

Disability in Asia Pacific Fact Sheet

Facts:

- There are approximately 400 million disabled people in the Asia and Pacific region; of which 250 million are of working age
- Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- Only 10 per cent of children with disabilities are estimated to attend primary school in the region (UNESCO)
- Disabled people are often excluded from training and workplaces
- The majority of disabled people live in rural areas (70 to 80 per cent)
- Disabled people are more likely to be unemployed - about 50 per cent in countries like Australia and up to 90 per cent in other developing countries
- People with disabilities account for 20 per cent of the world's poor

How is disability defined?

ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983:

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Disability as a human rights issue

Due to social and other barriers, people with disabilities are often denied access to the training and employment services they need to succeed to have full participation in society. It is society rather than their impairment that leads to disability. When barriers are removed, most people with disabilities can work and contribute to their country's economy.

Disability and decent work is a human rights issue, based on the concept that people with disabilities are citizens like non-disabled people; they have been denied their rights; and they represent an enormous untapped potential.

The United Nations recognizing the severity of the issue passed the **“Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”** in Dec 2006.

In addition, the International Labour Organization headquarters and regional offices are urging countries to ratify both the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ILO Convention 159 “Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983”, which calls for countries to have a policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment promotion.

For more information on Persons with Disabilities and the right to decent work please visit the following web sites:

- **Decent Work** - www.ilo.org/global/themes/decentwork
- **United Nations Enable web site** - www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/iddp2007.htm
- **Disabled People's International** – www.dpiap.org
- **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983** www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C159
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** – www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml
- **ILO Ability Asia** – www.ilo/abilityasia