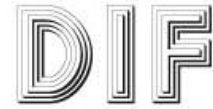




Consejo Nacional para las
Personas con Discapacidad



Mexico City Call to Action

Adopted by the RI Latin American Regional Conference

IMPLEMENTING THE
UN DISABILITY RIGHTS CONVENTION
IN LATIN AMERICA:
PARTNERSHIPS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION

April 15-16, 2008

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico City, Mexico

We – the 250 participants of the RI Latin American Regional Conference, representing 20 countries and a broad range of sectors including the disability community, professionals, service providers and governments – express our strong commitment to the ratification and full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, powerful legal instruments that focus on all human rights of persons with disabilities. The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 13, 2006 and signed by 127 countries and ratified by 23 states to date, including 9 states in Latin America. The treaty will become international law on May 3, 2008. This conference has a particular focus on Latin America, but also has relevance for the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide.

In this effort, we hope to work together with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016) (the Decade of the Americas) and other regional bodies in Latin America, in their work to promote the rights, empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (CONADIS) and the National System for the Integral Development of the Family (DIF) and RI for co-organizing this Conference. We also appreciate the general support of Irish Aid and Foundation Open Society, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, and an anonymous donor.

In order for the Convention to create lasting change and promote a world where persons with disabilities enjoy equal rights and are included in all aspects of society, we call on all governments, UN agencies, civil society, and professionals in the disability field to work collaboratively to:

Ratification and Implementation of the Convention

- To urge governments to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol as soon as possible, without reservations. To call on countries that have ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol with reservations, to promote a dialogue to examine its possible withdrawal. The Optional Protocol is a key tool for individuals and groups to seek a response for violations of the CPRD once all national legal procedures have been tried;
- To encourage Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) and other regional bodies of Latin America and the Caribbean, to ratify the Convention and its Optional Protocol and promote implementation, in accordance with Article 44 of the Convention.
- To develop fully inclusive programs and policies, and develop and implement new action plans, laws, policies and programs for implementation of the Convention, at the regional, national and local levels;
- To ensure that persons with disabilities fully participate in all relevant decision-making processes, including in the monitoring and implementation of the Convention. Persons with disabilities must serve on monitoring bodies created at the national and international levels;
- To create independent monitoring bodies, such as national human rights institutions (NHRIs), or strengthen existing bodies, designed to monitor implementation of the Convention, and effectively enforce the rights of persons with disabilities. Where a pre-existing NHRI will be modified to address disability issues for the first time, staff members of the institution (and particularly decision-makers) should undergo training to gain insight into the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities;
- To consider the adequate allocation of financial and other resources for the implementation of the Convention, including technical assistance and financial support to countries in the region;

Protection of the Full Range of Human Rights

- To adopt a rights-based approach in all matters that affect persons with disabilities, treat persons with disabilities as equal persons under the law with the same rights as persons without disabilities; and ensure measures such as supported decision making, so that persons with disabilities can exercise their legal capacity;
- To urge both the public and private sectors to ensure accessibility to the physical and virtual environments, as well as to assistive technology;

- To urge governments to provide effective access to habilitation and rehabilitation services so that people can reach their full potential as contributing citizens;
- To address the poverty and disability link by combating the discrimination and lower standards of living that many persons with disabilities face;
- To promote research, statistics and indicators on persons with disabilities, including through national population censuses, in order to have more information about the number of persons with disabilities and their daily living conditions, including met and unmet needs;
- To address the multiple discrimination faced by many indigenous persons, women, children and older persons with disabilities, on the combined basis of ethnicity, gender and/or age and disability;
- To develop effective programs and strategies to support persons with disabilities in armed conflicts and natural disasters;

Awareness Raising, Capacity Building and Training

- To strengthen the partnerships among all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, civil society, service providers, governments and international organizations;
 - To promote the link between national NGOs in Latin America and international organizations, with the objective of consolidating networks and building capacity, with respect to the monitoring process of the Convention.
- To promote the awareness raising, capacity and strength of local, national and regional organizations and networks of persons with disabilities, mainstream media, government officials, parliamentarians, lawyers, jurists in both national judicial systems and the Inter-American System of Human Rights and experts in relevant fields, in order to assess their understanding of the higher standards set by the Convention;

Conclusion

In order to achieve these goals –

Ratifying countries in Latin America need to be encouraged to take a leadership role in motivating other countries in the region to ratify and implement the Convention. All countries in Latin America must cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur, UN agencies, international, regional and national NGOs, and other concerned parties to promote universal acceptance of the Convention. Finally, we all commit ourselves to ensuring that persons with disabilities will fully participate as partners, in keeping with the motto “Nothing About Us, Without Us.” Only when the principles of the Convention are fully realized, can our communities be truly inclusive and equal for all.