

**Report of the Intergovernmental meeting on the Midpoint Review of the
Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012
19 – 21 September 2007**

Background

The Emerging Social Issues Division of the United National Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organized the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting from 19 to 21 September in Bangkok, Thailand on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. Andonia Piau-Lynch, National Coordinator and Nelly Caleb, Assistant National Coordinator of the Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association were able to attend this meeting through the generous assistance of NZAID's Pacific Islands Countries Fund.

Objectives of the BMF Plus Five Review

The objectives of this meeting were two-fold:

- A. To review the progress and challenges in implementing the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and ;
- B. To consider and adopt the "Biwako Plus Five: Further Efforts towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific", a supplement to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

Outcome of the Review

The adoption of the "BMF Plus 5: Further Efforts towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific" was adopted on 21 September 2007.

The meeting recommended that a review of the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the Biwako Plus Five be conducted at the national, sub-regional and regional in 2012.

Reports of the BMF Plus 5 meeting plus background documents can be found on the following UN website:

<http://www.unable.net/bmf5/finalreport.htm>

The Nature and Overarching Principles of Biwako Plus Five

Biwako Plus Five supplements the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. In terms of content, Biwako Plus Five distinguishes itself from the Biwako Millennium Framework for

Action by (a) providing additional actions in the 7 priority areas, (b) reconfiguring the 4 strategy areas into 5 areas with 25 additional strategies and (c) adding 3 strategies under “cooperation and support and monitoring and review”.

The meeting called for the Biwako Plus Five to be implemented on the basis of the same principles and policy direction delineated in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the following three aspects should be amplified:

- a. That Government shall, within the limit of their economic capacity and development, take appropriate measures to devise national strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five. Governments should recognize the importance of international cooperation and partnership, in support of national efforts, including through the transfer of resources and technologies, as appropriate.
- b. Second, partnership among different stakeholders, namely, Governments, representatives of disabled people’s organizations, international, regional and national non-governmental organizations, development organizations and agencies, and the private sector, as appropriate, should be promoted in all relevant activities, including research, data collection, needs assessment, policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, capacity-building and awareness-raising.
- c. Third, the diversity of persons with disabilities should be respected not only because they are the targets of policies, programmes and projects but also because they are partners in the decision-making process concerning disability as well as implementers and evaluators of projects and policies.

Key Strategies

The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action has 10 strategies categorized under the following four areas of strategies to achieve the targets of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action:

- a. National Plan of Action (five years) on disability
- b. Promotion of a rights-based approach to disability issues
- c. Disability statistics/common definition of disabilities for planning
- d. Strengthened community-based approaches to the prevention of causes of disability, rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

These four strategies were reexamined and restructures as follows:

- a. Reinforce a rights-based approach to disability issues
- b. Promote an enabling environment and strengthen effective mechanisms for policy formulation and implementation
- c. Improve the availability and quality for data and other information on disability for policy formulation and implementation
- d. Promote disability-inclusive development

- e. Strengthen comprehensive community-based approaches to disability issues for the prevention of the causes of disability and for the rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

The restructured strategic area, “reinforce a rights-based approach to disability issues”, expands on the existing strategy: “promotion of a rights-based approach to disability issues”, in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, taking into consideration the greater importance of the rights-based approach embodied in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Another restructured strategic area, “promote an enabling environment and strengthen effective mechanisms for policy formulation and implementation”, was added because it is necessary to reemphasize the institutional and other factors that would enable undertaking what is promoted in both the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five.

The existing strategy in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, “national plan of action (five years) on disability” was integrated into this revised strategy. The structured strategic area, “improve the availability and the quality of data and other information on disabilities for the purposes of policy formulation and implementation”, expands on the existing strategy: “disability statistics/common definition of disabilities for planning” in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, taking into account the need to intensify efforts to obtain and utilize effective data and information on disabilities.

The restructured strategic area, “promote disability-inclusive development”, was added because the mainstreaming of disability perspectives into development assistance activities has been increasingly deemed effective in attaining the goals of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action. The restructured strategic area, “strengthen comprehensive community-based approaches to (a) prevent the causes of disability, (b) the rehabilitation and (c) the empowerment of persons with disabilities”, expands on existing strategy: “strengthened community-based approaches to the prevention of causes of disability, rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities”, which reflects the evolving concept of community-based rehabilitation.

Furthermore, although the target dates for strategies 1, 8, and 9 in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action were set before 2007, Governments and other stakeholders that have not achieved the targets will need to continue their efforts to achieve them as soon as possible. *Strategies 6 and 7 of the Framework, which have been nullified with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, were reformulated as strategies 4 and 5 in the BMF Plus Five.*¹

¹ *Strategy 6.* Governments should consider support for and contribute to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001 to consider proposals for a “comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities” in the elaboration of the comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and should encourage and facilitate the full participation of a wide range of disability groups from all regions of the world in contributing to the Committee’s work.

Strategy 7. Governments should include persons with disabilities and their organizations, in their procedures at the national, regional and international levels, concerning the drafting and adoption of the proposed human rights convention on disability, (as decided by General Assembly resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001) which by passing, will ensure a strong consumer-influenced monitoring mechanism on the rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities.

Professor Byrnes provided an overview of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. He noted that the Convention had innovative provisions such as the right to accessibility, the right to protection and safety in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, the right to live independently as well as be included in the community, and the right to personal mobility. The right of persons with disabilities to communicate through all forms of communication of their choice and a detailed provision on international cooperation were also guaranteed for the first time in a human rights treaty. Referring to its relationship with the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, he stated that they were broadly in alignment as both focused on a rights-based approach, participation of persons with disabilities and capacity building. In relation to the Millennium Development Goals he noted that though its targets and indicators made no specific mention of disability, it was however necessary to address the situation of persons with disabilities and to insert disability analysis into policies in order to achieve the Goals.

The amended strategies are provided in Appendix A.

Acknowledgement of Pacific leaders

It is significant at the regional level that Members of Parliament from the Pacific Islands were elected as Officers bearers at the meeting:

Hon Joshua Tafura Kalsakau, Minister for Justice and Social Welfare, Vanuatu as Chair and two Vice Chairpersons: HE Sem Sokaha, Under Secretary for State, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Cambodia and Hon Ngamau Mere Munokoa, Minister of Internal Affairs and Social Services, Cook Islands.

This is important particularly since the meeting noted the significant progress in the Pacific sub-region, a development that has been quite marked compared to the first decade. One of the major reason for this development in the Pacific region has been the work undertaken by the Disabled Peoples' International (Oceania subregion) linking disabled peoples organizations with government and with and between the Pacific Disability Forum with support from both ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre and the Forum Secretariat.

Acknowledgement of collaboration with and between Government, regional organizations and DPOs

Of note in the meeting was the collaboration between DPOs, Governments and regional organizations. Two such regional organizations were the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability (APCD) and the Forum Secretariat for the Pacific: Since 2002 APCD has played a key role at empowering persons with disabilities through networking and collaboration, information and support and human resource development and was acknowledged at the Meeting. Since 2003 the Forum Secretariat has taken a lead role in including disability on the regional agenda.

A roundtable discussion on the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action in the Pacific focused on the success of the collaborative initiative among various stakeholders including disabled people's organizations, intergovernmental agencies, Governments and ESCAP. The panel, which included representatives from the Governments of Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea and the disability coordination officers from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, recognized the importance of such a collaborative initiative in developing programmes and policies for persons with disabilities in the region. The Pacific Island Forum, an intergovernmental body, adopted the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action as one of its policy documents. The panelists also noted the challenges in the region especially the geographical distances and the lack of resources which posed an obstacle to the exchange of views and common concerns among the 14 island countries in the Forum.

For the Pacific region a review of the BMF was held in Fiji in March 2007. A report compiled by Daniel Stubbs of APIDS on the developments and challenges was one of the background documents of the BMF Plus Five review.

The National Coordinator of DPA was able to speak at the meeting urging countries to ratify the UN Disability Convention and for more closer collaboration between DPOs and Government. In this regard the Meeting noted that for the remaining five years of the Decade, partnership amongst all the stakeholders was a crucial key strategy for the successful implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

In this regard, Professor Byrnes' overview of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was important. He noted that the Convention had innovative provisions such as the right to accessibility, the right to protection and safety in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, the right to live independently as well as be included in the community, and the right to personal mobility. The right of persons with disabilities to communicate through all forms of communication of their choice and a detailed provision on international cooperation were also guaranteed for the first time in a human rights treaty. Referring to its relationship with the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, he stated that they were broadly in alignment as both focused on a rights-based approach, participation of persons with disabilities and capacity building. In relation to the Millennium Development Goals he noted that though its targets and indicators made no specific mention of disability, it was however necessary to address the situation of persons with disabilities and to insert disability analysis into policies in order to achieve the Goals.

Purpose of DPA Participating in the BMF Plus Five Mid-term Review

DPA was recognized in 2004 by the Asia Pacific Development Centre on Disability (APCD) as the NGO Focal Point for the BMF in Vanuatu. This arose from the fact that DPA's mandate when it came into existence in 1999 was to ensure that the targets set by the Asia Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 1993-2002 were implemented. Following the extension of the Decade in October 2002, DPA again took the 7 Priority Areas and the 21 targets of the BMF as its platform for action.

The following advocacy work has been carried out by DPA on the targets of the two decades since 1999:

- Lobby for the establishment of a National Disability Council through an Act of Parliament. In 2006 the National Disability Committee was established; an Act of Parliament has yet to be achieved;
- Lobby for representation of persons with disability at the UN ESCAP meeting in June 2002 to extend the Decade;
- Lobbying for Government representative to attend the 7th Special ESCAP meeting to extend the Decade
- Lobbying for Government to be represented in Japan in October 2002 to endorse the extension of the Decade
- Advocating for the Government to lobby for the endorsement of the BMF by the Forum Heads of Government in August 2003
- Advocating for Government to develop national plans and policies based on the BMF, a task that has now been accomplished with the National Disability Policy and Action Plan 2007-2015
- Advocating for the signing and ratification of the UN Disability Convention since 2003. Vanuatu signed the Convention in May 2007. It is expected that the Convention will be ratified by Parliament in 2008²

Actions taken / to be taken by DPA following their participation at the BMF Plus Five

i. Inclusion of recent developments in the National Disability Policy & Plan of Action

Prior to attending the BMF Plus Five, the National Coordinator of DPA³ advised the Department of Justice and Social Welfare that the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2007-2015 to be hold off from being finalized until after the BMF Plus Five in September and the Regional Meeting on Inclusive Education in Fiji in September-October. This would enhance the document as it would include the most recent developments and updates on issues pertaining to the targets in both the BMF and the UN Disability Convention that were included in the National Policy and Plan of Action.

This was agreed to and the finalization of the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action was completed in November 2007. In particular the recommendations from the BMF Plus 5 on Priority 3 on Early Intervention, Early Detection and Education and stressed emphatically in the Regional Meeting on Inclusive Education were re-written.

² It is significant to note here that in August 2003 the Prime Minister through the Minister of International Affairs appointed John Suran, Chair of the Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association to be the Vanuatu representative to the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the drafting of the UN Convention. This was possible through the intervention of Heidi Forest, President of Persons with Disability (PWD) Australia, a national advocacy organization which has consultative status with ECOSOC. DPA was again privileged to partner with PWD Australia as a member of its delegation to the BMF Plus 5 meeting.

³ In November 2006 the National Coordinator of DPA was contracted by the Government of Vanuatu to draft the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2007 – 2015, a project carried out under the auspices of the National Disability Committee and the Ministry of Justice & Social Welfare. This was completed and submitted in January 2007. The draft document was widely disseminated for comments received from various government agencies were then incorporated. The emerging issues from the BMF Plus Five such as disaster management, through the National Disability Committee and comments.

Of note are the following recommendations from the BMF Plus Five that were given more emphasis in the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action:

- a. Explore the possibility of establishing efficient coordination and communication mechanisms among government bodies responsible for health and education matters in the provision of services to infants and young children with disabilities in terms of early identification, assessment, referral to, or enrolment in, early intervention and health-care services, preschools and schools.
- b. Promote the access of persons with disabilities to an inclusive education system.
- c. Promote the education of all children, including those with visual and hearing disabilities so that it is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication
- d. Take appropriate measures to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education and to employ teachers including teachers with disabilities who are adept in sign language, Braille, augmentative or alternative communication⁴

This followed a presentation by DPA and the Special Education Officer to the Ministry of Education. One outcome of the call by DPA for inclusive education and inclusion of special education in the curriculum saw the Vanuatu Teachers College send two teachers to Melbourne in November on a study tour of special education facilities. Another outcome of DPA's intervention is that the Special Education Policy of the Education Department which previously only had provisions on special education will now include provisions for inclusive education.

ii. Inclusion of disability related policies in the Vanuatu Pre-School Association

DPA has also held discussion with the Pre-School Association of Vanuatu on the necessity of incorporating inclusive education in their policies which are being revised in December of 2007 or January 2008. Included in our discussion has been the need to include sign language training for pre-school teachers and redesigning of their standard pre-school designs to include universal access. Correspondence and discussion with the Pre-School Coordinator in Santo has been held because of the effectiveness of the advocacy carried out by DPA Affiliates over the past four years.

iii. Inclusive Tourism

One of the recommendations from the Asian region was for the necessity of tourism to be inclusive. In this regard DPA has met with the Managing Director of the Planning and Strategic Division of Air Vanuatu to consider the possibility of sign language training for their staff, provision of an accessible bus and support for physical planning to be accessible.

iv. Disaster Mitigation

⁴ This recommendation was submitted by the Pacific region.

In the draft National Disability Policy and Plan of Action of January 2007, policies on disaster management was not included. A recommendation from the Asian region following the 2004 Christmas tsunami and the 2007 tsunami in Gizo, Solomon Islands for disaster policies and plan of action adopted at the BMF Plus Five has now been incorporated.

v. Training and Awareness Raising of the BMF / BMF Plus Five by DPA

In March 2007 DPA commenced negotiations with NZAID for core funding for its programme. On the 30th of October 2007 HE the High Commissioner formally announced that NZAID has agreed to supporting DPA.

One of the component of this project is for DPA to provide training and raising awareness on the BMF. This will take place in 2008 since the funding for the project was released late by the Government. Of the four components under the project, component 3 is well placed to promote NZAID's contribution:

Component 3: To raising awareness on the UN Disability Convention, the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2007-2015, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action toward the Asia & Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2003-2012 and the ILO Convention No. 159. This component will be achieved when:

- i. Awareness workshops are conducted on the UN Disability Convention and the National Disability Policy & Plan of Action 2007-2015, BMF are conducted by June 2008;
- ii. 500 Posters on the 7 Priority Areas of the BMF are printed and distributed to affiliates, NGOs, Government and other civil society organizations by June 2008;
- iii. Campaigns to ratify the ILO Convention No. 159 is conducted by December 2008;

Within this project DPA will, commencing January 2008, raise awareness of the recommendations from the BMF Plus Five with a number of stakeholders including persons with disabilities, government agencies, civil societies and donors.

vi. Publicity

Publicity on the BMF Plus Five was carried in the Vanuatu Daily Post. This was provided by the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare.

Further publicity for the PIC Fund and the role that NZAID has played in promoting rights of persons with disabilities through DPA's participation at the BMF Plus Five as well as its support to the organization will be ongoing.

APPENDIX A

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION UNDER THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action contained 21 targets categorized under 7 priority areas. Although the dates for achieving targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17 and 18 were set before 2007, the Governments and other stakeholders that have not yet attained those targets may need to strengthen their efforts in order to achieve them as soon as possible.

Further efforts need to be made in order to achieve those targets where progress has been found to be inadequate and where action has been lagging. The following are additional actions that may help countries to achieve the targets under each of the priority areas.

A. Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations

Actions required

12. Governments at all levels are encouraged to support:

- a. The development of organizations for persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations at the local and national levels, and the promotion of their networking at the regional, subregional and interregional levels, paying particular attention to the self-help organizations of persons with intellectual disabilities, psychosocial disabilities and multiple disabilities;
- b. The participation of persons with disabilities in the political and civil processes as well as in the development, implementation and monitoring of economic and social policies and programmes at all levels;
- c. The development of young men and women with disabilities as leaders;
- d. The development of partnerships with self-help organizations, in particular cooperation between urban-based self-help groups/organizations of persons with disabilities and their rural counterparts.

Self-help organizations and related family and parent organizations, with the support of Governments at all levels, should mainstream themselves into the self-help organizations of other vulnerable groups and communities.

B. Women with disabilities

Actions required

Governments should promote:

- (a) The inclusion of gender perspectives in disability-relevant policies, programmes, plans and legislation;
- (b) The inclusion of the perspectives of women with disabilities in the development of gender-relevant policies, programmes, plans and legislation;
- (c) The participation of women with disabilities and organizations of women with disabilities in the processes of developing both gender-relevant and disability-related policies, programmes, plans and legislation.

Governments recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination and, in this regard, together with self-help organizations, should support the economic, social, cultural and political empowerment of women with disabilities, in particular through leadership and management training on a sustained basis. Governments should take appropriate measures to address discrimination

against women with disabilities in all matters, including those relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, to ensure their full development, advancement and empowerment.

Self-help organizations should review their existing structure, policies, plans and operations, taking into account the needs of women with disabilities, and actively support their empowerment, with a view to helping them to participate fully in decision-making processes.

Self-help organizations and networks of women with disabilities, in collaboration with community-based development organizations and Governments at all levels, should sensitize communities in remote areas to the potential negative impacts of culture on women and girls with disabilities and address their issues through community-based development processes.

C. Early detection, early intervention and education

Actions required

Governments should:

- a. Explore the possibility of establishing efficient coordination and communication mechanisms among government bodies responsible for health and education matters in the provision of services to infants and young children with disabilities in terms of early identification, assessment, referral to, or enrolment in, early intervention and health-care services, preschools and schools;
- b. Pay increased attention to ensuring that the number of trained personnel in early intervention services is sufficient to provide services for all children with disabilities and their families in urban, rural and remote areas;
- c. Promote the access of persons with disabilities to an inclusive education system, including the acquisition of literacy skills, and to adult education and life-long learning;
- d. Promote the education of all children, including those with visual and hearing disabilities, deafblind and those who have learning and intellectual disabilities, so that it is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication;
- e. Take appropriate measures to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education and to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are adept in sign language, Braille, augmentative or alternative communication;
- f. Take appropriate measures, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to involve persons with disabilities in sports, both as spectators and as active participants.

D. Training and employment, including self-employment

Actions required

Governments should:

- a. Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others, and promote the realization of the right to work for persons with disabilities, including those who become disabled during the course of employment;
- b. Develop comprehensive strategies to address the barriers to employment of persons with disabilities, especially those in remote, rural, agricultural and economically depressed areas, while paying particular attention to new developments in community-based approaches, in order to ensure improved access to resources and services, such as cooperatives, social enterprises, self-employment initiatives, microfinance schemes and on-the-job and peer training;
- c. Develop national and multinational partnerships, with support from non-governmental organizations, self-help organizations and other stakeholders, aimed at increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing incentives to facilitate hiring, retention and advancement, promoting positive awareness of their skills and employment, and operating joint training and employment programmes;

- d. Include persons with disabilities in mainstream public employment services and provide with support services persons with disabilities and their employers so that they could assist with the recruitment, placement and retention in jobs of persons with disabilities and maintain rosters of job-ready persons with disabilities for referral to potential employers;
- e. Adopt policies and practices related to job-readiness training and/or skills redevelopment or retraining for adults with disabilities who lack employment experience or whose skills are obsolete or who can no longer return to their former jobs owing to their disability.

E. Access to built environments and public transport

Actions required

Governments should:

- a. Take appropriate measures to enforce accessibility standards effectively and to promote accessibility in both existing and newly built environments and public transport;
- b. Promote the concept of universal design among public and private entities, with a view to benefiting persons with different disabilities;
- c. Ensure, in collaboration with other stakeholders, that all services which are open to or provided for the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- d. Encourage and promote the research into and the development of good quality mobility aids and devices at affordable prices in order to enable access by persons with disabilities to built environments, public transport, information and communications, and other services;
- e. Take appropriate measures to promote accessible tourism.

F. Access to information and communications, including information, communications and assistive technologies

Actions required

Governments should:

- a. Actively promote accessibility in respect of information and communications, including information and communication technology, for persons with disabilities in order to ensure the full enjoyment of their rights and, in so doing, comply with the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society;
- b. Promote the production and dissemination of public information in accessible languages and the modes and means of communication, including plain language, via accessible technologies;
- c. Take appropriate measures to recognize and promote the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative means of communication and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication chosen by persons with disabilities in facilities and services open or made available to the public, and in all other forms of official interaction;
- d. Take appropriate measures, in collaboration with the private sector, to promote the availability of various forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign-language interpreters, to facilitate the accessibility of persons with disabilities to built environments, services of a public nature, including banking and postal services and those which are provided electronically;
- e. Promote, together with other stakeholders, research and development, as well as the procurement of information and assistive technologies that abide by universal design concepts and internationally recognized accessibility standards;
- f. Take appropriate measures to support, in collaboration with national organizations of the deaf, the development of sign language and the training of sign language interpreters, and recognize the use of sign language in educational, employment-related and legal processes.

G. Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes

Actions required

Governments should:

- a. Mainstream disability perspectives in national development frameworks, such as poverty reduction strategy papers;

Review existing social security policies and practices and modify them, as necessary, to promote personal mobility, health, rehabilitation and rehabilitation services, education and an adequate standard of living and social protection for persons with disabilities. Where they do not exist, policies aimed at providing basic services should be developed and implemented. The provision of basic assistive devices that meet the needs of persons with disabilities as well as any personal assistance needed should be promoted.

A. Reinforcing a rights-based approach to disability issues

Strategy 1 Governments take note of a newly emerging trend in understanding disability as an evolving concept and are encouraged to recognize disability as a result of the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Governments are encouraged to incorporate this understanding of disability into their existing and new policies. Particular attention should be paid to the removal of any barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in society and exercising their rights.

Strategy 2 Governments should consider steps to amend or repeal any laws that are not consistent with the international instruments on human rights and disability to which they are parties, and to adopt laws that would promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

Strategy 3 Governments are encouraged to take appropriate measures, including development and implementation of antidiscrimination legislation, to effectively promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Strategy 4 Governments are encouraged to consider the establishment of an effective, independent, advisory and representative mechanism, or the designation of an existing mechanism, to assist in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the legal, administrative and institutional systems aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Strategy 5 Governments are encouraged to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention as a matter of priority, and to promote and protect the right of persons with disabilities so that they may enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Strategy 6 Governments, in collaboration with all stakeholders, should take positive measures in facilitating the provision of reasonable accommodation to equalize the opportunities that exist for persons with disabilities in all areas of life. Reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, in order to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy or exercise, on an equal basis with others, all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Strategy 7 Governments should promote access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

B. Promoting an enabling environment and strengthening effective mechanisms for policy formulation and implementation

Strategy 8 Governments at all levels are encouraged to develop or update an action plan on disability with time-bound targets and to allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of the plan and the monitoring of implementation. Where appropriate, lessons learned from the previous action plan should be taken into account.

Strategy 9 Governments should, if they have not already done so, establish or designate an institutional mechanism to coordinate and monitor policies and programmes concerning disability; this should ensure both the effective and regular participation of representatives of all ministries and the participation of persons with disabilities. Local government should be an integral part of this mechanism.

Strategy 10 Governments should, within the limits of their economic capacity and level of development, adequately and on a sustainable basis finance the implementation of relevant policies and programmes, data collection and capacity-building for government officials, experts and persons with disabilities as well as the operation of a mechanism for coordinating disability-related matters.

Strategy 11 All stakeholders should raise awareness of the rights-based approach and disability-inclusive development through effective networking and collaboration with the media, research institutions, legal professionals, donor and development agencies and the private sector.

Strategy 12 Governments, together with other stakeholders, should ensure that the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the present document are disseminated in an appropriate manner.

C. Improving the availability and quality of data and other information on disabilities for policy formulation and implementation

Strategy 13 The importance of collecting data on disabilities should be stressed and advocated not only within the United Nations system but also among decision makers at the national level, including national statistical offices, as well as academic institutions, self-help organizations and other civil society organizations.

Strategy 14 Governments are encouraged to develop policies or laws to mandate the collection of data on disabilities, as well as the allocation of the requisite resources. Such policies and laws should, among other things, respect the privacy of persons with disabilities.

Strategy 15 As far as possible, data should be classified by the socio-economic status of persons with disabilities, including the type of impairment, sex, age, education, employment and income.

Strategy 16 Governments should build national capacity so that data on disability can be regularly collected through population censuses and surveys and disseminated.

Strategy 17 Governments are encouraged to develop innovative methods of data collection in order to capture the needs of persons with disabilities, in particular those who are illiterate or who live in remote areas.

Strategy 18 Governments are encouraged to undertake regular assessments of the impact of policies and programmes which are intended to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and to ensure that they fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Strategy 19 Governments, in cooperation with ESCAP, should, as appropriate, take measures to ascertain the concerns of disabled persons and to develop future action plans through questionnaires and surveys, depending on the availability of resources.

Strategy 20 ESCAP, other United Nations organizations, agencies and intergovernmental organizations, should, upon request, assist Governments in setting statistical standards and in formulating policy regarding persons with disabilities.

D. Promoting disability-inclusive development

Strategy 21 Governments at all levels, in collaboration with United Nations development organizations and agencies, international, regional and national development organizations, the private sector and other civil society organizations, should mainstream disability perspectives in the development and implementation of all social and economic development plans, in particular those related to the Millennium Development Goals. The development of disability indicators for the Millennium Development Goals should be considered.

Strategy 22 International, regional and national development organizations and agencies, including United Nations development organizations and agencies, are encouraged to mainstream disability perspectives into the development and the implementation of their general policies and programmes. Economic and technical cooperation should also be an integral part of this endeavour.

Strategy 23 Disability-inclusive disaster management should be promoted. Disability perspectives should be duly included in the implementation of policies and initiatives in this area, including the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, an international framework for promoting the commitment of Governments to disaster management. Universal design concepts should be integrated into infrastructure development in disaster-preparedness and post-disaster reconstruction activities.

E. Strengthening comprehensive community-based approaches to disability issues for the prevention of the causes of disability and for the rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities

Strategy 24 Governments, in collaboration with United Nations development organizations and agencies, international, regional and national development organizations and agencies, the private sector and other civil society organizations, are encouraged to apply comprehensive community-based rehabilitation (CBR) measures, taking into account the recommendations contained in the ILO/UNESCO/WHO joint position paper referred to in paragraph 4 above.

Strategy 25 Governments are encouraged to take appropriate and effective measures to reduce the preventable causes of disabilities, such as traffic accidents and diseases.

V. ENHANCING COOPERATION AND SUPPORT IN PURSUANCE OF THE BIWAKO MILLENNIUM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

51. The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action has seven strategies categorized under three areas of "cooperation and support in pursuance of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action", namely "subregional cooperation and collaboration", "regional collaboration" and "interregional collaboration". The following are additional strategies to reinforce the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action targets.

Strategy 26 Together with such partners as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and relevant funds, agencies and other entities within the United Nations system, ESCAP should enhance inter-agency coordination to implement the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five effectively.

Strategy 27 Governments and international organizations are encouraged to enhance subregional cooperation and collaboration through their involvement in subregional governmental organizations and

through regional programmes and projects, such as the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. Collaboration with regional and subregional disability-related organizations, projects and activities, such as the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability, the Asia and Pacific Disability Forum and the Pacific Islands Forum, should be encouraged.

Strategy 28 In support of the effective implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five, ESCAP is encouraged to develop knowledge networks and disseminate and exchange information throughout the region concerning good practices in cooperation with stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, and in partnership with international and regional forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Asia and Pacific Disability Forum.