

ANNEX III

STATEMENT OF THE
NON—GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION SYMPOSIUM ON THE
ASIAN AND PACIFIC DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS, 1993—2002
BEIJING, 30 NOVEMBER 1992

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION SYMPOSIUM
ON THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS, 1993-2002
30 NOVEMBER 1992, BEIJING, CHINA

STATEMENT

Presented to:
Meeting to Launch the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled
Persons, 1993-2002

PREAMBLE

WE, the representatives of non-governmental organizations of and for people with disabilities (attached) gathered in Beijing, China for the NGO Symposium on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, held on 30 November 1992 with the theme "Towards Effective Regional Networking, Solidarity and Action on Disability";

RECOGNIZING that 60 per cent of the more than 500 million people with disabilities reside in this region and that, in China alone, there are 51.64 million people with disabilities;

RECALLING relevant United Nations resolutions on disability issues;

REVIEWING the achievements of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-1992, conducted in the Asian and Pacific Region;

REITERATING that the goals of "equalization of opportunities, full participation and sharing" of people with disabilities are still far from being reached; and that their rights of access to social justice, equalization legislation, education employment, transport and accommodation, community-based integrated services and recreational and cultural activities are still far below the average level existing in society - and even more so with disadvantaged groups such as women, girls and boys, migrants and refugees with disabilities, people with hearing impairment, people with intellectual disability and psychiatric disability, the ageing with disabilities, the growing number of children and adults with multiple and extensive disabilities; and that disabled people in many developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries, are still living in conditions of extreme hardship;

ENCOURAGED by Resolution 48/3 adopted at the 48th Commission Session of ESCAP, Beijing, April 1992, proclaiming the "Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002", and bearing in mind

that this Decade should focus on action rather than just on awareness raising, and;

HEARTENED by the fact that the concluding years of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-1992, "also witnessed major breakthroughs in peace-building in the region marked by significant improvements in conflict resolution and rapprochement between diverse states" (Agenda for Action SD/DDP/3; p. 1, Line 2);

EXHORT member governments to incorporate the following within the Agenda for Action which we fully endorse and pledge to support. It is a powerful tool for the implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons and the promotion of the Asian and Pacific Decade. Therefore, the representatives of member nations of ESCAP are encouraged to give life to this Agenda for Action by unanimously adopting and implementing it in its ENTIRETY.

1. FULL PARTICIPATION, EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES AND SHARING

1.1. We encourage Governments to enact and implement laws which will protect the right to full and equal participation of women, men, girls and boys with disabilities, in all aspects of life in the community. These laws must include basic and fundamental rights to access to information and documentation in acceptable format and media of communication, education at all levels, formal and informal, vocational training and gainful employment, sexuality, marriage, parenthood and family life, and community-based integrated services. Legislation is to be enacted to ensure accessibility to a barrier-free, ecologically sustainable environment by stipulating full access to all citizens in new construction of housing, public building, work places, streets and public spaces as well as mode of public transportation. Importance is also placed on legislation to support accessible facilities for cultural, leisure and sports activities for people with disabilities.

1.2. We encourage governments to legislate for social security and preferential economic policies and measures such as tax exemption, loans, special subsidies and special funds, and strengthen measures for vocational training for people with disabilities, in which priority should be given to disabled people with extensive disabilities and those living in conditions of extreme hardship.

1.3. Countries which have enacted and implemented equalization legislation should endeavour to share their expertise and experience with other countries in the region.

1.4. We assert that Governments in the region should establish and strengthen permanent and high-level national coordinating bodies on disability issues which should have men and women with disabilities as standing representatives of organizations of people with

disabilities, who have been recommended by organizations of people with disabilities, and individuals from organizations for people with disabilities.

1.5. Specific attention must be paid to the development of grassroots organizations of people with disabilities in which women are given the opportunity to play equal leadership roles and where their voices shall be heard.

1.6. Priority must be placed on self-directed (independent) living for people with disabilities. Disabled persons who need assistance with the activities of daily living, should be enabled to live in the community through the provision of self-directed community-based services. Institutionalized living should be strongly discouraged.

2. RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

2.1. In keeping with the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (Paragraph 85) we call on all governments in the region, governmental and non-governmental supporting and funding agencies, to provide financial and other support to organizations of people with disabilities and to projects developed by them. Further, overseas development assistance funds should be made available to programmes and activities of self-help organizations of people with disabilities.

We further commend initiatives taken by UN agencies to cooperate with non-governmental organizations of people with disabilities in some countries, and urge member governments to emulate this good practice and increase financial support to self-help organizations of people with disabilities.

2.2. Governments and non-governmental agencies should make particular attempts: 1) to train more national specialists, including those with disabilities, to meet the growing needs of people with disabilities, and 2) to provide better facilities for the improvement of the lives of all categories of people with disability, including those who have speech and hearing impairments, intellectual and speech disability, psychiatric disability and those who are ageing. Provision should be made for the promotion of all methods and devices of communication used by people with disabilities.

2.3. Governments should consider upgrading and strengthening the existing ESCAP Inter-Organizational Task Force on Disability Related Concerns to the status of an Advisory Panel. We also urge governments to provide funding to organize meetings of this proposed Advisory Panel of which ESCAP serves as the Secretariat, to enable it to assume an active role in regional coordination,

information and technical exchange, and where appropriate, to initiate formation and functioning of regional networks in areas of specific interests and concerns.

2.4. We request that ESCAP put in place a two-way monitoring mechanism that will include time-bound targets and measures to identify actions that may be required to maintain the momentum of the Decade through which progress can be assessed at national and regional levels.

3. INTER- AND INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

3.1. We strongly support the ESCAP document (SD/DDP/3) titled "Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002", and request ESCAP that a Regional Summit on disability issues be convened in 1994 in collaboration with Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) and other organizations of and for disabled persons. This summit to be specifically for the purpose of reviewing the status of the implementation of the Plan of Action of each member nation, and updating definitions and terminologies to continue to promote the Decade with collaboration and cooperation between Governments and organizations of and for people with disabilities. This should be done by utilizing principles and recommendations outlined in the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, the Draft Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons, Vienna, October 1992 (AHWG/SRDP/3/4) the ILO Convention 159 (1983), ILO Recommendations 168 (1983), the Report on Human Rights and Disability (1991) and all other current and relevant documents.

3.2. Governments should allocate sufficient funds for the convening of biennial inter-organizational meetings of organizations of and for people with disabilities in the region. These meetings should take place immediately preceding the Review Meetings proposed by ESCAP in the Agenda for Action.

4. PREVENTION OF CONDITIONS CAUSING AVOIDABLE DISABLEMENT WITH DUE RESPECT TO LIFE AND LIVING

4.1. In endorsing Section 8 of the Agenda for Action on Prevention of disability, the NGO Symposium reiterates that the prevention of conditions causing avoidable disablement should be given emphases in national action plans with due respect to life and living.

As an objective, governments should direct the efforts towards reduction of diseases and other conditions which could result in disabilities within time frames to be specified.

5. PEACE

5.1. In the light of present day peace initiatives in the Asian and Pacific region and in many other parts of the world, countries which are pouring the ill-affordable major part of their national budget into the purchasing and deployment of weapons of destruction which create human misery and disablement, are strongly urged to reallocate their budgetary priorities from the purchase of such tools of destruction to instruments of peace, social reconstruction, and income generating projects of people with disabilities. "Can we afford not to beat our swords into ploughshears of human development - for our children, for our future?" (Grant, J.P. Introduction to UNICEF 1992 annual report)

5.2. Funds and personnel should be provided to make the neutralization and subsequent total removal of anti-personnel mines an urgent humanitarian priority in those countries affected, and to respect international law and to control the production, sale and use of these weapons that kill and maim even in times of PEACE.

NGO SYMPOSIUM
BEIJING
30 NOVEMBER 1992

NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC DECADE OF DISABLED
PERSONS, 1993-2002

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. DISABLED PEOPLES' INTERNATIONAL
2. REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL
3. REDD BARNA - CAMBODIA (SAVE THE CHILDREN, NORWAY)
4. IMPACT INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
5. REHABILITATION COORDINATION OF INDIA
6. INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY
BASED REHABILITATION
7. HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL
8. HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL
9. HILTON PERKINS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
10. NEPAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND
11. ROYAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SWEDEN
12. CHRISTOFFEL BLINDENMISSION
13. INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE VISUALLY
HANDICAPPED
14. WORLD BLIND UNION
15. SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND
16. HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE

