

Co chairs of the Standing committee on Victim assistance and socio-economic reintegration, Honourable guests, colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen:

The World Health Organization is delighted to participate in the Parallel Programme for Victim Assistance Experts at this Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, with its specific focus on Community-based rehabilitation.

As many of you know, Community-based Rehabilitation was developed in 1978, following the Alma-Ata Declaration, which promoted the right to health and prioritized primary health care. WHO introduced CBR in line with the Alma-Ata principles, to ensure people with disabilities achieved access to rehabilitation in their own communities, using mostly local resources.

Just as approaches to disability have undergone a paradigm shift in recent decades, away from the medical approach towards the human rights approach, so CBR itself has changed. In 2004, following a twenty-five year review of CBR practice, ILO, UNESCO and WHO repositioned CBR as a strategy for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunity, poverty reduction and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

As part of the process of operationalizing this strategic approach, WHO in partnership with ILO and UNESCO and IDDC, facilitated the development of *Guidelines on CBR*. The *Guidelines* have been developed in collaboration with a large number of non-government organizations and disabled peoples organizations and we are very happy that they are being launched here in Geneva.

The Guidelines are important because

- they provide technical guidance on how to develop and strengthen CBR programmes in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- they show how CBR - a strategy for community-based inclusive development - can assist in the mainstreaming of disability in development initiatives.
- They promote multisectoral collaboration - they can support stakeholders to work together to meet the basic needs and enhance the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families by facilitating access to the health, education, livelihood and social sectors.
- They promote the principle that people with disabilities must be central to CBR implementation and to development generally. The Guidelines encourage us to facilitate the empowerment of people with disabilities and their families by promoting their inclusion and participation in development and decision-making processes.

It is important to remember that persons with disabilities have been the intended agents and beneficiaries of development cooperation for the last four decades. But despite developments such as the UN standard rules, World

programme of action, MDGs, persons with disabilities continue to be kept on the margins of their communities in all parts of the world.

We hope that as a result of these new CBR guidelines, we can

- raise awareness about CBR
- enable the benefits of the CRPD to reach people where they live
- increase political will and resources into CBR
- upscale action in line with the Guidelines
- generate more research and knowledge on CBR and its effectiveness (a point I will come back to in a minute)

WHO will work in partnership to scale up our support to implement the CBR Guidelines and support Member States to provide access to health and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities.

I want to make one final point about the role of WHO in promoting access to better evidence on disability. In 2011, we will release the first ever World Report on Disability, based on the best available scientific evidence. This report, developed jointly by WHO and the World Bank, will summarize existing information on the status of disability and the lived experience of persons with disabilities. The World Report forms part of the process of improving collaboration across sectors to bring about the necessary change in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities and so to ensure their full participation in every facet of life. Needless to say, we discuss the important role of CBR in the World Report, so the two documents are connected closely. We will be releasing the launch date for the World report on December 3rd - the international day of Persons with disabilities - so please look on the WHO website for further information and sign up to our new Facebook page!

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk about the importance of CBR and the new Guidelines. WHO looks forward to working with you all, to ensure that people with disability - regardless of the nature or cause - and their families can live in communities that promote and protect their human rights. I would like to close by wishing the participants of the parallel programme a very successful two days.