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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED
PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 43/98 of 8 December 1988, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution. Subsequently, the Secretary-General circulated a note verbale to Member States requesting information and received 22 replies by 31 May 1989, from the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Norway, Oman, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Yugoslavia. Fifteen other replies arrived after the present report had been completed, from the Bahamas, Bahrain, Bolivia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, Gabon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Rwanda and South Africa. The present report also includes other information concerning Member States and bodies and organs of the United Nations system, as available to the Secretariat during the reporting period. Because of the innovative character of some of the activities, dissemination of such information is considered vital to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

II. SUMMARY

2. The Decade (1983-1992) was proclaimed without budgetary provisions as the initial timeframe for the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Progress since 1983 in attaining the main goals of the World Programme of Action (A/37/351/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, annex) - namely, prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities - has been slow and frustrating at all levels. The mid-Decade review in 1987 clearly indicated that only limited progress had been made throughout the world, especially in the developing countries, where disabled persons are disadvantaged by both economic and social conditions.

3. The Decade, already in its seventh year, has not met the expectations of the international community nor, most important, those of disabled persons themselves. The political commitment of Member States, who adopted the World Programme of Action and proclaimed the Decade, continues to be expressed mainly through annual resolutions at intergovernmental bodies. However, without more national-level action, including policy decisions, planning and allocation of sufficient resources, the Decade will soon end without having accomplished its purpose. Governments, public and private sectors must work together to ensure progress in the implementation of the World Programme of Action.

4. Based on the analysis of the mid-Decade review, the priority activities, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General to the forty-third session of the General Assembly (A/43/634 and Add.1), continue to be important for the successful implementation of the World Programme of Action. The present report provides information on the following perceived priority needs at this point in the Decade: establishing and/or strengthening national co-ordinating mechanisms; developing national policies to encompass prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of

opportunities; drafting and implementing suitable legislation; producing orthotic and prosthetic appliances locally; further developing community-based rehabilitation; developing national, regional and global statistics; increasing information activities; expanding regional and international co-operation in training personnel to deal with disability matters; strengthening inter-agency collaboration on the priorities of the Decade; strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations, particularly those of disabled persons; strengthening co-operation among non-governmental organizations and between them and the United Nations system; developing the clearing-house capacity of the United Nations Office at Vienna; improving access of disabled persons to United Nations buildings, meetings and information; expanding Braille services; increasing resources for technical co-operation; revising the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps; and implementing the Nairobi Protocol of the Florence Agreement on the duty-free international movement of equipment and materials needed in the daily life of disabled persons.

5. Efforts are being made to reactivate and strengthen national disability committees or similar co-ordinating bodies. In this context, the Secretary-General sent an appeal to all Member States in May 1989 and some positive replies are being received by the Secretariat.

6. The Secretariat is currently preparing guidelines for the establishment and functioning of organizations of disabled persons. Furthermore, to strengthen the role of non-governmental organizations, the Secretariat will promote increased co-operation between national committees and non-governmental organizations through an exchange of information. To this end, it is preparing a project document that will include suggestions for training programmes that could be considered by non-governmental organizations in training their field workers. This will be supplemented by a newsletter containing items from and for non-governmental organizations, particularly in developing countries, and the preparation and updating of a directory of non-governmental organizations and focal points.

7. The existing guidelines and manuals on disability, prepared during the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons and the Decade, should be used more widely by Member States and organizations. They contain concrete suggestions to assist in the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action.

8. The Secretariat now has a limited capacity to reproduce documents in English Braille. Measures are being considered to expand this service in the other official United Nations languages, including through electronic transmission of texts to organizations with Braille reproduction facilities to meet the demands of their members for United Nations materials. Also, a project proposal on the strengthening of the Braille Information Service is being prepared for circulation to potential donors. Member States and organizations are invited to support efforts in this regard.

9. Initial steps have been taken to make United Nations buildings and meetings more accessible to disabled persons. In this context, the Buildings Management offices in New York, Vienna and Geneva have recently identified a number of needs, including: (a) an up-to-date comprehensive survey to be conducted at each

location; (b) recruitment of consultants to work out a feasible programme for the implementation of the required modifications; and (c) identification of funding resources. It is desirable that these needs be addressed and that the necessary budgetary provisions be made available.

10. The initiative being undertaken by the Secretariat to establish a pilot project on a computerized clearing-house data base to improve the exchange of information requires the support of Member States.

11. The feasibility study on the substantive, financial and administrative implications of alternative ways to mark the end of the Decade in 1992, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/98, is to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Member States will be requested to submit advance comments to the Secretary-General by 28 February 1990, for inclusion in the background document to be discussed at the meeting of experts to be held at Helsinki in May 1990.

12. The work of the United Nations system, individually and through inter-agency collaboration, continues to promote the goals of the World Programme of Action through a variety of activities and technical co-operation projects. The annual inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons will continue to define a common strategy on substantive and technical issues in order to ensure co-ordination and harmonization of activities as well as optimal use of available resources.

13. The plan to improve employment opportunities for disabled persons in the United Nations, recently endorsed by the Secretary-General, has been circulated by the Office of Human Resources Management to ensure its effective implementation. It is hoped that the plan, which will be reviewed by the seventh inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons in December 1989, will form the basis of system-wide action.

14. The Secretary-General believes that international co-operation is vital in the revision of the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps. Member States and concerned organizations should be encouraged to co-operate in this exercise.

15. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons continues to suffer from a lack of sufficient contributions. The declining trend of support reflects decreasing enthusiasm and interest, and needs to be reversed if the Fund is to contribute more effectively to the implementation of the World Programme of Action. The Secretary-General appeals to Governments to reconsider, before the 1989 pledging conference, the possibility of increasing their contributions to this Fund, which plays such a vital role in stimulating projects in the field of disability.

16. Since the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the Decade, a number of promotional and fund-raising activities have been planned or initiated at all levels. The Special Representative is preparing an intensive awareness and promotion strategy for the remainder of the Decade.

III. OVERVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES

17. During the mid-point review of the Decade, serious concern was expressed about the lack of progress achieved in implementing the World Programme of Action. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-third session (A/43/634 and Add.1), much more needs to be done to motivate Governments and organizations. The following information shows important activities and programmes being planned and implemented at all levels. However, the comprehensive implementation of the World Programme of Action still requires increased planning activities and resource allocations, as concrete evidence of the political will to promote meaningful action on behalf of disabled persons.

A. Activities of Member States

18. Information from Member States, based on a very small sample that cannot be deemed representative, indicates that much of their action revolves around the following issues: the formulation of national plans of action, the establishment and strengthening of national co-ordinating bodies, legislative measures, research activities, promoting integration and independent living, promoting organizations of disabled persons, education, training of personnel, prevention, rehabilitation, employment of disabled persons, information activities, technical co-operation, and cultural activities both to promote awareness of the Decade and to involve disabled persons in cultural life.

19. Formulating a comprehensive plan for the integration of disabled persons in society has been a major activity in a number of Member States (Antigua and Barbuda, China, Cuba, India, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia). Twelve countries reported that central co-ordinating committees or bodies with inter-ministerial composition are recommending policies on disability issues (Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, China, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Yugoslavia). In a few countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Lesotho) one government office or ministry is responsible for most disability work.

20. Several countries report recent legislation or amendments concerning such areas as education and training, employment, income security, housing, transportation, severely disabled persons, allowances for disabled people and their families, and income tax relief or tax incentives for employment, among others (Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, China, Denmark, Cyprus, Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Yugoslavia). Swaziland has requested assistance from the Secretariat in drafting appropriate legislation, and Oman is reviewing national legislation on disabled persons.

21. Promoting independent living for disabled persons is being given special attention in Canada, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Oman, Singapore, Sweden and Yugoslavia. Activities are being undertaken in the areas of housing, transportation, development of service centres, improved community services and group homes for disabled adults, among others.

22. Implementation of the Nairobi Protocol to the Florence Agreement concerning the duty-free international movement of equipment and material needed to assist disabled persons in their daily living was mentioned by Trinidad and Tobago. Other countries (Botswana, China, Denmark, India, Tunisia) mentioned their efforts to distribute or import aids and special equipment.

23. Research and/or special work in the development of statistical data systems is being carried out in Botswana, Canada, Iceland, India, Oman and Singapore. A number of countries are developing technical aids (Botswana, Denmark, Ghana, India). Cuba and Denmark are working intensively on computer technology for disabled persons. Guides to services and institutions have been prepared by Iceland, Portugal and Sweden.

24. Almost all countries referred to efforts to promote and strengthen organizations of disabled persons. Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Lesotho, Norway, Oman, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago reported that they consulted with such organizations and involved them in decision-making.

25. Education remains a priority area in all reporting countries. Schools for persons who are sight-impaired, hearing-impaired or mentally retarded were recently opened in five countries (Antigua and Barbuda, China, Cuba, India, Tunisia). Several countries (Canada, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland and Sweden) referred to efforts to maintain integrated education.

26. Special education programmes are being carried out in almost all countries. Assistance to persons who are mentally or severely mentally retarded or who are intellectually disabled was reported in Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Cyprus, Portugal and Sweden.

27. Activities on behalf of the hearing-impaired include special schools (Antigua and Barbuda, China); curriculum for deaf interpreters (Denmark); adoption of a sign language (Ghana); and publication of a sign language dictionary (Portugal, Thailand). Activities for persons who are mentally retarded include special schools, classes and/or training (Antigua and Barbuda, Chile, Cyprus, Ghana, India, Portugal, Sweden), sheltered workshops and day-care centres (Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland), and community rehabilitation and integration programmes (Cuba, Ghana, India, Portugal, Sweden). Oman reported developing services and training for disabled women; the President of the Philippines appointed a representative on disabled persons and women. Special attention is being given by Cuba to the problems of aging persons and disability.

28. Prevention programmes for children and adults were reported in Botswana, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, India, Lesotho, Philippines, Portugal, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, and Tunisia. Several countries mentioned developing effective screening and treatment schemes (Botswana, Cuba, Federal Republic of Germany). Early detection was identified as a key to preventing disabilities.

29. The community-based approach to rehabilitation is being used by several countries (Botswana, Cuba, India, Singapore). The development of community services for disabled persons and their families is a major focus in most countries

(Botswana, Brazil, China, Cuba, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, India, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Swaziland, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Yugoslavia). Treatment and rehabilitation of newly disabled persons was given special attention in Portugal and Trinidad and Tobago. New rehabilitation and vocational centres have been opened in Antigua and Barbuda, China, Ghana, India, Swaziland and Trinidad and Tobago. Training of personnel for these centres and programmes is a constant concern of all countries. Two countries reported no national capacity for some types of professional training (Antigua and Barbuda, Swaziland).

30. Employment of disabled persons is tied to training as well as the employment opportunities of the open labour market. Training and employment were mentioned as a major focus of almost all countries. Access to the labour market has entailed giving special incentives to employers and establishing quotas and other measures in a number of countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Brazil, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago). Frequent mention was made of sheltered workshops for the employment of those disabled persons unable to participate in the open job market. Measures such as pension insurance, social security schemes, special allowances to promote self-employment, support for severely disabled persons and assistance to families of unemployed disabled persons are also receiving more attention.

31. Canada reported a two-year project to link Canadian employers to the Job Accommodation Network, a telephone consulting service based in the United States of America, which has a data bank of thousands of examples of how employers have successfully accommodated their disabled workers. One country (Trinidad and Tobago) mentioned it was in the process of ratifying International Labour Organization Convention No. 159 of 1983 on the vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons.

32. Mass media and information campaigns have been reported by seven countries (Botswana, Canada, India, Oman, Philippines, Tunisia, Yugoslavia). One country (Lesotho) encourages disabled persons to speak out on a regular radio programme. Another (Sweden) has provided more state grants for the publication of talking books, easy readers, video production for deaf persons and an experimental scheme of talking newspapers for sight-impaired persons. One country (Denmark) has recently published information on the sex problems of disabled persons.

33. One Government (Norway) is reviewing technical co-operation assistance, in consultation with representatives of organizations representing disabled persons. The Danish International Development Agency, which supports an institute for the prevention, rehabilitation and care of disabled persons in Kenya, will finance a junior professional officer for the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

34. A number of countries (Canada, China, Cuba, India, Oman, Singapore, Sweden) stress the importance of involving disabled persons in cultural activities, such as in the arts, music and national and international sports events. Four countries

(Botswana, Ghana, Oman, Portugal) described their use of cultural events to promote awareness of disability issues, particularly the needs and potential of disabled persons.

B. Strengthening national disability committees

35. National disability committees or similar co-ordinating bodies continue to play a crucial role in the implementation of the World Programme of Action. At the sixth inter-agency meeting on the Decade, in 1988, it was recommended that the Secretary-General direct an appeal to Member States to establish and/or strengthen national co-ordinating committees on disability to ensure effective implementation of the World Programme of Action. This appeal was sent in May 1989.

36. Also, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna has prepared a study on the structure and functioning of national disability committees. This study will serve as the main background paper for the international meeting on national disability machinery in developing countries, proposed for 1990. The meeting is being convened jointly by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat and the United Nations Office at Vienna.

C. Activities of the United Nations system

37. The Statistical Office of the Secretariat reported that in the first four months of distribution the disability statistics data base (DISTAT) had about 50 Governments, offices and research institutions as registered users. The Statistical Office will publish in late 1989 a report on disability statistics reviewing the availability of national data and publishing selected data on 12 major topics. The Office has increased co-operation with the regional commissions in the compilation and dissemination of disability statistics and in the development of concepts, methods and technical co-operation activities. It supported the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development in the organization of a workshop on census and survey methods for the study of disability in Malta, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). It is also collaborating with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the development of disability statistics through its participation in the ESCWA inter-agency task force on disability and through a project in 1989 on technical advisory services to the Western Asian countries for the development of statistics on disabled persons.

38. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat is currently executing, in co-operation with the United Nations Office at Vienna, projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Djibouti, Guinea, Kuwait, Mauritania and Somalia, as well as a regional project, which started in October 1988, on technical advisory services to the Gulf countries for the development of statistics on disabled persons. In August 1989, the Department is funding and holding, together with the United Nations Office at Vienna, an international meeting on human resources in the field of disability, in Tallinn, Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic.

39. Besides providing advice to Governments on the integration of disabled persons, ESCWA has prepared a number of studies and technical publications, including: (a) a directory of specialized institutions, expertise, projects and publications; (b) a study of social trends and social indicators with special emphasis on disabled persons; (c) a statistical data base; (d) a study of women and disability; (e) a study on adaptation of the physical and social environment to the conditions of disabled persons; and (f) a study on adaptation and transfer of new technologies designed for disabled persons. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and ESCWA prepared a profile regarding the implementation in Western Asia of the World Programme of Action. ESCWA will organize a conference on capabilities and needs of the disabled in the ESCWA region at Amman from 20 to 28 November 1989.

40. The current and next biennial work programmes of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) call for the promotion of rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities through technical assistance, the training of national personnel and disabled persons, and the enhancement of inter-agency co-operation and collaboration at the regional level. Recent ESCAP activities include: (a) technical advisory missions; (b) the sponsorship of national training workshops; (c) meetings of the ESCAP inter-organizational task force on disability concerns; (d) a study on the planning and development of community-based rehabilitation programmes; (e) a workshop on the equalization of opportunities; and (f) the publication of two handbooks, one on funding and training resources in Asia and the Pacific and the other on the effective promotion of community awareness.

41. The strategy of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the field of childhood disability continues to focus on three main elements: more effective prevention of childhood impairments, early detection and intervention, and the involvement of the family and the community as primary sources of service delivery to disabled children. Projects on the control of iodine deficiency disorders have been carried out in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Viet Nam. In 1988-1989, UNICEF supported projects for the control and prevention of blindness in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Viet Nam. Community-based rehabilitation projects are being carried out in Belize, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Kampuchea, Kenya, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Viet Nam, the Yemen Arab Republic and in other areas. Other UNICEF activities include more relevant education for mothers and families in the context of prevention, early detection and rehabilitation; studies on the incidence and prevalence of childhood disability in different countries; preparation of training materials; and the training of parents and personnel in the primary health care system. Continuing emphasis has been placed on integrating disability components within other UNICEF-supported projects.

42. The main thrust of the disability-related work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) still lies in Jordan; similar activities are being planned for its other four fields of operation. There is an urgent requirement, especially in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for the rehabilitation of physically disabled persons. UNRWA is operating four community centres now, with a fifth one to be opened at the end of

1989. The objective is to co-ordinate education, health and social services for disabled persons; to provide social support to their families and skills training for disabled refugees; and to promote small-scale income-generating enterprises partly or wholly employing disabled people and community awareness of the needs and potential of disabled persons. UNRWA works in co-operation with local institutions, and its programmes are helped by local and foreign organizations. An eventual outreach to all 62 Palestine refugee camps in the UNRWA area of operations would require the assistance of local communities and national and international voluntary associations and expertise.

43. The ILO technical co-operation programme in vocational rehabilitation has expanded considerably during the Decade, with direct assistance to Member States increasing from \$US 1 million in 1981 to over \$5 million in 1988. ILO activities are becoming increasingly linked with those of other international and regional agencies, with collaboration in research, projects and organization of conferences. In recent years, ILO has increasingly assisted disabled refugees; it is a member of the Committee on Assistance to Disabled Afghans within Operation Salam. Other special subgroups receiving closer ILO attention include people with drug and alcohol problems, women with disabilities and the mentally ill. Regional seminars and studies have been undertaken on behalf of disabled women. At the request of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, ILO is co-ordinating the update and reprint of the Joint United Nations Information Centre/non-governmental organization development education kit on women and disability. ILO research into training and employment of disabled persons resulted in a publication on self-employment. In collaboration with Rehabilitation International, a two-phase research project is under way on the impact of new technologies on the employment of disabled workers. The ILO Vocational Rehabilitation Branch publishes an internal newsletter entitled Inside Rehab, which contains an up-to-date list of ILO projects in vocational rehabilitation.

44. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) focuses mainly on the prevention of disabilities in the rural sector, and most of its technical divisions are involved in programmes and projects to teach and apply safety and prevention techniques. FAO is engaged in the prevention of vector-borne diseases in agricultural and irrigation projects, and in the control of agricultural water pollution, which has the potential to cause disability or even mortality. Guidelines on the prevention of agricultural water pollution are under preparation. FAO has two projects for rural disabled persons, one involving disabled children in a fishery project in Lesotho and the other promoting the rehabilitation and integration of disabled people into the rural environment in Tunisia. In addition, a scheme is being developed for the inclusion of disabled children in the school feeding programmes of the World Food Programme (WFP).

45. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes the production of educational materials, the organization of seminars and workshops, and support for projects. Besides its continuing series of guidelines for special education, UNESCO will issue two new publications, one concerning planning language curriculum for deaf children and the other a resource package that provides practical suggestions on teaching children with special needs in mainstream schools. UNESCO seminars and activities organized in 1989 include:

(a) a European training workshop on education for the deaf; (b) four national workshops on planning and management of special education provisions, in different regions; (c) a subregional workshop with women's organizations to involve them in the field of disability; (d) a workshop for teacher trainers on methods and techniques for working with pupils with learning disabilities in the Arab region; and (e) an annotated bibliography on Arabic reference materials in special education. UNESCO's proposed medium-term plan for 1990-1995 will include co-operation with Member States for the development of national plans for special education, wider information exchange, and teacher education activities aimed at meeting special education needs in mainstream schools.

46. The rehabilitation programme of the World Health Organization (WHO) up to 1995 aims to ensure that at least half of all countries start community-based rehabilitation activities in primary health care and other community services, and that 25 per cent of all developing countries set up personnel training programmes at the district level to expand population coverage. The programme is developing orthopaedic technology for the production of appliances; WHO held an interregional seminar at Dakar in June 1989, entitled the "Orthopaedic Workshop without Machines". The use of modern materials to produce orthopaedic appliances, using only an oven and simple tools, will allow countries to set up decentralized, low-cost orthopaedic workshops. WHO is also producing a manual entitled Training in the Community for People with Disabilities.

47. The International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement (IMPACT), co-sponsored by UNDP, WHO and UNICEF, continues to promote a community-based approach to assist in the development of national action programmes for the prevention of disability. IMPACT programmes have been carried out in India, Thailand, Kenya, Mali and Malta, and preliminary contacts have been made with Algeria, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Philippines, Zambia and Zimbabwe. National IMPACT foundations, now located in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, India and Thailand, operate as non-governmental organizations and raise funds for their own activities. In a recent IMPACT policy review meeting, it was agreed that among IMPACT's priorities over the next five years should be the establishment of integrated national programmes for the prevention of disability in at least 20 countries and the development of more IMPACT foundations on the model of those already established.

D. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons

48. Activities of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons included contacts with approximately 200 organizations of or for disabled persons, and organizing a consultative meeting with international non-governmental organizations at Vienna on 8 and 9 June 1989. Based on the results of this meeting and thanks to funding from the Government of Canada for an information expert, who was appointed at the end of May 1989, an action plan is being finalized. Two projects, one to develop a manual to assist in developing national organizations of disabled persons and the other to identify projects, appropriate non-governmental

organization partners and funding sources, have been prepared and now await confirmation of commitments from sponsors. Denmark has confirmed the funding of a junior professional officer to work on project development activities.

49. The Special Representative has encouraged a co-ordinated approach to project activities to avoid duplication of effort and resources. Through his initiative, the International Trade Centre will assess the feasibility of expanding trade among developing countries in equipment for disabled persons. The Special Representative initiated an assessment of the rehabilitation needs following the earthquake in Armenia in 1988. As Chairman of the Committee on Assistance to Disabled Afghans, he oversaw the completion in May 1989 of the guidelines and priorities for United Nations humanitarian and economic assistance programmes relating to disabled Afghans. Monthly briefings for groups of ambassadors are held by the Special Representative. Plans call for concerts to be held in different locations each year, as a means of raising awareness of the needs of disabled persons. Discussions have begun on major fund-raising initiatives. An intensive awareness and promotion strategy was started in late August 1989, with a promotional brochure ready for printing once a sponsor was located.

E. Inter-agency collaboration

50. The sixth inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was held at Vienna from 5 to 7 December 1988 (ACC/1988/PG/15). The participants adopted a work plan for inter-agency meetings during the second half of the Decade and held a technical discussion on community-based rehabilitation. For future agendas, it adopted eight substantive themes for the period 1989-1992: employment and social security, the development and use of statistics on disabled persons, technologies, prevention, education and training, access and independent living, legislation and human rights, and revision of definitions and concepts. Among the other items suggested were the second round of the monitoring and evaluation exercise on the implementation of the World Programme of Action, and a strategy to the year 2000 and beyond. The seventh inter-agency meeting will be convened at Vienna from 6 to 8 December 1989.

F. Activities of intergovernmental organizations

51. The Council of Europe has continued its programme to harmonize national policy and legislation. Gaps have already been identified in existing legislative instruments, such as those dealing with prevention, the training of rehabilitation personnel and provisions for aging persons who are disabled. The Council is also active in efforts to revise the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps, by working to develop common nomenclature and definitions.

52. The Bureau for Action in Favour of Disabled People of the European Community (EC) indicates that through HELIOS, the Second Action Programme on Disabled Persons of the EC, it continues to promote a European policy aimed at facilitating rehabilitation and education, as well as social and economic

integration and independent living of disabled persons. Special attention is being given to the employment of disabled persons.

G. Activities of non-governmental organizations

53. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is expanding its collaboration with non-governmental organizations. An additional professional staff member, financed by extrabudgetary resources provided by the Government of Sweden, has recently been appointed to act as a liaison officer with non-governmental organizations and to work on strengthening national disability committees. Priority will be given to the establishment of a network providing regular, close contacts and consultations between the Centre and non-governmental organizations, strengthening them at the national level and promoting more systematic co-operation among them.

54. Among the innovative ways being considered to mobilize additional resources is a proposed global campaign in support of the Decade. This campaign, mentioned in the Secretary-General's report to the last session of the General Assembly (A/43/634 and Add.1, para. 10), is to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, with the full participation of key international non-governmental organizations, including Disabled Peoples' International, the International Council on Disability and the IMPACT Foundation (United Kingdom). Its dual purpose is to increase public awareness of the Decade and related issues, and to raise funds for projects to benefit disabled people, particularly in developing countries. Although progress has been made in planning the campaign, it has been a matter of regret that it has not been possible to raise the seed money needed to launch it. Initial funds for efforts to date have been provided by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, international non-governmental organizations, the Government of the United Kingdom and British Airways. It is hoped that there will be a further response to the consultative document outlining the project and that the financial requirements for the primary stages can be met.

55. The sixteenth World Congress of Rehabilitation International, in September 1988, emphasized the need for a dialogue between international organizations, representatives of service providers and organizations of disabled persons. Planning is now under way for the seventeenth World Congress, to be held in Kenya in November 1992. Rehabilitation International regularly publishes its International Rehabilitation Review, which now also includes information on global activities during the Decade, provided by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

56. Disabled Peoples' International will hold its third World Congress at Bogota in November 1989, under the motto "Equal Opportunities: from Philosophy to Action". The organization is broadening its fund-raising strategies, as well as its local and national leadership, to involve disabled women and other target groups. One of its members is Disabled Women's International, which was founded on the occasion of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Nairobi in 1985. Its purpose is to establish an international network on disabled women's issues. It has over 300 members and publishes an international newsletter.

57. The International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicaps has established a special committee on international organizations. The League plans to create a European association and to organize a regional Arab conference during the next biennium. A second European regional conference will be held in November 1989.

58. Gallaudet University (Washington, D.C.) is the world's only accredited liberal arts university that enrolls primarily deaf students and offers individual programmes. Its International Centre on Deafness organized the first International Festival and Conference on the Language, Culture and History of Deaf People, entitled "The Deaf Way", which took place at Washington in July 1989. This event brought together more than 2,000 people from around the world. The World Federation of the Deaf works closely with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and with the United Nations specialized agencies, and establishes a link between national associates and all organizations and persons interested in The Deaf Way.

59. At the General Assembly of the World Blind Union, held in September 1988, support was reaffirmed for programmes planned for the remainder of the Decade. The Union plans to produce a manual in several languages, as well as in Braille and audio-cassette versions, on the main aspects of the World Programme of Action, for use by non-governmental organizations and by the United Nations.

60. The International Network on the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps, established by the Canadian Society for the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps, is revising that classification, in collaboration with experts and users.

61. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is also in contact with other national and regional non-governmental organizations that are active in the disability field. Among these are the African Union of the Blind; Union nationale des handicapés physiques et mentaux de Mauritanie, which is planning an African seminar, postponed from August 1988, on leadership training for disabled women, to be held at Nouackchott; Fédération algérienne des sports pour handicapés et inadaptés, which is planning to establish a centre for sports for disabled persons; the Guinean Deaf Association; and the Association des handicapés moteurs et amputés du Cameroon.

62. The Association of the Deaf in Thailand is preparing a Thai sign language dictionary of 1,000 pages. The project is being supported, *inter alia*, by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, the United States Agency for International Development, the Canadian Mission Fund in Thailand, Thai International Airways and TISCLO, the largest Thai investment and security firm.

63. The Liliane Fund Foundation, founded in the Netherlands in 1980, provides individual assistance to disabled children in developing countries. For promotion and fund-raising purposes the Foundation, which is a member of the International Catholic Child Bureau, has produced seven documentary films in co-operation with Netherlands television on the situation of disabled children in Burkina Faso, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Philippines and Zaire.

H. Strengthening organizations of disabled persons

64. Since the International Year of Disabled Persons, many organizations of disabled persons have been formed and have acquired a wealth of experience, which they are now in a position to share. A global project is being undertaken at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to determine the type of assistance needed by new organizations. The aim is to develop guidelines for the establishment and strengthening of such organizations and for funding agencies and organizations that provide assistance.

I. Dissemination of information

65. Distribution of the World Programme of Action continues to be a priority of the Centre. The Spanish version is being revised, in co-operation with the Government of Spain, to bring it into conformity with current terminology. For similar reasons, the Chinese version is being revised in co-operation with the China Disabled Persons' Federation.

66. A number of technical publications prepared by the Centre and published during and since the International Year of Disabled Persons continue to provide guidelines and standards on important topics. These publications include the following: Manual on the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons (ST/ESA/177), developed to assist consultants and advisers to Governments in developing national disability programmes; Guidelines for Workshops on the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons, developed for use in conjunction with the Manual; Designing with Care: a Guide to Adaptation of the Built Environment for Disabled Persons, aimed at facilitating the work of planners, architects, designers and others engaged in public and private building projects; Disability: Situation, Strategies and Policies (ST/ESA/176), which deals with national and international strategies for solving disability problems, and the Report on Analysis of the Monitoring Questionnaire (CSDHA/DDP/GME/3), based on responses received from over 80 Governments at the mid-point of the Decade, which provides information on the implementation of the World Programme of Action.

67. Also available are several publications prepared by the Statistical Office of the Secretariat in co-operation with the Centre: Development of Statistical Concepts and Methods on Disability for Household Surveys (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/38), a two-section report based on selected national and international experiences; Development of Statistics of Disabled Persons: Case-Studies (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Y/2), which is based on information from a limited number of countries and analyses the statistics and testing techniques for using them effectively; and United Nations Disability Statistics Data Base 1975-1986: Technical Manual (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Y/3), developed to consolidate available census and survey statistics for policy makers, programme planners and researchers and offer examples of their potential use.

68. Other publications available from the Centre include the Report of the International Expert Meeting on Legislation for Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities, which covers three themes: fundamental legislative and

social policy provisions for equalization of opportunities, the role of non-governmental organizations in the legislative process, and implementation of legislation; Co-operatives of Disabled Persons, published to promote a better understanding of such co-operatives and their capacity to promote employment and vocational rehabilitation; and Improving Communications about People with Disabilities, which contains guidelines for use by the information media.

69. The Disabled Persons Bulletin and the Circular Letter to National Disability Committees and Similar Co-ordinating Bodies continue to play an important role in the Centre's information activities. The Bulletin, published in a new format, provides general information on disability prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities. Thanks to the Thiel Braille printer generously donated to the United Nations in early 1989 by the American IMPACT Foundation, a summary of the Bulletin and the Circular Letter are being transcribed into English Braille. Copies are available upon request. Funding permitting, the Centre expects to expand this important information service.

J. Access to United Nations meetings and information

70. At the request of the General Assembly, a study was carried out in 1981 by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, entitled Access to United Nations Buildings, Documents and Information Facilities for Persons with Sensorial Disabilities. The three-part report, concerning persons who are visually-impaired, hearing-impaired or mobility-impaired, was compiled by experts who were themselves disabled. The survey covered the United Nations buildings in New York, Geneva and Vienna. At each location, there has been partial implementation of the recommendations. Information recently received by the Centre provides a preliminary assessment of the improvements necessary to ensure the full and equal access of disabled persons to United Nations facilities and meetings.

71. Buildings Management, Vienna, estimates that improvements to provide full physical access to the Vienna International Centre could be carried out easily and on short notice at a cost of approximately \$250,000. This would include levelling street curbs, paving pavements, marking parking places, installing electric door buttons, installing an intercom system at various points, placing a ramp to the conference room rostrum, lowering tables in the restaurant self-service area and installing more toilet facilities for wheelchair users. However, substantial modifications for persons with impaired vision or impaired hearing would imply considerable additional costs.

72. Buildings Management, Geneva, reported that modifications for mobility-impaired persons had been carried out in the annex housing the United Nations Office at Geneva at Petit-Saconnex. However, modifications for persons who are hearing-impaired or visually-impaired had not been possible owing to the depletion of budgetary resources. Buildings Management both at Geneva and at Vienna noted, however, that an updated survey of the improvements required at each location and their cost implications would have to be made by a consultant and that the necessary funding would have to be obtained, since such surveys could not be charged to common services.

K. International information system

73. In early 1989, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs implemented the first phase of a pilot project to develop its clearing-house function as the focal point within the United Nations system for global disability issues. The project aims to establish an information data base system that would also provide information about other information centres, international organizations and projects in the field of disability. The first phase was made possible by the generous support of the International Federation for Documentation and the Computer and Automation Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Missions were undertaken to examine the resources available at the libraries of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ILO and WHO at Geneva; FAO at Rome; UNESCO at Paris; and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) at Vienna. These missions also defined the potential of a system-wide information network and the feasibility of collecting, processing and disseminating information through a clearing-house established at the Centre as the core of such a network. It has been suggested that an experimental version of the computerized clearing-house data base should first be established using the information collected during the first stage, as well as additional information from the agencies. Following this experimental stage, the pilot project should be switched over to the main data base project. At least one Professional and one secretary would be required to develop the potential of the preliminary data base.

L. Feasibility study on ways to mark the end of the Decade

74. Since the mid-Decade review in 1987, the international community has indicated the need to mark the end of the Decade in 1992, including a review of global progress during the Decade and development of a strategy for action to the year 2000 and beyond. The General Assembly, at its forty-third session, and the Economic and Social Council, at its first regular session of 1989, both attached importance to a feasibility study of alternative ways of marking the end of the Decade. An expert group meeting will consider this subject at its meeting at Helsinki in May 1990, to be held at the invitation of the Government of Finland. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/98, the Secretary-General will present the feasibility study to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

M. Employment opportunities for disabled persons in the United Nations

75. The draft plan for improving equal employment opportunities for disabled persons in the United Nations was submitted to the thirteenth session of the Staff Management Co-ordination Committee, held in New York from 27 February to 3 March 1989. The meeting endorsed the draft plan and recommended its early implementation. The Secretary-General has since accepted the recommendation. The Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat is now circulating the plan and will monitor its implementation. The plan will be presented to the seventh inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons in December 1989.

N. Technical co-operation activities

76. During the period under review the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, provided short-term advisory services to China, Guinea, Mauritania and Somalia. In China, the mission provided advice with regard to policies and programmes concerning social groups, including disabled persons. The missions to Guinea and Mauritania were carried out in connection with the review of ongoing institution-building projects concerned with establishing national disability centres. In Somalia, the mission carried out the first tripartite review of an ongoing institution-building project concerned with the establishment of a technical secretariat for the National Council for Social Welfare. At the request of the Government of Swaziland, a preparatory mission carried out a preliminary assessment of the status of disability legislation and organized technical services with regard to developing appropriate disability legislation.

77. In its capacity as focal point for the implementation of the World Programme of Action, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in collaboration with the Ljubljana Support Service for Technical Co-operation in the Field of Disability, organized two subregional workshops on technical aids: one at Moshi, United Republic of Tanzania, in July 1988, for experts from eastern and southern Africa; and the other at Conakry in November 1988, with experts from west Africa. In view of the economic situation of many African countries, the Tanzanian workshop recommended the promotion of mass production of low-cost orthotic and prosthetic appliances, using indigenous materials, and distribution of African countries having acquired technical competence in the production of such appliances of the appropriate information to other Member States of the Organization of African Unity. At the workshop held at Conakry, participants discussed the need for inter-African co-operation in developing technical aids suited to the African physical and socio-economic environment. The United Nations was called upon to assist in establishing an African association of orthotists and prosthetists as the basis of a network of professional associations.

IV. VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS

78. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons continues to provide seed-money grants for innovative and catalytic projects of benefit to disabled persons. Since the beginning of its operation in 1980, the Fund has provided over \$2 million in seed-money grants to 110 projects. Table 1 presents the regional distribution of the grants. During the period under review, the Fund received more than 70 requests for assistance, of which only 25 were approved for funding, involving a resource disbursement of \$353,651 with an average project grant of \$14,000.

Table 1. Distribution of grants by region

| Region | <u>Number of projects approved</u> | | <u>Value of grant</u> (United States dollars) | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| | January 1980 to December 1987 | January 1988 to June 1989 | January 1980 to December 1987 | January 1988 to June 1989 |
| Africa | 20 | 8 | 653 875 | 151 256 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 20 | 7 | 299 405 | 69 617 |
| Europe | 1 | 0 | 1 440 | 0 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 7 | 2 | 68 050 | 19 600 |
| Western Asia | 4 | 1 | 70 543 | 35 000 |
| Interregional and global | <u>33</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>780 974</u> | <u>78 178</u> |
| Total | <u>85</u> | <u>25</u> | <u>1 874 287</u> | <u>353 651</u> |

79. More than three fourths of the resources disbursed during the period were for regional and country level projects. The remaining resources were allocated for projects concerned with interregional and global level activities, directed particularly towards expanding the global body of knowledge on disability issues, a prerequisite to promote co-operation particularly among developing countries. Africa and Asia and the Pacific accounted for nearly two thirds of the projects supported during the period.

80. Table 2 provides data on the distribution of grants among six principal subject areas. It may be recalled that the report of the Secretary-General to the forty-third session of the General Assembly (A/43/634 and Add.1) had categorized the activities of the Fund into six subject areas. Following further review and analysis of the operation of the Fund, the "information exchange" category has been renamed "technical exchange" in order to reflect more appropriately the basic objective of the activity, which is to increase technical knowledge and exchange of experiences in the field of disability.

Table 2. Distribution of grants by subject area

| Area | <u>Number of projects approved</u> | | <u>Value of grant</u> | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | | (United States dollars) | |
| | January 1980 to December 1987 | January 1988 to June 1989 | January 1980 to December 1987 | January 1988 to June 1989 |
| Promotional activities | 10 | 1 | 169 709 | 5 000 |
| Support to organizations of or concerned with disabled persons | 16 | 2 | 398 692 | 7 500 |
| Data collection; applied research | 14 | 5 | 222 332 | 71 800 |
| Training | 27 | 10 | 926 148 | 136 873 |
| Technical exchange | 16 | 6 | 137 306 | 73 478 |
| Technical co-operation on disability policies and programmes | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>20 100</u> | <u>59 000</u> |
| Total | <u>85</u> | <u>25</u> | <u>1 874 287</u> | <u>353 651</u> |

81. Training, the major area of Fund support, was also the major recipient of the grants disbursed (39 per cent). Technical exchange was the second largest recipient (21 per cent). The remaining resources went for data collection and research (20 per cent), technical co-operation on disability policies and programmes (17 per cent), support to organizations of or for disabled persons (2 per cent) and promotional activities (1 per cent).

A. Selected project experiences

82. In accordance with the terms of reference of the Fund, special attention has been devoted to increasing the capacities of developing countries. Assistance has taken a variety of forms, ranging from support for large-scale institution-building projects to the financing of small-scale initiatives. In Guinea, for instance, the Fund is supporting an important institution-building project focusing on various aspects of integrating deaf persons. Similarly in Thailand the Fund is assisting to strengthen the disability-related activities of a large-scale relief and rehabilitation project sponsored by the Government.

83. Developing and tapping the potential of disabled persons is an emerging area of support. In Somalia, the Fund supported an occupational therapy workshop for the training and skills development of mentally disabled persons in various income-earning trades. The Fund also continued to assist the Asian Federation of Laryngectomees in its training of voice trainers from developing countries of the Asia and Pacific region; and the International Fund Sports Disabled in its training workshops for sports instructors to promote sports for disabled persons. In Uruguay, the Fund assisted in the publication of literature in Spanish Braille, which will be an important resource material for the education of the Spanish-speaking persons who are blind.

84. Support from the Fund also included funding for the publication of statistical material, preparation of guidelines on the development of organizations of disabled persons and the participation of persons from least-developed countries in technical exchange forums. Each of these projects is a unique and requisite activity for the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action.

85. These are only representative examples of activities through which the Fund has been fulfilling its mandates. By providing small but critically needed complementary resources to those activities which otherwise tend to be easily overlooked in large-scale development plans, the Fund has contributed to strengthening the capacities of developing countries. It has also continued to play a positive role in raising awareness of disability issues, providing financial support and mobilizing resources.

86. The data available indicate that every dollar provided as seed money from the Fund has mobilized an additional six dollars from other sources, generating a multiplier effect six times as great. The \$353,651 provided from January 1988 to June 1989 resulted in over \$2 million in additional resources, which would not otherwise have become available.

B. Project co-financing

87. The period under review was also marked by continued close co-operation between the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations. The project funding agreement between that Programme and the Centre concerning assistance to disabled persons in Djibouti was effected through the release of the co-financing grant in 1988. A programme review consultation between the two, held at Riyadh in February 1989, resulted in the release of co-financing grants from the Arab Gulf Programme for eight additional disability projects: the expansion of the Al-Amal Institute for Mentally Retarded Children in Lebanon; development of the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in the Sudan; manufacture of lower limb prostheses in developing countries; monitoring of activities in selected target areas of disability prevention in developing countries; provision of technical advisory services for strengthening disability statistics in Arab Gulf countries; strengthening the capacity of the West African Federation of Associations for the Advancement of Handicapped Persons; the training of mentally disabled adolescents in Haiti; and support to the Resource Centre for the Blind in Pakistan.

C. Resource management and status

88. The managerial responsibility of the Fund continues to rest with the Director-General of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna, who designated the Social Development Committee on Trust Fund Operations, established in 1987, as the body responsible for the efficient operation of the Fund. Project proposals are appraised by this Committee and recommended to United Nations Headquarters for financial approval. Experience shows that these procedures have been very effective in facilitating transactions, implementation and evaluation of grants.

89. The Fund has continued to fulfil its mandates despite its limited financial resources. Regrettably, the gap between the availability of and demand for resources has widened as a result of declining contributions and an increasing number of requests. The total number of requests in 1988, for instance, was several times greater than the total contributions, received by the Fund from 10 States (Austria, Central African Republic, China, France, Greece, Holy See, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Zaire). The 1988 pledging conference for United Nations development activities resulted in pledges of only \$91,000 from nine Governments (Austria, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, France, Greece, Holy See, Philippines), much less than the total pledges of \$175,933 from 11 countries during the preceding year.
