

Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the New Century

There are many calls for international conventions to protect the rights of different groups of people, especially those who have been marginalised or discriminated against by global politics and economics. But conventions in themselves are not enough. In order for them to work they have to be implemented, respected and monitored to ensure that agreements are respected at all levels. The following call is for a convention to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities and enhance equal opportunities for their participation in mainstream society.

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1. We, the leaders of Disabled Peoples' International, Inclusion International, Rehabilitation International, the World Blind Union, and the World Federation of the Deaf, as well as national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of and for people with disabilities from all continents, have convened in Beijing from 10 - 12 March 2000 to develop a new century strategy for the full participation and equality of people with disabilities.
2. We recognize, with appreciation, that the last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed and increased awareness of issues faced by over 600 million people with disabilities, assisted in part by various United Nations instruments.
3. We expressed deep concern, that such instruments and mandates have yet to create a significant impact on improving the lives of people with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, who remain the most invisible and marginalized of all disadvantaged social groups.
4. We emphasize, that the continued exclusion of people with disabilities from the mainstream development process is a violation of fundamental rights and an indictment of humankind at the inception of the new century.
5. We share the conviction, that the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society requires our solidarity in working towards an international convention that legally binds nations, to reinforce the moral authority of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.
6. We believe, that the inception of the new century is an opportune time for people with diverse disabilities and their organizations, and other civic organizations, local and national governments, members of the United Nations system and other inter-governmental bodies, as well as the private sector, to collaborate closely in an inclusive and wide consultative process aimed at the development and adoption of an international convention to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities, and enhance equal opportunities for participation in mainstream society.
7. We therefore urge, all heads of state and government, public administrators, local authorities, members of the United Nations system, people with disabilities, civic organizations that participate in the development process, and socially responsible private sector organizations, immediately to initiate the process for an international convention, including by raising it in all forthcoming international

forums, especially the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Social Development, the NGO Millennium Forum, the United Nations Millennium General Assembly and Summit and related preparatory meetings.

8. We further urge, all participants in this process actively to facilitate the adoption of such convention, which should address, inter alia, the following areas of priority concerns:

(a) Improvement of the overall quality of life of people with disabilities, and their upliftment from deprivation, hardship and poverty.

(b) Education, training, remunerative work, and participation in decision-making process levels.

(c) Elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices, as well as information, legal and infrastructure barriers.

(d) Increased allocations of resources to ensure the equal participation of people with disabilities.

We hereby send out a call to action, to all concerned with equality and human dignity, to join together in widespread efforts embracing capitals, towns and cities, remote villages, and the United Nations forums, to ensure the adoption of an international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities.

We commit our respective organizations to strive for a legally binding international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities to full participation and equality in society.

Adopted on 12 March 2000 at the World NGO Summit on Disability Beijing, People's Republic of China.