes. The workshop resulted in the formulation of technical cooperation projects and the adoption of a policy on disability by the Australian Chamber of Commerce Industry as well as the development of a disability committee by the Mongolian Employers' Federation.

23. In the area of technical cooperation, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has made extensive efforts in mainstreaming the perspective of disability in existing ILO development projects in Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. For example, since 2005 the ILO training programme on business development entitled Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) in China had included persons with disabilities in the training activities and is currently developing a manual on how to mainstream disability perspectives into SIYB training in other countries as well. Another example is the Artisans' Association of Cambodia, supported by the Informal Economy Project in Cambodia, which has included in its programme approximately 30 major handicraft producer groups, including persons with disabilities.

24. In its partnership with ESCAP, the ILO provided financial and technical assistance as the Chair of the Employment and Poverty Alleviation Task Force of the TWG-DC. The ILO also jointly organized the Multinational Corporation Roundtable on Employment and Disability in July 2005, which brought together regional representatives from Governments, multinational companies, NGOs and disabled people's organizations to encourage the hiring of workers with disabilities in the region. This activity resulted in several multinational companies linking up with organizations of/for persons with disabilities to extend employment opportunities. In China, the Roundtable was replicated by way of the collaboration between CDPF and Shanghai Disabled Persons Federation.

#### **B. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

25. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has contributed to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action through their work on Education for All (EFA) initiatives, a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults.

26. In March 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA): Meeting Basic Learning Needs held in Jomtien, Thailand, adopted a World Declaration on EFA. The Declaration reaffirmed the notion of education as a fundamental human right and urged countries to intensify efforts to address the basic learning needs of all. This commitment of the international community was reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, which proposed 12 strategies and set six goals to achieve quality education for all by 2015.

27. To support the achievement of the six goals of EFA in Asia and the Pacific, a Regional Thematic Working Group on Education for All (TWG on EFA) was established. ESCAP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the ILO are some of the key members of the TWG on EFA and the promotion of inclusive education for children with disabilities is one of the core concerns.<sup>14</sup>

28. In 2004, the Asian Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) Unit of UNESCO, Bangkok, published a training manual entitled *Embracing Diversity: Tool Kit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-friendly Environments*.<sup>15</sup> The manual targets teachers in pre-primary, primary and secondary level schools, and is aimed at creating more inclusive, learning-friendly class rooms, to include children with disabilities as well as other children marginalized or excluded from schooling due to their social status, such as being girls, having HIV/AIDS or belonging to minority-ethnic backgrounds.

29. In 2005, the Assessment, Information system (AIMS) Unit of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of UNESCO, in cooperation with the APPEAL Unit of UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Headquarters and the UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, organized a regional meeting to plan and launch the mid-decade assessment of national and regional commitments to EFA.<sup>16</sup> The EFA mid-decade assessment calls for the holding of regional and national assessments aimed at identifying problems, issues, policies and strategies of education reform to ensure that education will reach all, including children and youth with disabilities.

30. The AIMS Unit had also conducted research in a number of countries and drafted the *National Case Studies and Manual*, which provides practical and policy solutions for policy makers and practitioners in the education sector to promote inclusive education for children and youth with various disabilities.<sup>17</sup>

### **C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

31. The Rural Development Section of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has supported the implementation of the

---

<sup>14</sup> For more details on the Thematic Working Group on Education for All (TWG on EFA) please see <<http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=720>>.

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO Publication, *Embracing Diversity: Tool Kit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-friendly Environments* is available at, <<http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/032revised/index.htm>>.

<sup>16</sup> The Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment and Mid-Term Policy Review, for more details see <<http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=mda>>.

<sup>17</sup> The National Case Studies and Manual have been drafted and reviewed and are currently awaiting publication.

Biwako Millennium Framework for Action by incorporating the disability perspective into their projects. In 1999, the FAO developed a mushroom production training programme for persons with disabilities in rural Thailand.<sup>18</sup> Since then, the graduates of the programme have returned to their communities and been successfully developing their mushroom production. The FAO had also assisted entrepreneurs with disabilities in businesses such as tailoring, incense-making and motorbike repairing, including the provision of funds from national or local micro-credit schemes. In 2003, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific published *A Handbook for Training of Disabled on Rural Enterprise Development*,<sup>19</sup> which identifies ways and means to start small-scale businesses in the community. In 2004, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand, the FAO produced a film entitled *Disabled Farmers Can be Successful Rural Entrepreneurs*, highlighting success stories of the entrepreneurs.

#### **D. Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team**

32. The Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (PRRT) is a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project, funded by the Department for International Cooperation (DFID) of the United Kingdom, New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZ Aid) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). PRRT provides training, technical support, policy and advocacy advice in human rights to promote social justice and good governance throughout the Pacific region. In 2005, PRRT conducted two training of trainers' workshops for the Fiji Disabled Peoples Association, for 15 persons with disabilities on human rights and disability across the country.

### **III. ASIA-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON DISABILITY**

33. The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) is a joint project of the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Royal Thai Government, aimed at empowering persons with disabilities and to create a barrier-free society. It grew from the efforts of Governments and organizations of people with disabilities, during the previous Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, to establish a center to provide region-wide training and build capacities of persons with disabilities. In 2002, ESCAP adopted resolution 58/4 of 22 May 2002 on promoting an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region in the twenty-first century, which encouraged Governments and the United Nations system to support the important work of APCD.

34. Over the past five years, APCD has focused its activities on three areas: networking and collaboration, information and support, and human resource development. To promote networking and collaboration, APCD identified 32 governmental and eight NGO focal points from 32 countries,

---

<sup>18</sup> Mushrooming Success -- Sustainable Development in Thailand: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for more details see, <<http://www.miusa.org/publications/freeresources/mti/chapter14>>.

<sup>19</sup> Hanko J, Polman W, *A Handbook for Training of Disabled on Rural Enterprise Development*, (RAP Publication 2003/09), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 2003, available at <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/ad453e/ad453e00.htm>>.

and also granted associate organization status to 180 organizations to participate in APCD training of trainers. In the area of information support, APCD has produced 19 country profiles vis-à-vis disability issues, which are accessible through the APCD website.<sup>20</sup> The APCD newsletters are published on a regular basis and distributed to more than 750 organizations. In the area of human resource development, APCD has provided 33 training courses to over 650 participants on the following themes: independent living, self-help organizations of persons with disabilities, community-based rehabilitation, non-handicapping environment, information and communication technology, and human rights of persons with disabilities.

35. APCD activities have impacted positively on the lives of persons with disabilities in the region. For example, participants of APCD training on non-handicapping environment, from the Philippines, have made significant contributions to ensure that the built environment in the country are more accessible, by engaging the Government as well as the private sector. The participants, who represented the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) and the National Council for Welfare of Persons with Disabilities (NCWDP), had organized a series of national and local workshop entitled Access Talks to raise awareness on accessible environment and to check the extent of accessibility in public and private facilities. As a result, Shopping Center Management Corporation, a pioneer in the mall operations in the Philippines, took the initiative to make their facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. The Corporation also organized sensitization training on accessibility for their employees. Moreover, the company extended employment opportunities to persons with disabilities.

36. In Myanmar, since 2003, seven organizations have participated in APCD training programmes on community-based rehabilitation and self-help organizations. The Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Myanmar, the Government focal point on disability, has been supporting the process and follow-up activities. As a result, there is an enhanced understanding of a rights-based approach to community-based rehabilitation and the development of a standardized Myanmar sign language (SSL) has been initiated. The DSW had collected existing vocabularies of sign language in Myanmar, in collaboration with deaf associations from Yangon and Mandalay, and compiled them into a series of picture-contained sign language dictionaries. The dictionaries, which are very reader friendly, have been used on several occasions by the DSW to train deaf persons, their family and community members and to promote sign language. Furthermore, the Department signed a three-year contract on a project with JICA to promote the development of Myanmar SSL by the deaf community, to raise awareness on the SSL and to include deaf students in regular schools. It is expected that associations for the deaf will be engaged in the development of SSL in the future.

37. APCD has also provided opportunities for enhancing subregional collaboration between Governments and self-help organizations of persons with disabilities. The Centre had organized a series of seminars entitled Capacity-Building for Self-help Organizations of Disabled People

---

<sup>20</sup> APCD website is available at <<http://www.apcdproject.org/>>.

(CBSHOD) in various parts of the region, namely Viet Nam (2004), Pakistan (2005) and Papua New Guinea (2007). In keeping with a participatory and process-oriented approach, self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and Governments were actively involved in the programming and organizing of the seminars. The processes as well as the seminars have greatly enhanced collaboration between the two parties as well as the development of action plans and disability laws in the countries concerned.

38. APCD had also responded immediately to the needs of persons with disabilities in the wake of the great earthquake in Pakistan in 2005. Soon after the earthquake struck, APCD organized the Accessible Environment Seminar: Towards a Barrier-free Society for All in the Post-earthquake Areas in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, Pakistan, JICA Pakistan, the World Bank and disabled people's organizations. The Seminar addressed the specific needs of persons with disabilities in the affected areas and contributed to the mobilization of external resources to help survivors with disabilities. As a result, the Government of Japan provided the Japanese Social Development Fund through the World Bank, which enabled local disabled people's organizations to offer counseling and care to disabled survivors, as well as to facilitate the provision of wheelchairs and other health and rehabilitative services.

39. APCD has jointly organized with ESCAP annual workshops on topics covering accessible built environment and transport, web-based networking for persons with disabilities, and south-to-south dialogue. The annual seminars on south-to-south dialogue, in particular, served as an effective tool for interregional collaboration. Such collaboration was evident, for instance, in 2003 when the Arab Decade of Disabled Persons was proclaimed and again in 2006, with the launch of the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. The world now has four regional disability-decade initiatives. The seminars on south-to-south dialogue have brought together representatives from Governments and disabled people's organizations from the four regions to engage in discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the Decade's projects and initiatives.

#### **IV. DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

##### **A. Asia and Pacific Disability Forum**

40. The Asia and Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) was established in 2003 as a regional coalition of NGOs to promote the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and to support the drafting process of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As of October 2006, APDF had 15 national NGOs and four regional or international NGOs as its members.

41. APDF contributed to the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action through information exchange and networking among its members, organization of regional meetings and active participation in regional forums organized by ESCAP. There are six working committees in

APDF, working on 1) the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2) information, 3) accessible tourism, 4) research and development, 5) gender issues, and 6) fund raising and sponsorship.

42. In 2004, ESCAP and APDF jointly organized workshops to raise awareness on the Convention. In 2005, APDF organized the Regional Accessible Tourism Conference in Taipei, Taiwan Province of China, in collaboration with the local Eden Social Welfare Foundation.

43. APDF members have been actively participating in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, known as the Bangkok Draft as well as the Biwako Plus Five document.

44. APDF's General Assembly is held on a biannual basis. In 2006, it organized the assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, in conjunction with a meeting organized by ESCAP. The next assembly will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in February 2008 to promote the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action as well as the Biwako Plus Five.

### **B. Disabled Peoples' International**

45. Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) is an international cross-disability self-help organization of persons with disabilities with member organizations in more than 130 countries worldwide. DPI was established in 1981 to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities through full participation, equalization of opportunity and development. DPI Asia-Pacific membership comprise of national organizations in 26 countries in the region.

46. DPI Asia-Pacific has been providing technical assistance to the regional training seminars on Capacity-Building for Self-help Organizations of Disabled People organized by APCD. It had also organized leadership training workshops in collaboration with Abilis Foundation and Nippon Foundation.

47. DPI Asia-Pacific responded promptly to the needs of survivors with disabilities in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Thailand and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. In Thailand, DPI Asia-Pacific, with the support and collaboration of the Royal Thai Army, and CSOs such as Aid for Asian Disabled Persons, Barrier-free Education Network, and Go Flying Wheelchairs, delivered wheelchairs to disabled survivors of the tsunami. They also identified survivors with disabilities who were hidden from communities and provided practical guidelines to survivors and related organizations in seeking financial and other support from Governments and other donors.

### **C. Inclusion International**

48. Inclusion International (II) is an international federation of family-based organizations, advocating for the human rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families. II has over 200 member organizations in more than 110 countries. Five of the 13 council members of II, which is the organization's decision-making body, are persons with intellectual disabilities.

49. In the ESCAP region, II is represented by four member organizations from India, Japan, New Zealand and Thailand. II has been working through their active participation in local, national and international decision-making processes. For example, in New Zealand, their representative organization was instrumental in closing down residential institutions. In Japan, their representative organization assists the University of Tokyo in the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities through such support mechanisms as the provision of job coaches and other back-up services.

#### **D. Rehabilitation International**

50. Rehabilitation International (RI), founded in 1922, is a global network of persons with disabilities, service providers, researchers, government agencies and advocates. It has currently over 700 members and affiliate organizations in about 100 countries, in all regions of the world.

51. In Asia and the Pacific, RI has played an active role in raising awareness on the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with APDF and ESCAP.

52. RI Asia-Pacific has also been working in cooperation and collaboration with UNESCO in the promotion of and training in Inclusive Education, with conferences held in Bangkok, for the Asia region, and in Samoa for the Pacific subregion. It has also provided input to UNESCO-EFA Coordinators and for UNESCO's Mid-Decade Planning and Assessment of progress towards the achievement of the EFA goals.

53. The Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (JEED), one of the RI member organizations, will be hosting the Seventh International Abilympics, from 13-18 November 2007, in Japan, in conjunction with the 39<sup>th</sup> World Skills Competition. The Abilympics is held to raise awareness, among the general public and employers, on the employment of persons with disabilities. The RI Asia-Pacific region will also host the 2012 World Congress in Seoul, the Republic of Korea and offers to be the regional platform for the final review of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

#### **E. World Blind Union**

54. The World Blind Union (WBU) was established in 1984 as a result of the merging of the International Federation of the Blind and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. The WBU is aimed at advancing the well-being of blind and partially sighted persons and has 160 national member organizations around the world. In 2001, the Asian Blind Union and WBU East-Asia Pacific merged into one organization – the WBU Asia-Pacific – which is the representative organization in the ESCAP region.

55. Over the past five years, WBU Asia-Pacific, in close collaboration with the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, has been actively promoting inclusive



education for the blind and partially sighted persons. For example, it has introduced systematic methods of teaching mathematics to the blind and partially sighted and developed relevant manuals to be used in countries in the region.

56. In the area of information, WBU Asia-Pacific has been actively participating in the meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society. Their participation and advocacy in this and related meetings resulted in the successful mainstreaming of the disability perspective in important outcome documents and the adoption of disability-specific reports.

57. Since 2006, WBU Asia-Pacific, in collaboration with the Danish Association of the Blind and under the sponsorship of the Government of Denmark, has been engaged in a project on leadership training for the blind and partially sighted persons, targeting countries such as Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mongolia. WBU Asia-Pacific also pays special attention to leadership development of blind women. The Blind Women's Forum has been actively involved in all WBU Asia-Pacific meetings and training workshops.

#### **F. World Federation of the Deaf**

58. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international organization for the deaf established in 1951. WFD's Secretariat for Asia and the Pacific was established in 1983 and is currently located in the office of the Japanese Federation of the Deaf. The WFD has members in 20 ESCAP countries.

59. The WFD Secretariat for Asia and the Pacific has been actively supporting the improvement of the status and use of sign language, education for the deaf, accessibility to information, technology and communication services, and human rights of the deaf.

60. The WFD, with support from JICA, has also been running a leadership training programme to empower and raise awareness among the deaf community. The main feature of the course is the teaching and learning of international sign language. As community leaders, the participants are thus enabled to communicate in international meetings and conferences.

61. In 2006, the Secretariat for Asia and the Pacific conducted a survey on the use of sign language in the region. The results indicated that many countries and areas in the region suffer from a dearth of sign language interpreters. In contrast to Japan, which has 18,161 sign language interpreters, there are 964 in the Philippines, 50 in Thailand, 40 in Nepal, four in Cambodia, two in Sri Lanka and none in Indonesia.

#### **G. World Federation of the Deafblind**

62. The World Federation of the Deafblind (WFD<sub>b</sub>) was established in September 1997 as a world wide forum to promote social inclusion and equal participation of deafblind persons in all areas of society, promote improvements in their education, rehabilitation, employment, guide interpreters and other services, and to support and increase the solidarity among national deafblind organizations.

63. The WFDb in Asia and the Pacific has its headquarters in Japan and works through a network of deafblind organizations. The Japan Deafblind Organization was established in 1991 and has played an important role in promoting community-based activities, training of interpreter-guides, and providing interpreter services through promoting and supporting the establishment of deafblind clubs. It has also supported the establishment of the first deafblind organization in the Republic of Korea in 2007 and, for the first time, the enrolment of two deafblind persons in two universities in the country.

64. In Indonesia, The Special Centre for People with Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness in Rawinala, train parents and families of deafblind persons in developing their communication skills and sign language to communicate with their deafblind family members. This training is supported by the Hilton Perkins International Program.

65. Although some services have developed in certain parts of the region for persons with deafblindness, persons with deafblindness are, in general, still excluded and segregated from society due to lack of resources to support their development.

#### **H. World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry**

66. The World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP), established in 1991, was previously known as the World Federation of Psychiatric Users. It is an international organization of all users and survivors of psychiatric treatment, aimed at protecting their human rights, self-determination and dignity. In the Asia and the Pacific region, WNUSP has members in Australia, India, Japan and New Zealand.

67. WNUSP members have been actively involved in the global drafting process of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They have actively addressed issues such as access to justice and legal capacity of persons with psychosocial disabilities. WNUSP India plans to organize an international conference on these issues in 2008

68. By and large, the concerns of persons with users and survivors of psychiatry are still largely ignored in the region.

#### **I. Handicap International**

69. Handicap International is an international organization specializing in the field of disability with programmes in 60 countries, working with persons with disabilities, civil society and Governments. Handicap International has responded to the needs of persons with disabilities, through financial assistance, training and technical support in the areas of rehabilitation, anti-land mine operations, health, inclusion, emergency relief, environmental development, and disability rights and policies.

70. Handicap International began its activities in South-East Asia in 1982 and currently has activities in 14 countries in South Asia and South-East Asia. It has intervened in emergency situations

in Afghanistan, Pakistan and in the 2004 tsunami affected areas; and provided capacity building and rehabilitation services as well as advocacy and awareness-raising on disability issues.

71. Handicap International in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Afghanistan, had conducted the first sampling survey on disability between 2005 and 2006. In Pakistan, HI had provided technical support for community-based rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in the earthquake affected areas. In Indonesia it provided aids and appliances, physiotherapy services, conducted advocacy and awareness-raising training of social workers, professionals and communities following the 2004 tsunami disaster. HI also provides support to war victims and runs a mobile rehabilitation unit in the Philippines.

## V. CONCLUSION

72. Governments, the United Nations system, disabled people's organizations and other CSOs have played important and instrumental roles in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. Each group of stakeholders has made significant contributions. In addition, collaboration between them has multiplied the benefits and increased the advantages of working together. The cooperation and collaboration of committed partners have enabled increasing financing of projects, enhanced knowledge on and provided solutions for issues and concerns of persons with disabilities in the region. The contribution and initiatives of private sector stakeholders have also lent to progress in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

73. For the remaining five years of the Decade, partnership amongst the stakeholders must continue to be a key strategy for the successful implementation the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

. . . . .