

# Mainstreaming disability in the UN system

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**World Health  
Organization**

# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- First human rights treaty of 21<sup>st</sup> century, came into force May 2008
- Represents "paradigm shift"
- Principles:
  - Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy
  - Non-discrimination
  - Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
  - Respect for difference and acceptance of people with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
  - Equality of opportunity
  - Accessibility
  - Equality between men and women
  - Respect for the evolving capabilities of children with disabilities

# CRPD ratifications and monitoring

- Convention
  - 144 signatories
  - 85 ratifications
- Optional protocol
  - 88 signatories
  - 52 ratifications
- Committee of Experts
  - Holds countries to account
  - (If signatory to OP) receive individual communications, conduct enquiries

# Implications for WHO and other agencies

- Barrier removal
  - Physical access
  - Information access
  - Human resources
  - Attitudinal change: awareness raising, training
  
- Mainstreaming in technical programmes
  - Disability data, not just mortality
  - Use of ICF
  - People with disabilities as vulnerable group
  - Rehabilitation as cross cutting issue
  - Balance between public health aim of prevention and human rights principle of respect and inclusion



# What agencies are doing: World Bank

## The Disabilities Action Plan

- **Policy**—Developed definition; reviewed policies & Staff Rules to ensure against bias
- **Recruitment**—Stepped up outreach to disabled peoples' organizations & universities, trained interviewers, put statement about accessibility in website
- **Accommodations**—Created Disabilities Accommodation Fund (DAF) to centrally reimburse cost of accommodations (hardware, software, personal assistants, etc.)—over \$258,000 in FY07.
- **Career Development**—Made sponsors available to staff with disabilities, made orientation accessible, integrated disabilities awareness into training

# World Bank (continued)

5. **Infrastructure and Services**—Ensuring accessible facilities and services (5-year, \$6.8 million Country Office Accessibility Program; ramps, signage, other modifications to HQ buildings; conference, travel, food, mail services made more accessible)
6. **Technology**—Established Assistive Technology Program and Center to provide products & services for staff with physical & sensory limitations
7. **Communications/awareness-raising**—Publish articles in intranet news, produced video & resource guide, organize roundtables & events
8. **Outreach & partnerships** —link to work on disabilities & development (Bank started/sustaining Global Partnership on Disability & Development)



# ILO

- Policy;
- Welcome statement;
- Outreach;
- Reasonable Accommodation Fund (\$40,000);
- Interns with disabilities project planned;
- Plus technical work.



# What WHO is doing

- Task Force on Disability, set up by DG Dr Margaret Chan under leadership of ADG (NMH) Dr Ala Alwan: first meeting July 2008
- Members drawn from all HQ clusters, all regional offices
- Barrier removal
- Mainstreaming in technical programmes
- Current survey of all Directors in HQ: outcome of internal report on mainstreaming





# Barrier removal

- Access audit (HQ, SEARO, EMRO), and investment in improvements
- Web access audit complete, proposed training for web people
- WHO Press training programme on accessible printed information, ongoing
- Draft Disability and Employment policy
- Proposed welcome statement
- Proposed training for Selection Panel members
- Awareness activities (seminars, Dec 3 etc)



# Mainstreaming in technical programmes

- HAC: needs of pwd in disasters
- RHR: guidance note on sexual and reproductive rights of persons with disabilities
- WHO/UNAIDS/OHCHR: policy brief on disability and HIV
- VP: systematic review of violence against pwd
- Seminar series
  - Mainstreaming
  - Rehabilitation &...



# Disability and ageing

- Half of all people with disabilities over 60
- World population of older people quadruples in next 50 years
- Shared experiences
  - Social, not biological phenomenon
  - Social exclusion and poverty
  - Discrimination and stigma
  - Lacking a voice
  - Vulnerability: GFC, climate change
- Potential for collaboration and alliance



# Thank you for listening!

- Any questions?
- In your experience, what are the priorities for barrier removal in the UN system?
- Do you see potential in partnership around work on ageing and work on disability?
- How can the mainstreaming agenda translate into country-level action, particularly in LMIC?

