

Editorial

On 23rd September, a high-level meeting of Heads of State and Government was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, “to reaffirm our resolve to work together for disability-inclusive development and the commitment of the international community to the advancement of the rights of all persons with disabilities....”

The participants confirmed that they “reaffirm the need for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond...”

Further, “as 2015 approaches, strongly reiterate our determination to ensure the timely realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities...”

The meeting also recognised that “special attention should be paid to developing countries that are experiencing increasing difficulties in mobilizing adequate resources to meet pressing needs in mainstreaming disability in development.....” (Source: www.un.org/disabilities/documents/hlmdd/a_68_1.1.doc)

This is very encouraging for all those who are working with and for persons with disabilities, particularly in developing countries. It demonstrates international commitment to ensure inclusive development for persons with disabilities. It is a reaffirmation and endorsement of efforts towards inclusive development at the ground level by different stakeholders. It holds out hope that this work will continue and strengthen in the coming years, with strong international support and backing, despite challenges related to resources.

The action areas arising from recommendations from the recent meeting include: ratification of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities; national legislation; inclusion of persons with disabilities in all development policies of governments and donors; access to education, health care, social protection, employment; accessibility; data collection, monitoring and management; research; inclusion in humanitarian response; awareness-raising; strengthening international cooperation and exchange of good practices.

The resolutions from this meeting can be used by stakeholders, especially those working in developing countries, in a variety of ways. They can serve as advocacy tools for governments to hasten the process of formulating legislation in line with

the UNCRPD and of mainstreaming disability into development policies and programmes. This is already happening in some countries. National legislation, enacted many years ago, is being revised to be in harmony with the UNCRPD.

It is of interest to note how over the last couple of decades, these international resolutions and conventions on rights and inclusive development have been translated into practice at the ground level in developing countries. Some countries are using the CBR Guidelines of WHO as a framework to formulate policies and programmes for country-wide CBR coverage. Many community based programmes in developing countries already have activities to address many of the action areas mentioned in the recent UN resolution, indicating that their plans are in line with international developments. Many have moved from a service delivery role to advocacy for rights and inclusive development.

There are examples of partnerships between local governments and civil society, including local Disabled Persons' Organisations, in promoting inclusive development for persons with disabilities, and in sharing information and capacity building resources. Local governments in some countries follow the CBR Matrix of the WHO CBR Guidelines in their plans and budgets for inclusion of disability into development. The UN CRPD is translated into local languages and used as a capacity building tool with persons with disabilities and their families by CBR programmes.

Grave challenges remain, as the latest MDG reports show, including poverty and hunger, and continued inequities in access to development benefits, especially for persons with disabilities. However, there is also growing international interest and commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, as exemplified by the recent UN meetings and resolutions related to MDGs beyond 2015. This is what stakeholders in developing countries need to capitalise on, in continuing to push for inclusive development.

It is almost 3 years since the Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal was transformed into Disability, CBR and Inclusive Development. We are interested in hearing from our readers on how we are doing and how we can improve further. The editorial team encourages all our readers to provide feedback at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18DEMFJ9ITHyuGFOgUTATG4J0AobeqXfufzMGLqpBhFU/viewform>

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