



## **Inclusive development and the convention**

*The International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations (in short: convention) will be an important human rights document to strengthen inclusive approaches within international development. This article will outline the importance of the Convention for inclusive development and elements within it that promote this inclusive approach. Having its roots in both disability organisations as development work IDDC has a valuable contribution to make to the Ad Hoc Committee negotiations in New York. IDDC and its members are aware of the interrelations between the UN convention and global strategies in the context of international development such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Looking at the Convention from a development perspective teaches us that socio-economic exclusion of persons with disabilities, leading to discrimination and poverty, needs to be eradicated. International efforts in the field of poverty reduction show us that the UN Convention can bring together various inclusive elements that help to eradicate poverty effectively.*

The United Nations estimates that some 600 million persons have a disability and that the vast majority of persons with disabilities (more than 75%) live in a developing country. According to World Bank estimates, one of every five of the world's poorest persons is disabled. Poverty, discrimination and disability are interlocked in a vicious circle and eradication of poverty will not – indeed cannot – be achieved without mainstreaming disability issues in all development policies.

## **Inclusive development**

Inclusive development refers to ensuring that all phases of the development cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) have a diversity dimension and that persons with disabilities meaningful participate in development processes and policies. Inclusive development ensures that persons with disabilities are recognized as rights-holding equal members of society who are engaged in the development process. Development institutions, policies and programmes must operate in an inclusive manner and must be assessed in accordance with their impact on the situation of persons with disabilities, like all persons.

## **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

Six out of eight Millennium Development Goals (1) have fundamental links to disability and can not be achieved without taking disability issues into account. For example the MDGs call for reducing the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day to half the 1990 level by 2015, and all children should have basic education by 2015.

## **UN convention**

The drafting of the Convention presents an important opportunity to strengthen the concept of inclusive development across a number of key articles and for the formulation of a separate article on international co-operation. Like this the removal of barriers and 'mainstreaming' will go hand in hand with a specific focus on disability issues which are required to enable persons with disabilities to become empowered participants in society.

## **Non-discrimination and participation**

Failure to promote the principle of non-discrimination for persons with disabilities would not only constitute a human rights abuse, but would be negating the concept of inclusive development. Poverty reduction and other development strategies must be equally accessible and appropriate to persons with disabilities. In this context, participation in development decision-making, proposed as an addition by some governments to Article 18 (Participation in Political and Public Life) is particularly relevant. Development strategies must ensure the meaningful participation of all stakeholders, as inclusive development has relevance for all sectors and at all levels. In this regard the draft article on general obligations (Draft Article 4) must be strengthened to include an obligation for States to work in partnership with disabled people and their representative organizations.

## **International Cooperation**

The convention article on international cooperation must stress that no funds should be use to create barriers for disabled people and that a certain amount of development efforts must be allocated for disabled people. The principle of international cooperation is broadly understood to encompass collaborative activities, not merely the provision of financial assistance, between and among all countries, not merely between developed and developing countries. An effective framework for international cooperation should be a means of improving services and access, but also, a means to include disability aspects in planning of mainstream services. For example, the cost of providing accessibility for persons with disabilities is often negligible compared to the overall cost of a building project, as long as it is incorporated up front. Many countries may already have the financial resources to provide access to persons with disabilities, but if they lack the necessary knowledge and expertise the issue of accessibility will not be addressed in an appropriate manner.

International cooperation is an essential principle and implementation measure – it must be exercised in a manner that respects the participation and representation of persons with disabilities, and furthers development goals – particularly at the community level. International cooperation should be broadly understood to have applicability across countries, and to encompass collaborative activities beyond financial donations, such as through sharing of information and technical expertise.

Accessibility and exchange of information is an important requirement in the context of the UN convention and for inclusive development. Information is necessary to make informed choices and decisions and the accessibility of knowledge about best practice helps organizations to improve the practice.

### **Community Based Support**

Many resources that disabled persons need to enable them to fully participate and access their rights can be met within local communities. For these resources to be successfully utilized, governments must recognize local leadership, the interdependence of different sectors of the community and, where necessary, provide financial and other collaborative support to enable community resources to have maximum impact. Governments must ensure, through collaboration at all levels with all relevant stakeholders, that persons with disabilities have the possibility to access their rights within their own communities and that accessible, affordable, relevant services are available in these communities.

### **Disaster and conflict**

During the 4th and 5th Ad Hoc Meeting the situation of disabled people in disaster and conflict has been discussed. The fresh memory of the Tsunami at the time of the 5th ad hoc meeting clearly illustrated the importance. Situations of conflict, emergency and disaster, and refugee and stateless populations are mutually linked to issues of disability. Situations of disaster are a major cause of disability and when emergencies arise persons living with disabilities are especially vulnerable to survive, to the breakdown of basic infrastructures such as family support, and to access to basic facilities. Governments must address persons with disabilities at particular risk and in especially difficult circumstances, and ensure that development programmes and policies adequately meet their specific needs.

### **Monitoring**

For the monitoring system to be effective, it must be rooted in existing human rights monitoring structures, to enhance the complementarity of the convention with other human rights instruments. The monitoring must also be enhanced by new monitoring approaches to ensure the sustainable effect on the living conditions of disabled people. It must also be linked to the development system, and in this regard the MDG and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) mechanisms are important areas of intersection. Such mechanisms have the potential to be an invaluable source of information that should be incorporated into a monitoring reporting system. Such monitoring must encompass analysis of programmes and practices that have a direct impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, in order to identify ‘good practices. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, any monitoring mechanism must be inclusive of the unique expertise offered by persons with disabilities themselves.

*This article is based on the Reflection Paper of the International Disability and Development Consortium, prepared for contribution for the 5th Session of the Ad Hoc Committee (NY, January 2005). The reflection paper was prepared by IDDC Task Group on the UN Convention ([www.iddc.org](http://www.iddc.org)) chaired by Handicap International. This complete document is available at [www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc5docs/ahc5iddc.doc](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc5docs/ahc5iddc.doc)*

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### **What is IDDC?**

[www.iddc.org](http://www.iddc.org)

It is a global consortium of non-governmental organizations supporting disability and development work in more than 100 countries around the world. Its aim is to promote the rights of persons with disabilities through effective collaboration and sharing of information and expertise.

IDDC member organizations are facilitating the participation of under-represented groups of persons with disabilities from developing countries to participate in the convention process. Provides accessible information for DPOs and NGOs in order for them to understand the convention process, its implications and, ultimately, to participate in the future implementation of the convention.

IDDC and Source made a CD-ROM “*The Disability Convention – Making it Work*” . This CD-ROM is a collection of approximately 90 resources for use by disabled people's organisations (DPOs), disability non-government organisations (NGOs) and governments. It aims to spread experience and stimulate an international information exchange. This comprehensive CD can be ordered from Source ([www.asksource.info](http://www.asksource.info)).

### **Note**

(1) MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) are benchmarks set by UN Member States for development at the start of the new century. The six out of eight MDGs that have fundamental links to disability and can not be achieved without taking disability issues into account, are: eradication of poverty; universal primary education, gender equality, reduction of child mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS