

1. Background

In August 2001 the 1st Regional Leadership Training Workshop was organized by Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific / Oceania sub-Regional Office and hosted by the Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (DPA). At this meeting participants asked the Government of Vanuatu to put disability issues on the Forum agenda. This request was accepted by Vanuatu through the Hon Joe Natuman, Minister for Internal Affairs (Appendix 1). In 2002, Prime Minister Edward Natapei 'flagged' the issue at the Forum Heads of Government meeting in Nadi and in 2003 he supported the Forum in Auckland to endorse the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action toward the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2003-2012. This Forum Regional Disability Workshop is the culmination of the support that Vanuatu has given to fulfilling its commitment accepted in August 2001. The outcome document is attached at the end of this report.

This Forum meeting is also the first meeting where NGOs were fully sponsored by the Forum Secretariat. Vanuatu was represented by Mr Greg Nimbtik, Acting Director of the Department of Strategic Management and Andonia Piau-Lynch, Coordinator of the Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (seen top right in the photo)



Ms Helen Tavola, Forum Social Policy Adviser, speaking at the meeting

2. Shift from Thinking of Disability from a Charity/Medical Model to Rights-based Model

Over the last 30 years, there has been a shift in the way we think of people with disabilities and disability issues. This shift has gone from the charity/welfare (that we must help these poor people and provide for their welfare) and the medical model (that people with disabilities are sick because of their disability) to a rights-based model which recognizes that people with disabilities have rights and responsibilities as human being and can, and, do want to participate in all activities that is normally engaged in by the rest of the community.

I think this trend fully emerged in the 1980 following the UN declaration of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled People. It was also in 1981 in Winnipeg, Canada that people with disabilities themselves took the stand to speak up for themselves because service providers and administrators (predominantly those in the medical profession and with the medical model mentality) did not want to believe that people with disabilities were capable of making decisions that would affect their own lives and therefore could not possibly serve on the Board of Directors of the main disability organization.

As a result of this medical-model mentality, a small group of people with disabilities at the meeting stood for their rights to participate in making decisions that would affect their lives, left the room and formed a separate organization. In 1983 the first meeting was held in Singapore where the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) was formally established. DPA became a member of DPI in October 2002 at the World Congress held in Otsu, Japan, where the Asian & Pacific Decade of Persons with Disability 2003-2012 was declared.

The rights-based approach is now calling for recognition that people with disability have a right to be healthy, to be educated, to get a decent job, to make decisions for themselves, to be heard, to laugh, cry, love, hate, be mothers, fathers, doctors, MPs or whatever. But it is the social, cultural, political and environmental barriers that hinder their equal participation in society.

3. Inclusive Education

In its communiqué of August 2003, the Forum Heads of Government endorsed the BMF and called specifically to consider education of children with disabilities. It is now recognized that we need to move away from the "special needs education" model to the "inclusive education" model while recognizing that at times, there may be a need for special education. While some of the countries such as Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Samoa were able to report on their efforts to mainstream disability in their education system, many countries still have to take that step.

In Vanuatu, provisions for enabling access to education by children with disabilities are provided in the Education Act (2000) and in 2002/2003 a Special Needs Officer was appointed by the Ministry. Since 2003, the Statistics Unit of the Ministry has begun collecting data on children with disabilities in schools. In its 2004 Annual Report,

"The Ministry of Education has also included statistics information on Special Education. According to schools data, 5% of primary school students have special needs and 2% in secondary. It is therefore important that the Ministry for Education must assist these children in special needs. It is suggested that the Ministry must set up policies in place in order to guide the national government in:

- Providing appropriate equipments for children in special needs considering that they represent 5% of the school population in primary education and 2% in secondary.
- Training primary and secondary school teachers with technical teaching methods in order to assist children with special needs.
- Work collaboratively with Health Department in order to set up a strategy of supports and approaches for children in special needs.
- Organizing conferences relating on "Space of children with special needs within the school system".

Since 2002 the National Plan of Action for the Education for All (EFA) effort has identified Children with Special Needs under Priority 4 for Vanuatu. The Executive Director of the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People has been the representative on the national EFA Committee.

As the Ministry of Education has already indicated that it plans to organize a conference, the Department of Strategic Management could give its support to this conference from which the latest update can be obtained as well as making other suggestions for an inclusive education. However, data alone will not promote an inclusive education system, let alone, an inclusive society. More effort needs to be directed toward an enabling environment to ensure that the education system is inclusive for ALL children.

It should also be noted that Peggy Fairburn-Dunlop of UNESCO informed delegates that there will be a conference on Inclusive Education in Apia, Samoa, from the 27-30 November 2005. While it is clear that the EFA National Coordinator will attend, it is also clear that others in the Education Ministry need to attend to understand the move to the "inclusive education model" rather than the "special needs model".

4. Sign Language Training

In its Vision 2005-2007, DPA has identified that communication between, and with those who are deaf/mute is urgent and we intend to pursue a course of action that will "... ensure that alternative forms of communication such as Sign Language is available by 2007". DPA started this in February 2004 through its fundraising for the Sign Language Training Project and in December 2004, it was further highlighted by the Parents/ Caregivers Support Group in Luganville. In 2005, DPA pursued the possibility of bringing a volunteer from the Youth Ambassador Programme. This was not possible and DPA is now looking to see if they can get the volunteer through the Volunteers International Australia (VIA) to start in December 2005. Part of this project will be to develop a Bislama Sign Language dictionary.

In their Analysis of Unmet Needs as a result of the TAFEA Disability Survey, VSDP provided the following conclusions on page 22:

The next greatest need is the result of Deafness/Hearing impairment. 75 (18%) of those interviewed would benefit from **hearing tests** with a further 59 (14%) indicating an interest in learning sign language. This high level of need has implications for services required within the TAFEA province. Ear checks can be performed at the local hospital to monitor the actual health of the ear, so such things as ear infections can be treated. However, currently there is no adequate way to test hearing in TAFEA, as this requires specialized equipment and trained professionals. Both 2003 and 2005 Surveys indicated that a high proportion of disability within TAFEA province is Deaf/Hearing impaired related, therefore it would be an important area to investigate further. The implications of such a high proportion of people with Deaf/Hearing impairment also means that **sign language** is an essential communication need for this group of the population and would go along way to help improve the lives of those who are hearing impaired.

Following this and the findings from the VSDP survey of school children on the island of Efate in May/June 2005 which found many children with hearing and vision problems, DPA made a recommendation at its Strategic Planning Meeting held from 26-28 July that all children in schools must have their ears and eyes tested. This will go beyond just thinking that only children with disabilities need special needs but also provide detection of any impairment in all children attending schools.

There are a number of Sign Languages used in the Pacific; the most common one used in Vanuatu is Makaton. While reference to this was made at the Disability Workshop, it would do for Vanuatu to raise this training need with USP here in Port Vila. Regionally, that USP pursue the introduction of Sign Language training through distance education and to include provisions to implement BMF Priority 3 on *Early Intervention and Education* through the PRIDE Project currently based at USP, Suva. This will also ensure that the Forum Communiqué of August 2003 which specifically refers to the education of children with disabilities will be addressed – at least with regards to BMF Priority No. 3.

Although teachers are not yet trained for “special needs”, sign language is one way in which children who are deaf can participate in school if it is taught at the Teachers College. There is a need, however, for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of CRP to collaborate on how to make education inclusive beyond just providing training in sign language.

5. UN Draft Disability Convention

The Government of Vanuatu must also be congratulated for its positive stance in appointing John Suran, Chair of DPA, to be the representative on the UN Ad Hoc Committee on *the Draft Comprehensive and Integral Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*. This Convention is still being drafted and it is not clear at present when it will be completed.

In August 2003 the then Minister for Internal Affairs, Joe Natuman, recommended to the then Prime Minister, Edward Natapei, to appointed John Suran as Vanuatu’s representative to the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the Draft Disability Convention. Since February 2004, Suran has attended the deliberations three times, including this most recent meeting in August 2005. On two of these occasions, there were no funds in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore the Office of the Prime Minister, through Director General Jean Sese, provided the necessary assistance and support for his attendance. In August 2005, Suran, with the assistance of the Honorary Consul in the New York office, were able to obtain the support from the United Nations itself.

It is recognized now that funding to attend this meeting needs to be included in someone’s budget: either the Department of Foreign Affairs or the Department of Strategic Management. During the 6th Ad Hoc Meeting of August 2005, Suran made an interjection calling for two things: i) More participation from Pacific countries at the UN Ad Hoc Committee, and ii) More regional cooperation. It is important to note that at the opening of the Regional Disability Workshop, the Deputy Secretary of the Forum stated that:

“...some issues lend themselves well to a regional approach, while others tend to be more nationally oriented. Disability appears to be an issue that lends itself well to regionalism. Few if any of the Forum Island Countries have the human or financial resources to fully provide all the specialized services that would be desirable for disabled people. However, if we pool our expertise and work collaboratively, we can improve the lives of disabled people in the region. If the issue of disability is not adequately reflected in the current draft of the Pacific Plan, it may be because of lack of clear and strong suggestions oh how such as issue would be tackled regionally. The challenge is to move from a national or community level to a regional level...”

It may be of interest to you that in our Brief to the Prime Minister for the 2003 Forum Heads of Government meeting in Auckland, DPA made the following recommendations:

- i. That Vanuatu supports the proposal for a Convention for Persons with Disabilities.
- ii. That Vanuatu lobby Forum members to support the proposed Convention for People with Disabilities.

Recommendation i) have been implemented through the appointment of Suran as Vanuatu's representative to the Ad Hoc Committee in August 2003 and support since. While the issue of regionalism is new, Vanuatu has already moved in that direction to integrated disability issues in its Pacific Plan. To this end, we are grateful and acknowledge the continuing support for people with disability that the Vanuatu Government has given.

For the purpose of how we have got to where we are today in Vanuatu, I attach a status report of the 2003 recommendations provided on page 14 of this report.

6. BMF Awareness Training for Government Officials

The Workshop heard verbal reports from the different Pacific Island Countries on their progress on the BMF.

As part of Vanuatu's commitment to the BMF, a National Disability Policy Paper was approved in April 2004. However, a National Plan of Action is currently not available. As part of the strategies to achieve the BMF targets, a joint initiative by DPA, Department of Strategic Management and ESCAP has begun to hold an awareness raising training/consultative and planning workshop for Government Officials on 19 September 2005. Within the framework of this meeting, we can consider developing a National Plan of Action. DPA has already developed its plans for 2005-2007. A number of documents are available that can assist in this process and include the following:

1. Education Act (2000);
2. Policies of the Ministry of Health (2002) & Corporate Plan 2005-2010 (2005)
3. National Disability Policy Paper approved by the Council of Ministers (April 2004);
4. Our Vision: 2005 – 2007 produced by DPA (March 2005);
5. Ministry of Education Summary Report on 2004 Primary and Secondary School Statistics produced by the Division of Policy and Planning Services (March 2005);
6. Final Report of the TAFEA Pilot Disability Survey Project: Findings and Recommendations, Vanuatu Society for Disabled People, May 2005;
7. VSDP Report on School Children in Efate (June 2005)
8. Disability in Vanuatu. The Community View: Services and Services Priorities produced by ESCAP/POC, July 2005.

In order for this to effectively include both Government and civil society organizations or Non State Actors own the process, three options present themselves:

- i. Hold a Consultation & Planning Meeting with Government Officials only;
- ii. Involve civil society organizations (VANGO, VNCW, Vanuatu Women's Centre, VASANOC, Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, Chamber of Commerce and Trade, Vanuatu Trade Union Council, churches) and Donors to a joint meeting or
- iii. Hold a separate meeting with Non State Actors as identified above.

One of the *positive* aspects of holding a joint meeting is that it will provide the major stakeholders including donor partners an opportunity to plan together and know what each is supposed to do in one single session. This will ensure a collaborative effort on the part of Government to include civil society organizations in a partnership role to implement the BMF and enhance the Government/VANGO MOU signed in August 2004. It will also save the need for DPA to seek extra funding to hold a separate workshop for NGOs.

Following this meeting, the different departments, NGOs, Unions, Women, Employers, churches and others can then provide what they think they can do and through this approach. This will ensure the possibility of stakeholders in owning the process of implementing the BMF. If this is the approach to be taken, it will also lessen the need for the Department of Strategic Management to develop a National Plan of Action on its own.



Representatives from Government, NGOs & regional organizations

One of the *challenges* of holding a meeting for everyone is that there will be a need to seek funding so that Provincial representative, particularly Provincial Secretaries, can attend this consultative meeting. This is suggested as they are the implementers of the Provincial REDI Programmes and would provide an opportunity for them to review their REDI programmes to include people with disabilities.

7. National Coordination

One of the messages that came through loud and clear was that many Pacific Island Governments do not have a Focal Point or a coordinating mechanism to implement the BMF. In Vanuatu, this was identified as identified as Priority No. 1 in the National Disability Policy Paper. Therefore it is hoped that one of the outcome of this consultation and planning process on 19 September will see the establishment of the National Disability Council (NDC) or the National Disability Coordination Committee (NDC) which will act as the focal point for monitoring the implementation of the BMF. Since DSM is the Focal Point for disability issues, it would be logical for it to also act as the Secretariat for the NDC.

In January 2005 DPA submitted a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get ESCAP to assist in providing a situational analysis of the people with disabilities in Vanuatu. We are pleased that this was agreed to and a request was therefore made to ESCAP to provide a report. This was subsequently carried out by Alistair Wilkinson, Social Policy Development Advisor to ESCAP/POC and the report "*Disability in Vanuatu: The Community View-Services and Service Priorities*" was completed in July 2005.

A draft implementation plan for the implementation of the National Disability Policy is included in the report intended for discussion purposes amongst all stakeholders. It is recommended that DSM utilize this document for its National Plan of Action for the BMF and have it ready for presentation for the meeting of 19 September.

8. "Whole Government Approach"

This approach is clearly stated in the National Disability Policy Paper approved by the Council of Ministers in 2004:

Financial Implications

In addressing disability issues which cuts across all sectors of the Government, it is imperative that all Ministries are fully aware of the possible financial implications indicated and the commitment required for the successful implementation of this policy. For there to be a comprehensive, systematic and coordinated approach, a Disability Desk requires support and the Prime Minister's Office is well positioned to play this coordinating and monitoring role. In other Ministries, there will be financial costs associated with the implementation of the policy issues indicated above. Following these thoughts, the Prime Minister's Office will ensure that there are budgetary provisions in each Ministry and further, that the Ministries implement these policies.

Legal Implications

The thoughts contained within this policy paper are consistent with the laws of the Republic including the Constitution, the Education Act, the Employment Act, the Penal Code and policies of the Ministry of Health. With Vanuatu's accession to the International Labour Organization, this policy also falls in line with international laws, some of which Vanuatu needs to effect into domestic laws. In particular, the Prime Minister's Office will continue to work with the State Law Office, organizations working with and for persons with disabilities, and regional organizations to effect this policy.

In a nutshell, this means that **ALL** Government Departments must act as agencies to implement the different parts of the BMF. The Ministry of CRP and the Department of Strategic Management has already been identified as monitoring agency to ensure the implementation of the BMF within Government. For example, if we want to promote the right of people with disabilities to find a decent job, we must also beyond just helping them a job but look at what other rights may be denied to them:

- ✚ Our objective is to assist people with disabilities to get decent jobs. But what jobs are available and where?
- ✚ How will they get to work? Is transport accessible?
- ✚ Where can they work? Is the building accessible?
- ✚ Have they got the education or skills? Is education accessible? What education and training are there for people with disabilities?
- ✚ How they can upgrade their skills? Is training available on site or thorough vocational institutions? Are there a specific number of placements for people with disabilities?
- ✚ Do they have the confidence to go and find jobs? Is career guidance or peer counselling available?
- ✚ Are there Employee Assistance Programmes for people with disabilities? Are there services provided by the Department of Labour, Chamber of Commerce or Trade Unions to assist people with disabilities to find jobs?

If the answers to these questions are No, then we need to consider how to address these needs for people with disabilities. And the questions can be applied just as well to services such as health, education, self-employment, housing and inclusions in the REDI Programmes for each Province and so forth. The question is who will do this? It would seem logical that each Department and Provincial Secretaries be responsible for developing their plan of action and provide such information to DSM under the different Priority Areas of the BMF.

9. Inclusion of Disability Issues in Country Strategic Papers

While limited discussion was held on whether or not disability issues were contained in Country Strategic papers, this is another tool that Government can use to open discussion for disability specific budgets in its bilateral discussion with donors. In the Australia-Vanuatu Joint Development Cooperation Strategy 2005-2010 (which DPA was fortunate to provide an input), there is discussion about Hardship among various groups, one of which is people with disabilities:

People with Disability: The National Listing of the 1999 National Census showed that there were over 2,749 people with disabilities in Vanuatu. Women with disabilities are multiply disadvantaged through their status as women, as persons with disabilities, and majority numbers as persons living in poverty. It is not clear how many children and youth in Vanuatu receive primary education or are currently enrolled. In the Asian and Pacific region, less than 10 per cent of children and youth with disabilities have access to any form of education. Inaccessibility to the built environment including public transport systems is still the major barrier for persons with disabilities (p. 16)

The goal of this joint Strategy, in line with Vanuatu's PAA, is to support long term stability for Vanuatu by accelerating development, including broad-based growth, and improving the welfare of the general population (p. 2).

Further, the paper on Poverty Alleviation attached to the Strategy called to

Support policy enactment that would dismantle barriers and improve access and coordinator for people with disabilities. Also continue to provide support for further research on disabilities (p. 17).

10. Inclusion of Disability Issues in Reports of States Parties

Reports on Human Rights Conventions such as the CRC and CEDAW are not including people with disabilities. This concern was raised in the *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Progress in the Implementation of the Recommendations Contained in the Study on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Document E/CN.4/2005/82) which found that most States reports leave disability issues out, or if they did include it, it was just minimal in and in only certain places, such as education. As a cross cutting issue, the Report suggests to Government to included status of people with disabilities in all their reports and under all different sections. Section D (page 13) acknowledges the active involvement of national institutions and encourages national institutions (and regional institutions) to strengthen their work for rights issues by raising awareness on the rights of people with disabilities at a national level.

In Vanuatu the 1998 report of the CRC does contain sections on children with disabilities, and the CEDAW report of 2005 also contains report on women and children with disabilities. DPA has submitted information to DESP to include people with disabilities in its preparation of the MDG report.

From the point of view of an NGO, there is a need to train people to contribute to any shadow reports such as CEDAW on the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities. The Department of Strategic Management could also request to comment on the MDG report. As we move from the charity/welfare/medical model to a rights-based model, it was therefore heartening that one regional organization, Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), has indicated its support for rights training for people with disabilities. This statement was supported by delegates and is contained as part of the Outcome Document of the Workshop:

"There is a need for building the capacity of DPOs [Disabled Peoples Organizations] to use the rights based approach for advocacy and empowerment to improve the human rights of People with Disabilities at the community and institutional levels and to advocate for policy and legislative change at a national level. RRRT should in partnership with PIFS/PDF/DPOs/donors/development agencies provide technical support to conduct a regional training programme (Regional Community Paralegal Training on the Rights of People with Disabilities) tailored to promoting the human rights of people with disabilities. The regional advocates should then conduct in-country training to build the capacity of national advocates".

It is highly recommended that Vanuatu fully supports this initiative from RRRT as part of the Workshop Recommendation No. 3 that

"Regional agencies and national governments seek greater commitment from donors to mainstream disability in all programmes and make provisions for specific disability programmes"

as well as strengthening the rights training provided by this regional organizations as recommended in the Report from the Human Rights Commission of UN ECOSOC. It is my fervent belief that this type of training will help ALL women.

DPA will also be looking at how women with disabilities can have the opportunity to comment on reports such as CEDAW, CRC or the MDG report. One immediate possibility is to run a *Workshop to Build the Capacity of Women with Disabilities to Comment on States Parties Reports*. This is particularly important in view of the fact that a Shadow Report will be written for Vanuatu's CEDAW Report.

11. Preparations for the BMF Mid-term Review

The implementation of BMF will be reviewed in 2007. It is expected ESCAP will play an important role in compiling the report on the implementation of the BMF targets on a regional level and DSM as a coordinating agency on a national level. In order for Vanuatu to be ready to submit its 5 year progress report, a strategy should be considered on how to do this.

Three possibilities present themselves:

A. Report to be compiled by DSM

- i. Following the consultation and planning meeting on 19 September, Departments be required to report on their implementation successes by 30 December 2006 (that is, 15 months after the meeting);
- ii. DSM to compile the information and report findings by March 2007;
- iii. Report submitted to UN ESCAP by 30 July 2007.

While this option is the most logical, it will create extra burden on the already limited resources currently facing the Department of Strategic Management (unless the office is greatly expanded in 2006).

B. Compilation of the Mid-Term Report to be sub-contracted to DPA

DPA is already the NGO Focal Point in Vanuatu for the BMF, and has the human resources to undertaking this option.

C. Collaborative reporting by DSM and DPA

This option will place DSM as the ultimate agency responsible for the preparation of the report, as it is Government's responsibility, but will work with DPA, disability organizations and other civil society organizations for their input. Whichever option is approved by Government, it will be necessary to seek financial assistance for this and to identify funding sources. A few options present themselves:

- i. Include funding for the preparation of the report in the DSM budget for 2006;
- ii. Seek funding support from donor partners such as NZAID, AusAID, UNESCO, UNIFEM between November 2005 and March 2006.

12. Review of Vanuatu Labour laws

One full day was devoted to presentations from the International Labour Organization. While there was so much to learn, one thing that we can take advantage of is the fact that the ILO is currently reviewing the Labour laws of Vanuatu through Dr Mohomad Amaidu of the USP School of Law at Emalus Campus. This is one crucial opportunity for us to plug into the review process and request that they also look at

- i. What labour laws do exist for persons with disabilities and whether they are discriminatory or not;
- ii. Insure that we make submission to the Review Panel / Commissioner for Labour to include pro-disability legislation.

It is also important that **Government examine, ratify and implement ILO Convention 159** as identified under BMF Priority No. 4 on *Training and employment, including self-employment*.

However, prior to that, there must be an ***Information Paper*** prepared for dissemination to all 52 MPs, Labour Department, Trade Unions and other relevant sectors.



Ms Debra Perry, ILO representative speaking at the meeting

During the Workshop, the Fiji Disabled Peoples' Association (FDPA) informed participants of how they went about getting their Parliament to ratify ILO Convention 159. One main step which they took was by providing an Information sheet which they then distributed to all members of parliament. This is an example which DSM/DPA could use.

13. Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)

At the 1st Regional Training Seminar organized by DPI Oceania in 2001, the idea of a regional disability focal point was suggested and a group called ODASC was formed. In 2002, the name was changed to the Pacific Disability Forum and was looked after by DPI Oceania in Fiji. Due to financial constraints faced by DPI Oceania, it was moved to New Zealand in 2004. Membership to the PDF was to be for advocacy organizations only but in the intervening two years, service organizations (welfare/medical mentality) have also joined.

As of August 2005 there are three financial members: Vision Pacifica (New Zealand), Inclusion International (New Zealand) and one other, plus a number of Associate Members and individuals. DPA Vanuatu is not yet a financial member although we did have the right to vote at the AGM held on 4 August.



From right to left: Tewai & Latoa Halatau of Vision Pacifica Charitable Trust, NZ; Fredrick Miller, Forum Island Secretariat; Setareki Macanawai, CEO, Pacific Disability Forum & Sainamili Tewaka, Pacifica Women with Disabilities, Daniel Stubbs, consultant

In 2005 the NZAID Regional Disability Programme is being reviewed with the view to supporting a further five year programme in the Pacific. Vanuatu has benefited from this programme such as the Tanna Disability Identification Survey conducted by VSDP in 2003-2004 with technical support from Inclusion International. In 2005, the European Union

provided assistance to VSDP for a TAFEA Disability Identification Survey, the report of which was produced in May 2005.

DPA has always supported the idea of having a regional body. However, it should be noted that we feel that support for the PDF should be given to an organization in a developing island country to support and built the capacity of that organization. We would suggest that it be located in Fiji and under the DPI Oceania office.

Nevertheless, one of the recommendations from the Regional Disability Workshop is that Governments support the PDF and I would therefore ask the Hon Minister for CRP to support this.

14. Reporting Responsibilities of Vanuatu Representatives

Many NGO participants felt that often outcomes from regional meetings such as this one do not provide reports or feedback once they return to their respective countries. It is therefore important that the Vanuatu representatives to the Workshop agree on how to communicate the information to Government, NGOs and the community at large. This should be completed by 12 August 2005 with at least one press statement communicated to the broadcast, print and electronic media.

15. Disability Budget Audit

Just as women can do a Gender Budget to appraise how much money is being spent on women's health, education, training and so forth, there is no reason why Self-Help Organizations such as DPA cannot do a Disability Budget. In Vanuatu, the Department of Women's Affairs has called for a Gender Budget in 2001 but I have not seen any reports.

In June 2004, I was commissioned by Dr Corrine Capuano, Resident Representative of the World Health Organization, to research a paper on *Gender and Women's Health in Vanuatu*. In this paper, I ventured forth into an almost unknown territory for me: Gender Budget Auditing. A gender Budget is carried out to see how much of the national expenditure is injected for programmes for women. As a result of the work carried out to do the CEDAW report, it was noted that the Department of Women's Affairs, for example, was one of the few offices with Departmental stature that received less than 10 million vatu per year (even less than the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs). As such, a recommendation to the Vanuatu CEDAW Committee was that they provide support to increase in the Department of Women's Affairs budget.

While this area still remains a new one for me, DPA will attempt to conduct a Disability Budget in 2005/2006 just to see how much money is injected to disability programmes. This can be used as a baseline for future comparisons.

DISABILITY RESPONSIVE BUDGETS

“If you want to see which way a country is headed, look at the country’s budget and how it allocates resources for people with disabilities.”¹

A Disability Responsive Budget is a strategy that can be used to assess how committed we are to disability issues by looking at how much we allocate to children and women with disability, employment of people with disability, accessible transport, communication or the different priorities we have committed ourselves to.



1. Adapted from Pregs Govender, “If you want to see which way a country is headed, look at the country’s budget and see how it allocates resources to children and women” on the front cover of Karen Judd. (Ed.) (2002). *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experiences*. New York: UNIFEM.

Disabled Peoples' International Oceania Sub-region
1ST Leadership Training Seminar
Port Vila, Vanuatu, 27 – 31 August 2001

Recommendations

We, the participants of the Disabled Peoples' International Oceania Sub-region, attending the first Leadership Training Seminar, held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 27 to 31 August, 2001, representing disabled people from seven Pacific Island countries, including the Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, New Zealand, and Vanuatu, have share our common concerns and experiences and recognize that people with disabilities in the countries of the Oceania sub-region face many common barriers to their full and equal participation and inclusion in the development process in their countries and within the region. We therefore recommend:

- That the Governments of all Pacific Island countries address the rights and concerns of disabled people within the mainstream development agenda framework of their respective countries.
- That children with disabilities must have full access to education, including secondary education.
- That disabled youth must have access to appropriate rehabilitation, vocational and skills training and job placement services.
- That legislation be passed to uphold the equal rights of people with disabilities, and their protection from discrimination.
- That all governments which have signed the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equalization of Opportunities of People with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Regions actively pursue the achievement of the targets of the Agenda for Action of the Asian and Pacific Decade which concludes in 2002, and fully support any Post-Decade initiative which ensures the achievement of the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities.
- That all governments support the establishment of organizations of disabled persons, and work in partnership with them in developing policy and programmes to ensure full participation of people with disabilities in their societies.
- *That the Government of Vanuatu, and all other governments of Pacific Island countries place the issue of the rights and concerns of disabled people on the Agenda of the Pacific Forum Secretariat, and other regional bodies.*
- That ESCAP actively promote and facilitate the increased participation of disabled people from the Pacific Island countries in all activities and initiatives concerning the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993–2002), and ensure that there is a specific focus on the Oceania Sub-region in Post-Decade planning and the development of the post Decade strategic framework.

We, the participants of the Disabled Peoples' International Oceania Sub-region First Leadership Training Seminar, wish to thank the Government and people of Vanuatu for their support of the rights and concerns of people with disabilities.

These Recommendations were accepted by the Hon Joe Natuman, Minister for Internal Affairs, Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, on Friday 31 August 2001.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO PRIME MINISTER EDWARD NATAPEI IN AUGUST 2003

1. NATIONAL

- i. That as a matter of urgency, the Government to inject funds to the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People, the only organization that is delivering services for people with disability in our nation.
- ii. That a budget item be included in the 2004 national budget for organizations working with and for people with disabilities.
- iii. That priority be given in health programmes to the prevention of disabilities.
- iv. That mechanisms be established to support caregivers, but in particular, ageing caregivers.
- v. That support for sportsmen and women with disability be given by increasing the current annual budget of VT 200,000.
- vi. That training and employment programmes for people with disabilities be developed, and
- vii. That Parliament ratify ILO Convention (159 of) 1983.
- viii. That the Government and disability organizations draft a National Disability Act.
- ix. That current building regulations be amended to allow for universal access to public buildings.
- x. That pre- and post-surgery counselling be provided for amputees and their care givers.
- xi. That the Government endorses the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. **COMPLETED – August 2003**
- xii. That the Government Identify a Ministry or Department to implement the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. **COMPLETED – September 2003 in the Prime Minister Office; December 2004 in the Ministry of CRP**

2. REGIONAL

- i. That the Heads of Government at the Forum meeting in New Zealand endorse the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. **COMPLETED – Communiqué of August 2003;**
- ii. That the Forum Secretariat establish a Disability Desk with appropriate human and financial resources for disability work in the region. **COMPLETED – Communiqué of August 2003; Forum Regional Disability Workshop, August 2005; Disability Officer to be recruited in August 2006.**

3. INTERNATIONAL

- i. That Vanuatu supports the proposal for a Convention for Persons with Disabilities. **COMPLETED – August 2003; DPA Chair John Suran began attending from the 4th session onwards in 2004.**
- ii. That Vanuatu lobby Forum members to support the proposed Convention for People with Disabilities.

AN ADDENDUM WAS ADDED TO RATIFY THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION. Following the 5th States Parties Meeting on the Convention in Bangkok in September 2003, DPA recommended to Foreign Affairs to ratify the Convention. This was followed up in discussion with Johnny Koanapo in early 2005. He had attended the 6th States Parties Meeting in November 2004 in Nairobi.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sato Kilman, presented a Bill to ratify the Ottawa Convention in Parliament in June 2005 and was subsequently ratified. **COMPLETED – June 2005**

PIFS/ILO/UN-EPOC/DPI/PDF

**PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DISABILITY
TANOA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL NADI, FIJI**

1 - 4 AUGUST 2005

1. Representatives from governments of Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; along with representatives from non-governmental organisations from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, met in Nadi from 1-4 August 2005. Observers from the University of the South Pacific, UNESCO, the European Commission, UNDP-Regional Rights Resource Team, Fiji Human Rights Commission, Asia Pacific Centre on Disability (APCD), Inclusion International and Rehabilitation International also attended the workshop.
2. Resource people were from Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), UNESCAP/POC, International Labour Office (ILO), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Vision Pacific Charitable Trust (New Zealand), Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons, Fiji Employers Federation and Fiji Public Service Association, Donna Lene (Samoa), Mrs Maresilina Tabalailai, Fiji Ministry of Education.
3. Participants expressed their appreciation for the convening of this Pacific regional workshop on disability as it was the first workshop that brought this range of partners together. Sincere thanks were conveyed to the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZ Aid) for funding the workshop and the ILO for funding support provided through Development Cooperation, Ireland.
4. The workshop was opened by a Deputy Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat, Mr Iosefa Maiava. He noted that the disability community has used the Forum processes very effectively, resulting in a discussion of disability at the 2003 Pacific Islands Forum reflected in the Communiqué, which endorsed the Biwako Millennium Framework and provided a mandate for regional work on disability.
5. Remarks were also made by the International Labour Office Director and the NZ Aid representative.
6. The objectives of the workshop were to:
 - Review progress in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework and the recommendations relating to education for children with disabilities arising from the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and the 2003 Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting.
 - Discuss the draft Convention On The Protection And Promotion Of The Rights And Dignity Of Persons With Disabilities and its implementation.
 - Develop policy and programme capacity within governments and national NGOs
 - Assess employment opportunities and rehabilitation issues.
 - Strengthen government and NSA partnerships at the national level
7. Participants agreed on the relevance and applicability of international and regional commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF), the Education For All initiative, the Forum Basic Education Action Plan

(FBEAP) and other pertinent international and regional agreements, as well as the current development of the Pacific Plan. The participants agreed on the following:

- a. The BMF is a blueprint for action at the national and regional level on disability in the second Asia-Pacific Decade for Disabled Persons recognising that it was adopted by UNESCAP in 2002 and endorsed by the Forum Leaders in 2003. The findings of the mid-term review of the BMF be considered by the 2007 meeting of Forum Leaders.
- b. That the *Draft Comprehensive and Integral Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities* will further enhance the promotion of rights of people with disabilities and the “rights-based” approach to policy and legislation development. It was noted, however, that there should be greater involvement from Pacific Island Country representatives and people with disabilities in the development of international instruments.
- c. Disability is both a cause and an effect of poverty in the Pacific as elsewhere. Poverty is mitigated by the protection of fundamental human rights and social inclusion. Action is necessary in a range of areas to alleviate poverty such as providing opportunities for employment, education, community participation and empower people with disabilities as decision making partners.
- d. Inequalities can be reduced when people with disabilities are empowered to take part in all levels of decision making.
- e. Partnerships between governments and Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), and other relevant non-state actors including churches are essential for policy development and the sustainable delivery of services.
- f. It was recognised that DPOs play a crucial advocacy role promoting effective policies and service delivery. It was emphasised that countries that did not have DPOs be supported to develop these. Countries without DPOs were encouraged to establish them.
- g. The media can play a key role in raising awareness and changing attitudes.
- h. Disability inclusive approaches are the preferred option to ensure that disability issues are mainstreamed into all areas, including education and employment. However, it is acknowledged that there are times where a “twin track approach” is necessary when disability needs to be seen as a stand-alone issue when people with disabilities need specialised assistance.
- i. The importance of education cannot be overstated, as it is a fundamental human right incorporated in various international commitments. It provides for lifeskills and creates sustainable lifestyle opportunities. Inclusive education, early intervention, and teacher education were recognised as priorities. It was further recognised that the education of children and adults with disabilities and there need to be policy, plans and budgetary allocations for the education of children with disabilities. While inclusive education is ideal, there are cases which require specialised education. Inclusive education will be considered in detail at a forthcoming UNESCO regional workshop. The Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) provides a further regional mandate for progressing this issue.
- j. People with disabilities must have a right to decent work. Important vehicles for promoting and safeguarding that right include ILO Convention 159 and other standards, as well as national legislation and policies. ILO’s work in the region on labour legislation was noted as was the importance of implementing national policies and legislation. To fully participate in society, people with disabilities need vocational training, employment and self-employment services and should have access to mainstream services, whenever possible. Such services must include business development, credit and marketing assistance for those who are self-employed. A range of work options and emerging models of employment such as supported employment and

social enterprises were discussed. The lack of awareness about the abilities of people with disabilities and their rights is among the many barriers to economic participation, however. Further, women with disabilities, those who are socially excluded, individuals with severe disabilities and those lacking basic education face the greatest challenges in finding decent work and accessing vocational training and services. The potential of partnerships with employers' organisations, individual employers and trade unions was noted as a way to improve training and increase employment opportunities.

- k. Legislation and policy development are key to implementing the BMF and protecting and promoting rights and mandating provision of services. Consultation across all sectors and all levels is of crucial importance in policy development to ensure community ownership, acceptance and relevance. Policy provides the opportunity to implement international conventions and make them relevant to national contexts. It was noted that the inclusion of disability in national constitutions is a powerful way of recognising needs and protecting rights. There was a clear need expressed for a regional source of assistance with development of policies and legislation.
- l. There are many constraints and barriers to implementation of policies and legislation including attitudes, cultural practices and traditions, geography and accessibility of remote communities and the lack of human and financial resources.
- m. National focal points are necessary for the effective coordination of programmes and services. However a whole of government approach, by means of the development of national coordination councils on disability, is needed to incorporate disability across all government programmes and key performance indicators on disability should be developed. Disability must be specifically included in national development plans, budgets and bilateral development assistance agreements.
- n. There is a need for adequate data and research to inform policy and service planning and delivery. A variety of approaches for data collection were discussed including sample surveys and incorporating disability questions into national censuses and other surveys such as Household Income and Expenditure Surveys. Further needs were recognised in the coordination of information from other key sectors particularly health and education.
- o. Women with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged and their needs should be addressed and promoted at all levels.
- p. Some indigenous people with disabilities in the Pacific region are particularly disadvantaged and that their needs should be addressed.
- q. The potential of information communications technology (ICT) to empower people with disabilities was recognised in accordance with the strategies and specific targets in the BMF.
- r. Disability is an issue that lends itself well to regionalism. By pooling expertise and working collaboratively, regional networks will be strengthened. Regional assistance, coordination and collaboration must be strengthened through regional organisations, development partners, regional NGO networks, particularly the Pacific Disability Forum. It would be desirable to have a regional focal point for disability to coordinate funding, information, regional capacity building, institutional strengthening etc.
- s. A Ministerial meeting on disability should be considered.
- t. UN-EPOC should continue to support the formation of national action plans and the implementation and monitoring of BMF.
- u. The importance of APCD in implementing the BMF was recognised. APCD indicated that it is considering establishing a regional mechanism in the Pacific to meet the growing demand for empowerment for people with disabilities and this was warmly welcomed.
- v. There is a need for building the capacity of DPOs to use the rights-based approach for advocacy and empowerment to improve the human rights of PWDs at the community

and institutional levels and to advocate for policy and legislative change at a national level. RRRT should in partnership with PIFS/PDF/DPOs/donors/development agencies provide technical support to conduct a regional training programme (Regional Community Paralegal Training on the Rights of PWDs) tailored to promoting the human rights of PWDs. The regional advocates should then conduct in-country training to build the capacity of national advocates.

w. National governments and regional agencies support PDF.

8. The workshop recommends that:

- i. Governments progress efforts to address the priority areas in the BMF and endeavour to mainstream disability across all sectors, including national development plans and bilateral development assistance agreements.
- ii. Disability remains on the regional agenda and that the outcomes and recommendations of this workshop are presented to the 2005 Forum Leaders meeting.
- iii. Regional agencies and national governments seek greater commitment from donors to mainstream disability in all programmes and make provision for specific disability programmes.
- iv. APCD is urged to increase the involvement of Pacific people in its empowering of people with disabilities.
- v. Technical assistance be provided and made sustainable through an effective regional mechanism involving partnerships between regional organisations, UN and PDF.

Nadi, Fiji
4 August 2005