



**Asia-Pacific Input to the
High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the
Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and
Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for
Persons with Disabilities
New York, 23 September 2013**

1. We, the representatives of members and associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), assembled at “The Way Forward: Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on a Disability-inclusive Development Agenda towards 2015 and Beyond” held in Bangkok from 15 to 16 May 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the Asia-Pacific Consultation).

2. The Asia-Pacific Consultation was convened by the Royal Thai Government in cooperation with the Government of Australia, ESCAP, the World Bank and the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability. It was also attended by representatives of civil society, including organizations of and for persons with disabilities, as well as the United Nations system and other international organizations.

3. The Asia-Pacific Consultation deliberated on challenges to, and steps to be taken in the promotion of, disability-inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda and the contribution that the Asian and Pacific region could make to the expected outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, to be convened in New York on 23 September 2013.

4. The Asia-Pacific Consultation drew inspiration from the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, as adopted by the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. That Intergovernmental Meeting had been organized by ESCAP and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 29 October to 2 November 2012.

5. The Incheon Strategy contains the world’s first set of regionally-agreed disability-inclusive development goals with measurable targets and indicators for charting progress over a 10-year timeframe. It was endorsed by ESCAP, through its resolution 69/13 of 2 May 2013 on the “Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific”.

Asian and Pacific disability and development context

6. The Asian and Pacific region is home to two-thirds of the global population. The region is noted for its economic vibrance and progress in reducing poverty. At the same time, it faces development challenges that are closely associated with growing economic and social inequalities. It is also the region most adversely affected by disasters. It is estimated that there are 650 million persons with disabilities in this region, most of whom live in poverty, and in developing countries. However, there is a lack of reliable statistics that are comparable over time and across borders. Disability-inclusive development is thus a necessary condition for the region’s further economic advancement and social progress.

7. Progress has been made in the region on the promotion and protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive development. Building on two consecutive regional decades of persons with disabilities spanning the period 1993 through 2012, the members and associate members of ESCAP, through ESCAP

resolution 68/7 of 23 May 2012, proclaimed the “Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022”.

8. Since the Millennium Development Goals do not explicitly refer to disability-related concerns, the post-2015 development agenda presents a landmark opportunity for mainstreaming disability dimensions into the development process of the twenty-first century, thereby ensuring the inclusiveness of economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and peace and security.

Bangkok Consensus

9. We submit the following recommendations for incorporation into the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities (HLMDD) to achieve our shared goal of disability-inclusive societies that enable all persons with diverse disabilities and backgrounds, including women and children, to participate fully in all spheres and stages of life. Our recommendations are in consonance with, and build upon, the Incheon Strategy.

10. We urge Member States to demonstrate political leadership at the highest levels to disability-inclusive development at the HLMDD and in their activities at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

11. The HLMDD outcome document should reinforce the spirit and content of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It should not in any way weaken interpretation of the Convention.

12. It should also be concise, action-oriented, measurable, time-bound and grounded in principles of inclusion, equality and non-discrimination. Furthermore, it should be user-friendly and accessible for all.

13. The HLMDD outcome document should address the priority areas, as contained in the 10 goals of the **Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific**, bearing in mind additional considerations, as follows:

(a) **Reduce poverty and enhance work and employment prospects:** Promote, within the decent work agenda, employment for persons with diverse disabilities in all economic sectors in rural and urban areas. Engage the private sector and promote disability-inclusive business, as well as support entrepreneurship development among persons with disabilities, social enterprises, and cooperatives.

(b) **Promote participation in political processes and in decision-making:** Measure the participation of persons with diverse disabilities in development policies, plans, programmes and projects as an indicator of the inclusiveness of economic growth and social progress. Promote diverse means of facilitating such participation at all levels, including through community-based inclusive development initiatives and e-government services.

(c) **Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication:** Ensure the full accessibility for all of the physical environment, public transportation, as well as the knowledge, information and communication infrastructure, and services for the public, by incorporating universal design, facilitating the use of assistive technologies, and providing reasonable accommodation. Strengthen access to services and technologies for enabling communication by and with persons who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing, as well as persons with other types of disabilities, through the provision of sign language, tactile communication, Braille and easy-to-understand materials, among others.

(d) **Strengthen social protection:** Guarantee social protection for meeting disability-related needs, and promote further universal schemes based on the social protection floor, on an equal basis with others, including income support, access to appropriate and affordable services, devices and other assistance.

(e) **Expand early intervention and education of children with disabilities:** Invest in early childhood programmes to optimize the development outcomes of children with disabilities and ensure their access, on an equal basis with others, to life skills development, as well as quality, inclusive and life-long education and skill development. Ensure equitable access to quality education close to the home, especially for children living in poverty, with special education provisions, as needed. Harness the enabling potential of information and communication technologies. Enable parents to provide more effective support for their children.

(f) **Ensure gender equality and women's empowerment:** Increase the visibility of girls and women with disabilities in mainstream gender equality programmes, as well as their participation in education programmes and sexual and reproductive health care, including HIV/AIDS, and general health care services and measures to both prevent, and protect them from, all forms of exploitation, violence, abuse and discrimination.

(g) **Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management:** Integrate disability perspectives in disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes, including awareness and early warning activities, the regular participation of persons with diverse disabilities in emergency preparedness measures, as well as the provision of timely and appropriate support for persons with disabilities in the event of disasters.

(h) **Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data:** Strengthen data collection to enhance the evidence base for policy-making, implementation and evaluation, as well as accountability in progress tracking of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development programmes by, inter alia, identifying opportunities in censuses, sample surveys, administrative data and specialized disability data sources, to increase data availability for such purposes.

(i) **Accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention:** Accelerate the universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the effective and comprehensive harmonization of domestic legislation with the Convention, supported by regulatory mechanisms for implementation. In this regard, Member States are also urged to ensure enhanced

resources for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to fulfil its responsibilities in a timely manner.

(j) **Advance subregional, regional and interregional cooperation:** Enhance multi-sectoral and multi-level partnerships, including subregional, regional and South-South cooperation. For this, involve: government ministries and institutions in diverse sectors; local authorities; organizations of and for persons with disabilities; other civil society entities; financial institutions; academic institutions; the private sector; United Nations entities; other international organizations; and development cooperation agencies. Give importance to technical cooperation, assistance and sufficient resources. Enhance capacity building. Promote the networking of disability focal points.

14. We also recommend the following additional elements for inclusion in the outcome document of the HLMDD:

(a) **Empower** persons with diverse disabilities, with particular attention to persons with autism, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, and persons who are deafblind, to exercise their rights, including the freedom to choose for themselves, thereby ensuring their human rights and human security, and emphasize the importance of capacity building of persons with disabilities in this regard. Recognize the vulnerability of persons with disabilities who are also discriminated against on other grounds. Combat multiple forms of discrimination, as well as abuse, violence and exploitation.

(b) **Promote** the formation and strengthening of representative organizations of persons with disabilities which are economically independent, democratic and practise good governance, to ensure the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all matters affecting their lives, and enhance their representation as equal partners in decision making processes.

(c) **Promote capacity investment** in persons with disabilities to develop their capacity for participation, as a means of ensuring economic, social and cultural progress, and strengthen the governance and economic sustainability of self-help organizations and groups of persons with disabilities. Fully utilize accessible information and communication technologies to promote digital literacy. Involve public policy research institutes in training persons with disabilities on disability-inclusive public policy.

(d) **Ensure** that the specific communication needs of persons who are deafblind, persons with multiple disabilities and persons with other types of disabilities are met, including through the allocation of resources for training, and the use of assistive technologies.

(e) **Encourage** the private sector to mainstream disability into the workplace and their products and services.

(f) **Foster change** in the **attitudes and behaviour** of the general public, families, persons with disabilities, government officials, decision-makers, the media, civil society organizations, and service providers, on a continuous and long-term basis, from a charity- to a rights-based and participatory approach towards persons with disabilities and issues concerning them. In this regard, recognize the contributions that persons with disabilities make to their families, communities and society at large.

(g) **Ensure adequate budgetary resources and allocations** for the implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of disability-inclusive development plans, programmes and projects, including through disability-inclusive budgeting across all sectors, with a view to achieving the best possible quality outcomes. Further ensure that budgetary resources be used to contribute to the enhancement of accessibility, human rights and non-discrimination in support of persons with disabilities.

15. Finally, concerning the **post-2015 development agenda**, we recommend the following:

(a) **Highlight** and **reinforce** the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda.

(b) **Give strong consideration** to including a stand-alone goal on empowering persons with disabilities for full participation in society.

(c) **Give** prominence to disability perspectives in the development process by mainstreaming disability into the proposed thematic areas that are under consideration in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda: inequalities; education; health; food security and nutrition; growth and employment; population dynamics; conflict and fragility; governance; environmental sustainability; water; energy.

(d) **Adopt** the community-based inclusive development approach to reach persons with disabilities at the grass-root level, especially in rural and remote areas.

(e) **Revise** overseas development assistance (in terms of financing channels and mechanisms, accountability contracts for donors and 'beyond aid' approaches) to include **disability markers** that identify the percentage spent for disability-inclusive development.

(f) **Recommend** to the OECD Development Assistance Committee that it develop and apply disability-sensitive indicators in its collection and analysis of data on official development assistance, to ensure it is possible to monitor and evaluate disability-inclusive development, both disability-specific and mainstream initiatives.

Adopted on 16 May 2013
Bangkok