

Committee: W.H.O

Issue: Improving the inclusion and protection of people with mental and physical inabilities

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## Introduction

People suffering from physical and mental disabilities are often separated from society because of their handicap. They have a more limited access to services than others and are often less taken care of and supported. The W.H.O estimates that people with disabilities have three times more of a chance of being refused care and a probability four times bigger of not being taken care of correctly compared to people without disability.

The inclusion of people with mental and physical inabilities is therefore of cardinal importance in order to fight these inequalities.

## Definitions

**Disability:** Disability is a complex, evolving, multidimensional and controversial notion. The law made 11th of February, 2005 defines disability as "any limitation of an activity or restriction of participation in society suffered in its environment by a person because of a temporal or permanent substantial alteration, of one or more physical, sensory, mental, cognitive or psychological function, of a polyhandicap or a disabling medical condition ". The term "disability" therefore covers multiple situations.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion means that all people, regardless of their abilities, have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of society. Laws and regulations are thought and written for all, just as rights are respected and effective for all. The duties are the same between all citizens. The differences in abilities between all individuals, whether disabled or not, are recognized and valued.

**Mental inabilities:** Inability of self-control, personal autonomy and decision making, which affect the interests of the person. It is a disease caused by persistent weakness of mental character. By legal incapacity and the appointment of a guardian, the civil authority protects the mentally ill.

**Physical inabilities:** Like mental incapacity, it is a factor that prevents an individual from acting normally. The inability of a person to perform certain actions and movements, as a result of an injury or illness.

**Activity limitations:** They indicate the difficulties that a person may encounter during an activity (walking, eating, etc.).

**Restrictions of participation:** Problems that an individual may encounter when wanting to participate in a situation of everyday life, such as discrimination when looking for a job or inaccessibility of transport.

**World Health Organization (WHO):** provides information on the current state of the inclusion of people with disabilities and enables global solutions.

## The situation

In the world we live in today, there is a large and growing number of disabled people. The figure estimated at 500 million has been confirmed by the results of surveys on population groups, juxtaposed with the observations of experienced investigators. In most countries, at least one out of ten people is handicapped by a physical, mental or sensory deficiency, and at least 25% of the population is affected by the presence of a disability.

According to a survey conducted by experts, it is estimated that at least 350 million people with disabilities live in areas where the services needed to help them overcome their limitations are not available. To a large extent, people with disabilities are exposed to physical, cultural and social barriers that disturb their lives even if rehabilitation assistance is available.

Many factors are responsible for the increasing number of people with disabilities and their exclusion to the margins of society. Some reasons and issues are :

- Wars and other forms of violence and destruction, and their consequences, including poverty, hunger, epidemics and major changes in the population;
- A high proportion of overcrowded and impoverished families, and unhealthy housing and living conditions;
- Populations with a high proportion of illiteracy and low public awareness of basic social services or health and education measures;
- Lack of specific knowledge about disability, its causes, prevention and treatment; this includes stigma, discrimination and misconceptions about disability;
- Inadequate programs of primary health care and services;
- Obstacles, including a lack of resources, geographical distance, and physical and social barriers that prevent many people from access to available services;
- The absence or weakness of infrastructures for social assistance, health, education, professional training and placement;
- The low priority of social and economic development for activities related to the equalization of opportunities, the prevention of disabilities and rehabilitation;
- The reckless use of drugs, the abuse of therapeutic substances and the illicit use of drugs and stimulants;
- Defective treatment of people injured at the time of a disaster, which may be the cause of an avoidable disability;

Indeed, the link between disability and poverty has been clearly established. While the risk of disability is much greater for the poor, the contrary is also true. The birth of a disabled child or the onset of a disability in the family often places a heavy burden on the family's limited resources and weighs down on the child's morale, pushing him deeper into poverty. The effects of these factors is reflected in higher proportions of people with disabilities among the poorest segments of society. Therefore, the number of affected families living in poverty is steadily increasing. The negative impact of these trends is seriously hampering the development process.

Existing knowledge and skills could prevent the occurrence of many deficiencies and disabilities, helping those affected to overcome or minimize their limitations, and enable countries to remove barriers that exclude people with disabilities from everyday life.

## **Handicap in developing countries**

It is of cardinal importance to highlight the problems of disability in developing countries. Lately, 80% of people with disabilities live in remote rural areas. In some of these countries, the proportion of the disabled population is estimated at 20% and, therefore, if families and parents are included, 50% of the population could be affected by disability. The problem is compounded by the fact that, for the most part, people with disabilities are usually extremely poor. They often live in areas where medical services and other related services are scarce or absent altogether, and where disabilities are not and can not be detected in time. When they receive medical care, if they even receive it, the deficiency may have become untreatable. In many countries, resources are not sufficient to detect and prevent disabilities and to meet the needs of rehabilitation and support services for the disabled population. Trained staff, the search for more up-to-date and effective rehabilitation strategies and approaches, as well as the manufacture and provision of aids and material for people with disabilities, are quite unprioritized.

In these countries, the problem of disability is made even more complex by the population explosion, which inexorably pushes the number of people with disabilities. As a matter of priority, it is therefore urgent to help these countries to develop population policies aimed at preventing the growth of the disabled population and at rehabilitating and providing services to people who are already disabled.

## **Position and challenges of foreign policies**

### **1) their definition of disability**

In Norway, disability is conceived as a shift between the expectations of the individual and the demands of the environment and society in order to move forward in areas that are essential to establishing and maintaining an independent social life.

In the United States, it focuses on the physical barriers (and attitudes) as creators of disability, not on disability itself.

A group of countries, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Hungary favor integration and seek both to compensate for the difficulties faced by the people and adapt them

to their environment. These countries are characterized by the strong predominance of specialized institutions or adapted institutions.

## **2) participation in education or work**

In terms of education, most countries enroll almost all students in regular schools. Northern countries, such as Sweden, Norway or Iceland but also southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal) favor this type of approach. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom and Poland, also have regular schooling and special classes.

In terms of employment, employers must hire people with disabilities. In many countries, the fraction of jobs to be reserved for people with disabilities is 5%, 2% and 7% for companies with more than 50 employees. However, a substitute contribution must be paid. In order to raise public awareness about social inclusion, measures such as support for adaptation costs are planned in some countries to encourage businesses to recruit people with disabilities. In addition, the inclusive policy focuses on eliminating the discrimination that people with disabilities may experience in the workplace as this policy aims to eliminate any barriers that may limit a person in fulfilling its activities.

## **Conclusion**

It seems important to emphasize that a person with mental or physical disabilities is not limited to its disability and to also see the qualities, abilities, and skills that these people have, primarily being human beings in their own right. It is for that reason that one speaks above all of disabled person and not of handicap. We are not reduced to a disability.

Taking into consideration the situation of people with disabilities, it is up to you to find solutions to correct the discriminatory practices of the past and to protect and promote their right to make sure they can participate fully in all the different fields of society.

## **Sources**

<http://www.un.org/fr/rights/overview/themes/handicap.shtml>

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