

A/RES/44/70  
78th plenary meeting  
8 December 1989

Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Recalling all its relevant resolutions, including resolution 37/52 of 3 December 1982, by which it adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and resolution 37/53 of 3 December 1982, in which it, inter alia, proclaimed the period 1983-1992 the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons,

Recalling also its resolution 43/98 of 8 December 1988, and reaffirming all of the relevant provisions contained therein, in particular, the list of priorities for global activities and programmes during the second half of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons set forth in the annex to the resolution,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/52 of 24 May 1989, in which the Council, inter alia, urged Member States, bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide all possible support to the awareness and fund-raising campaigns to give added momentum to the Decade,

Noting the important work currently being undertaken by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on human rights and disability, which could serve as a useful basis for the continued efforts to ensure for disabled persons the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Taking into account the concrete measures already carried out by the Governments of Member States, the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to implement the objectives of the World Programme of Action within the framework of the Decade, and recognizing that much more should be done at all levels to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities,

Mindful that Member States bear the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the World Programme of Action and that national disability committees or similar co-ordinating bodies play a crucial role in this regard,

Recognizing the pivotal role of the United Nations in promoting the exchange of information, experience and expertise and closer regional and interregional co-operation towards more effective strategies and policies to advance the status and welfare of persons with disabilities,

Stressing that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat is the focal point within the United Nations for the implementation and monitoring of the World Programme of Action,

Noting with satisfaction the strengthening of the Disabled Persons Unit of the Centre through the generous financial support of some Governments,

Concerned that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons continues to suffer from a lack of sufficient contributions and that, unless this declining trend is reversed and the resource capacities of the Fund are strengthened, many priority requests may not be met and the implementation of the World Programme of Action will be seriously affected,

Mindful that, since developing countries are experiencing difficulties in mobilizing resources, international co-operation should be encouraged to assist in national efforts to implement the World Programme of Action and the objectives of the Decade,

Noting that the International Meeting on Human Resources in the Field of Disability was held at Tallinn, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, from 14 to 22 August 1989 and that it adopted a nine-point strategy to promote the participation, training and employment of disabled persons, especially in developing countries,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General,

1. Reaffirms the validity of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons;
2. Reiterates that for the second half of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, special emphasis should be placed on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons;
3. Urges Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to translate into action at all levels, as appropriate, the priorities for global activities and programmes during the second half of the Decade, such as those set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 43/98;
4. Renews its invitation to all States to give high priority to projects concerning the prevention of disabilities, rehabilitation and the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons within the framework of bilateral assistance, as well as financial support to strengthen organizations of disabled persons;
5. Invites Governments to participate actively in the international co-operation with a view to improving the living conditions of disabled persons by encouraging professional experts, in particular disabled persons, in various aspects of rehabilitation and the equalization of opportunity, including the expertise of retired persons;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to assist Member States in establishing and strengthening national committees on disability issues and similar co-ordinating bodies and to promote and support the establishment of strong national organizations of disabled persons;
7. Also requests the Secretary-General to encourage all organs and bodies of the United Nations, including regional commissions, international

organizations and specialized agencies, to take into account in their programmes and operational activities the specific needs of disabled persons;

8. Invites the Secretary-General, in connection with the feasibility study on the substantive, financial and administrative implications of alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade in 1992, called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/98, to request Member States, in consultation with organizations of disabled persons, to submit their comments to him by 28 February 1990 for inclusion in the background document to be discussed at the meeting of experts to be held at Helsinki in May 1990;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the regional commissions to enable them to promote technical co-operation activities and the sharing of national resources for personnel training, the exchange of information, policy and programme development and research and the participation of disabled persons;

10. Invites the Secretary-General and Member States to involve disabled persons to a greater extent in United Nations programmes and activities, including the provision of employment opportunities, and to give particular attention to improving the situation of special groups as outlined in the World Programme of Action, emphasizing the need for social justice and the participation of these groups in each sector of the society;

11. Invites the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to expand its close collaboration with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of disability, in particular organizations of disabled persons, and to consult with them on a regular and systematic basis on matters relating to the implementation of the World Programme of Action, with a view to ensuring that the results of the Decade become meaningful and lasting;

12. Notes with satisfaction the progress made by the office of the Special Representative for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons;

13. Calls upon Member States, national committees, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, especially organizations of disabled persons, to assist in a global information and fund-raising campaign to publicize the Decade through all appropriate means;

14. Recognizes the important role of non-governmental organizations, especially those representing persons with disabilities in the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action, in raising international awareness of the concerns of persons with disabilities and in monitoring and evaluating progress achieved during the Decade;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that contributions, in cash or in kind, related to the Decade are channelled into the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, while giving donors the option of earmarking contributions for special purposes;

16. Reaffirms that the resources of the Voluntary Fund should be used to support catalytic and innovative activities in order to implement further the objectives of the World Programme of Action within the framework of the

Decade, with priority given, as appropriate, to programmes and projects of the least developed countries;

17. Invites Governments and non-governmental organizations to continue their contributions to the Voluntary Fund, and calls upon Governments and non-governmental organizations that have not yet done so to consider contributing to the Voluntary Fund so as to enable it to respond effectively to the growing demand for assistance;

18. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the Tallinn Guidelines for Action on Human Resources Development in the Field of Disability, the text of which is annexed to the present resolution, to the attention of Member States, national co-ordinating mechanisms in the field of disability, organizations of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations concerned with disabilities;

19. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

20. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth session the item entitled "Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons".

ANNEX  
Tallinn Guidelines for Action on Human Resources  
Development in the Field of Disability  
INTRODUCTION

1. The International Meeting on Human Resources in the Field of Disability, convened at Tallinn, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, from 14 to 22 August 1989, having considered the situation of human resources development in the field of disability, particularly in developing countries, firmly believes that it is necessary to reinforce existing activities, as well as to undertake new and innovative ones, in order to promote the further development and continued progress of disabled persons.

2. Following the adoption of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons by the General Assembly, in its resolution 37/52 of 3 December 1982, there has been a growing need for higher priority to be given to the development of the human resources of disabled persons, with specific reference to education and training, employment, and science and technology. In this connection, the General Assembly, in its resolution 37/53 of 3 December 1982, proclaimed the period 1983-1992 the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, encouraging Member States to utilize that period as one of the means to implement the World Programme of Action.

3. The main objectives of the World Programme of Action are to promote effective measures for the prevention of disability, for rehabilitation and for the realization of the goals of full participation and equality for

persons with disabilities. To accomplish these goals, due regard must be paid to education, training and work opportunities.

4. While it is acknowledged that the living conditions of the general population in developing countries urgently need to be improved, the objectives of the World Programme of Action call for the situation of disabled persons to be given special attention during the remainder of the Decade and beyond. Effective implementation of the World Programme of Action will make an important contribution to the process of development of societies through the mobilization of more human resources.

5. While it is also acknowledged that a number of countries have already initiated or carried out activities within the framework of the World Programme of Action, further concerted efforts should be made to integrate the human resources development of disabled persons into intersectoral planning at the national level.

#### GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

6. Human resources development is a process centred on the human person that seeks to realize the full potential and capabilities of human beings. This process is fundamental to the concept of equalization of opportunities, in keeping with the goals of the World Programme of Action.

7. Through human resources development, disabled persons are able effectively to exercise their rights of full citizenship. As full citizens, they have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of society, including the right to life, as declared in international human rights instruments. They also have the same choices as other citizens in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities.

8. Because persons with disabilities are agents of their own destiny rather than objects of care, Governments and organizations need to reflect this perception in their policies and programmes. This means that disabled persons, as individuals and as members of organizations, should be involved in the decision-making process as equal partners.

9. The abilities of disabled persons and their families should be strengthened through community-based supplementary services provided by Governments and non-governmental organizations. These services should promote self-determination and enable disabled persons to participate in the development of society. Governments should recognize and support the role of organizations of disabled persons in enabling those persons to take charge of their own lives.

#### STRATEGIES

##### A. Participation of persons with disabilities

10. A statutory basis is required to enable disabled persons to participate as full citizens in decision-making at all levels of the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

11. To facilitate the full participation of disabled persons and to enable them to exercise their rights as citizens, access to information is essential. To this end, all information has to be adapted to appropriate formats. These information formats may include Braille script, large print, audio-visual media and sign-language interpretation. Information channels should include television, radio, newspapers and postal services.

Governments

should work with organizations of disabled persons to identify appropriate information formats and channels to reach disabled citizens.

12. Governments should adopt, enforce and fund legally binding standards and regulations to improve access for persons with disabilities, ensuring that buildings, streets, and road, sea and air transport are barrier-free, architecturally and in all other ways. Communication systems and security and safety measures should be developed and adapted to meet the needs of disabled citizens.

13. To facilitate the recruitment of disabled persons and to assist private-sector industries in hiring them, organizations at the national, regional and international levels, including the United Nations, should identify and maintain listings of qualified disabled candidates.

#### B. Strengthening of grass-roots initiatives

14. Local community initiatives should be especially promoted. Disabled persons and their families should be encouraged to form grass-roots organizations, with governmental recognition of their importance and governmental support in the form of financing and training.

15. Governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with disability issues should allow disabled persons to participate as equal partners.

16. The efficient functioning of governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with disability calls for training in organizational and management skills.

#### C. Promotion of an integrated approach

17. Overall national policy frameworks with supporting legislation should be developed.

18. The essence of an integrated approach is the inclusion of disability issues in all government ministries and at every level of governmental policy and planning. National co-ordination bodies, with linkages at the local, regional and interregional levels, should be established or strengthened.

The

membership of those bodies should include all government ministries, legislative committees and non-governmental organizations, particularly organizations of disabled persons. Those bodies should review existing policies, plans and programmes, identify existing and projected resources and monitor and evaluate the implementation of national policies.

19. National development programmes should include disability components.

20. Disabled women should be included in the existing national and regional programmes aimed at women.

21. At the level of service delivery, an integrated approach entails co-operation and referral among professionals working in organizational settings that provide educational, vocational, health and social services.

#### D. Promotion of education and training

22. The early years are critical in the overall development of a disabled child and for the fostering of positive attitudes towards the child.

Specific programmes and training materials should be developed to address these needs during the formative infant and pre-school years.

23. Education at the primary, secondary and higher levels should be available to disabled persons within the regular educational system and in regular school settings, as well as in vocational training programmes. When such education is provided to deaf students, teachers and/or interpreters who are proficient in the indigenous sign language must be provided.

24. Special education programmes and schools that promote the indigenous sign language and the indigenous deaf culture must be available to deaf people. Deaf people should be employed in such programmes and schools.

25. Cost-effective alternatives to segregated school facilities should be developed and implemented by Governments at the national and local levels. These alternatives include special education teachers as consultants to regular education teachers, resource rooms with specialized personnel and materials, special classrooms in regular schools and interpreters for deaf students.

26. The education of disabled children should involve the co-operation and concerted efforts of health and social services, as well as of teachers and parents. It should provide support measures, such as technical aids, especially adapted pedagogical approaches, and incentives for teachers.

27. The content and quality of education and training should ensure the acquisition of skills that are economically viable and that provide opportunities for work. Career education and vocational training programmes should be available to ensure the transition of disabled students into the economic mainstream.

28. In addition to being offered formal skills training and education, disabled persons should be offered training in social and self-help skills to prepare them for independent living. Special efforts should be made to promote education and skills training for disabled girls and women, in both urban and rural areas.

29. General teacher-training curricula should include a course of study in skills for teaching disabled children and young persons in regular schools.

30. Each Government should have a national plan for training and employing an adequate number of health, education and vocational professionals in

rehabilitation. Persons with disabilities should be recruited for such training and employment.

31. In fields such as education, labour, health and social services, law, architecture and technical development, which are often involved in the different aspects of rehabilitation, professional training should include training on the rights and needs of disabled people. Professionals in these fields should also be made aware of the resources available for disabled persons so that appropriate referrals can be made or services provided.

32. Appropriate technology should be considered essential for the utilization of available resources. This may include simple, universally available equipment, as well as computer technology.

#### E. Promotion of employment

33. Disabled persons have the right to be trained for and to work on equal terms in the regular labour force. Community-based rehabilitation programmes should be encouraged to provide better job opportunities in developing countries. Use should be made of the vocational services, guidance and training, placement, employment and related services that already exist for workers in general. On-the-job training may be more effective than conventional training.

34. General development programmes that provide loans, training and equipment for income-generating activities should include disabled persons.

35. Employment opportunities can be promoted, primarily, by measures relating to employment and salary standards that apply to all workers and, secondarily, by measures offering special support and incentives. In addition to formal employment, opportunities should be broadened to include self-employment, co-operatives and other group income-generating schemes. Where special national employment drives have been launched for youth and unemployed persons, disabled persons should be included. Disabled persons should be actively recruited, and when a disabled candidate and a non-disabled candidate are equally qualified, the disabled candidate should be chosen.

36. Organizations of employers and of workers should adopt, in co-operation with organizations of disabled persons, policies that promote the training and employment of disabled persons, including women, and non-disabled persons on an equal basis.

37. Policies for affirmative action should be formulated and implemented to increase the employment of disabled women. Governments and non-governmental organizations should support the creation of income-generating projects involving disabled women.

#### F. Provisions for funding

38. In general, funding should be allocated through regular sectoral budgeting systems. A national rehabilitation fund may be established to

facilitate the employment or self-employment of disabled persons. This fund could be used to cover the costs of training, equipment and initial capital outlay.

39. Similarly, funds should be established for loans to small-scale pilot projects at the grass-roots level; such funds could be administered locally with the use of simple procedures.

#### G. Promotion of community awareness

40. To increase community understanding of the rights, needs and potentials of disabled persons, collaborative efforts with disabled persons and their organizations are required to develop and promote a flow of information using mass media, especially film, television, radio and print media. In particular, information for disabled persons and their families on all aspects of living with a disability should be as clear and uncomplicated as possible.

41. Community awareness programmes should include specific strategies for the prevention of disability. Government efforts aimed at early identification, intervention and prevention should be strengthened through community awareness and community involvement in programmes on disability.

42. Persons with mental disabilities (mental retardation or mental illness) or multiple disabilities are among the most stigmatized groups of citizens. They have the right to make choices, take risks, control their own lives and live in the community. Their adult status, abilities and aspirations must be respected and reinforced by their inclusion in decision-making, although many may need individual advocacy to be clearly understood.

43. It should be acknowledged that people with mental and multiple disabilities benefit from education, skills training and work opportunities. For many of these people, opportunities need to be individualized. Support is required to help them and their families to establish and maintain a positive life-style.

44. The World Programme of Action should be translated into all national languages, through governmental action. Braille, large print and simplified versions should also be made available by the appropriate media to ensure as wide a distribution as possible to all citizens, including disabled persons, their families, and non-governmental and governmental organizations.

#### H. Improving the methodology for human resources development

45. Policies and programmes for human resources development concerning disabled persons should be based on an assessment of their needs and resources as well as on the potential of existing development programmes and services to meet those needs. The implementation of such policies and programmes should be periodically monitored, with adjustments made to ensure effective implementation.

46. Evaluation should be built into programmes at the planning stage so that

their overall efficacy in fulfilling policy objectives can be assessed. Persons with disabilities should play an active role in developing the criteria for monitoring and evaluation.

47. Increased attention should be given to services for people with hearing, speech, mental, intellectual or multiple disabilities.

48. The requirements of particular groups, such as disabled children, disabled women, the disabled elderly, disabled migrants and refugees, should also be recognized and met.

49. Governmental and non-governmental organizations should utilize recent developments in education through communications media, also known as distance education, which has been found to be an appropriate methodology in human resources development in the field of disability.

50. The local use of appropriate technologies for producing such items as wheel chairs, prosthetic devices and mobility aids, as well as aids for hearing and seeing, should take into account the technical, socio-economic and cultural conditions in the particular society. Each country should have a national system for the delivery of rehabilitation aids.

#### I. Regional and international co-operation

51. Training programmes in human resources development in the field of disability should be strengthened by collaborative efforts at the regional and/or subregional levels. Such programmes should be co-ordinated through existing intergovernmental and regional organizations, including those of disabled persons.

52. International development aid projects should include a component specifically aimed at supporting organizations of disabled persons and training their members. In addition, employment opportunities should be made available to disabled individuals within these projects.

53. All international development assistance programmes directed at macro-level planning and development, such as those in agriculture or education, should include a specific component ensuring the participation of disabled persons in such programmes.

54. At both the national and interregional levels, Governments should strongly support collaboration with non-governmental agencies in specific areas of disability, to ensure co-ordination and to prevent duplication of services.

55. Linkages between organizations of disabled persons in developed and developing countries should be strengthened. This can be done through the exchange of information, training and meetings to provide forums for disabled persons to share experiences on strategic approaches. Workshops and field studies should be organized to train trainers and the management personnel of organizations of disabled persons.

56. Implementation of these Guidelines relies on effective action at the national level. This action should be supplemented by concerted efforts at the international level, particularly on the part of the United Nations and

its focal point for the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, as well as relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies. National and international non-governmental organizations, in particular organizations of disabled persons, should be fully involved.