

**1997/19. Equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities**

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 37/52 of 3 December 1982, by which the Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons,<sup>68</sup> which designates a focal point within the United Nations for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action, including its review and appraisal, and General Assembly resolution 48/96 of 20 December 1993, by which it adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,

*Recalling also* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>69</sup> the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>69</sup> and other international human rights instruments which proclaim that the rights therein should be ensured equally to all individuals, without discrimination,

*Recalling further* the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,<sup>5</sup> in which Governments are requested to promote the Standard Rules and to develop strategies for their implementation and in which it is emphasized that policies concerning persons with disabilities should focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities,

*Recalling* that children with disabilities and their families or other caretakers have special needs,

*Noting with great satisfaction* that the Standard Rules play an important role in influencing legislation, policies, action and evaluations at both the national and international levels,

*Acknowledging* the active role played by non-governmental organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, in support of the Standard Rules and their contribution to the implementation and monitoring of the Rules,

*Concerned* about the effects of the current budgetary constraints of the United Nations on its disability activities,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the valuable work done by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development on monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and welcomes his comprehensive report;<sup>70</sup>

2. *Urges* the United Nations, Governments and the non-governmental organizations concerned to strengthen their efforts to implement at all levels, by appropriate legal, administrative, financial and other measures, the goal of full participation and equality for persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development<sup>5</sup> and the Standard Rules;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to give higher priority to disability activities and to allocate the resources necessary to enable the Secretariat to fulfil its function as focal point in a forceful way;

4. *Urges* the Secretary-General and Governments to further the effective implementation of the Standard Rules and to emphasize the dimension of human rights, including that

dimension for persons with developmental and psychiatric disabilities;

5. *Also urges* the Secretary-General and Governments to give full attention to a gender perspective in all policies and programmes related to disability;

6. *Further urges* the Secretary-General and Governments to give full attention to the rights of children with disabilities;

7. *Encourages* the United Nations and Governments to involve organizations of persons with disabilities in policy planning and decision-making processes regarding education, communications, employment and health services;

8. *Also encourages* the United Nations and Governments to enhance cooperation, through appropriate mechanisms, with organizations of persons with disabilities or concerned with disability issues so as to improve the implementation of the Standard Rules;

9. *Urges* the United Nations, Governments and the non-governmental organizations concerned to combat the sexual abuse of persons with disabilities;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to invite appropriate United Nations bodies to provide advisory services and support to Governments in their efforts to develop disability policies based on the Standard Rules and thereby collaborate with the focal point in its role as policy-coordinating body and with organizations of persons with disabilities;

11. *Encourages* the United Nations Development Programme and other entities of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and inter-agency mechanisms, to mainstream disability issues in their development activities and in their efforts to eradicate poverty;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to ensure that the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and all other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system take into account, in their policies and programmes, the rights of children with disabilities and mainstream the particular needs of such children;

13. *Invites* the Special Rapporteur and the Committee on the Rights of the Child to pursue and enhance their cooperation to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities are addressed fully in the Committee's reporting process;

14. *Calls upon* Governments, when formulating national policies and strategies during the International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, to combat the social exclusion of persons with disabilities, to promote their employment and to include disability measures in poverty eradication programmes;

15. *Urges* all Governments to provide education for disabled children, youth and adults, regardless of the nature of

<sup>68</sup> A/37/351/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex, sect. VIII, recommendation I (IV).

<sup>69</sup> General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

<sup>70</sup> A/52/56, annex.

the disability, in accordance with the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education;<sup>71</sup>

16. *Urges* Governments that have not ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 159 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) to consider doing so, in order to strengthen their policies, and to use the opportunity to obtain technical assistance from the International Labour Organization, and urges Governments that have ratified the Convention to seek further guidance, when implementing it, in the accompanying Recommendation No. 168;

17. *Encourages* donors to provide assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their efforts to address the needs of persons with disabilities, and encourages Governments of recipient countries to include disability matters in their applications for such assistance;

18. *Decides* to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for a further period of three years, so as to make it possible to continue the monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules in accordance with section IV of the Rules, and to request the Special Rapporteur, assisted by the Secretariat and in consultation with the panel of experts established by six major international non-governmental organizations in the disability field, to prepare a report for submission to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-eighth session;

19. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to pay special attention to the situation of children with disabilities when monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules;

20. *Urges* States to make contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability so as to support initiatives on disability, and also urges them to support, by financial and other means, the important work of the Special Rapporteur;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions information on activities within the United Nations system that relate to the Commission's priority themes of promoting the social integration of disabled persons and of social services for all, and to counteract the social exclusion facing persons with disabilities and eradicate poverty among them.

*36th plenary meeting  
21 July 1997*

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<sup>71</sup> See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, 1994, *Report of the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, Salamanca, Spain, 7-10 June 1994*.