

OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration

Presentation by

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief overview of the concept of inclusive development. The presentation draws from the documented experience of experts including the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development, the International Disability and Development Consortium, the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Handicap International and the Inter-American Institute on Disability and Inclusive Development.

Over the past decade there has been a growing interest and focus on the issue of disability and development.

Since 2002, the World Bank has been working on disability as a development issue. The work started in response to strong pressure from Disabled Persons Organisations, civil society organizations and Bank members.

In December 2002, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development was established under the leadership of the World Bank and has grown to include representatives of government ministries in developing countries, donor states, UN agencies such as the International Labour Organisation, development banks, organisations of disabled persons, and NGOs.

The 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) promotes the understanding that development programs should be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. The CRPD also promotes a shift in thinking about development, as it encourages the integration of persons with disabilities into all development activities rather than treating disability as a stand-alone thematic issue. This is based on the clear understanding that persons with disabilities must be recognised as equals.

In 2006, the UN Economic and Social Council passed a decision to include the topic of "Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda" as an "emerging issue".

At the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly in December 2008, resolution 63/150 recognized "an urgent need to include disability in all aspects of monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

Other focused activities include a panel discussion, entitled "Mainstreaming Disability in Development Cooperation; experience, vision and future," at UN Headquarters in New York, in February 2009.

And in December 2010, the joint World Bank/WHO World Report on Disability, Rehabilitation and Inclusion will include recommendations which may be useful to the States Parties in implementing inclusive development activities.

In addition, the United Nations system is currently developing strategies for mainstreaming disability.

Nevertheless, according to the UN, despite national initiatives and experience accumulated in the field, mainstreaming of disability has only occurred in a very compartmentalized and limited manner within development cooperation. Over 10 percent of the world's population has yet to be integrated into international development cooperation.

The concept of Inclusive Development recognizes diversity as a fundamental aspect in the process of socio-economic and human development. It claims a contribution by each human being to the development process, and rather than implementing isolated policies and actions, promotes an integrated strategy benefiting persons and society as a whole.

More focused attention to ensure that development activities are inclusive has the potential to assist not only mine survivors but also the families of those killed or injured.

But why is this focus necessary?

Article 1 of the CRPD defines persons with disabilities as including “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Mine survivors and other persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the world’s poorest people. The World Bank estimates that persons with disabilities make up 20 percent of the poorest people in the world.

Evidence also suggests that persons with disabilities tend to be poorer than their peers without disabilities because of the multiple barriers to socio-economic participation and inclusion that they face.

We know that many mine survivors and other persons with disabilities in affected countries live in conditions of poverty, with a lack of access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, clothing and shelter.

There are many factors that prevent mine survivors and other persons with disabilities from fully participating in society, or alleviate their poverty.

These include:

- difficulties in finding employment or other income generating opportunities
- limited, or lack of, appropriate transportation to access workplaces
- limited, or lack of, accessibility to services and the built environment
- limited access to education
- social exclusion
- poor living conditions, and
- not being treated as equals

Many mine survivors and other persons with disabilities are denied access to the resources that would allow them to meet their basic needs.

Inclusive Development is an effective tool for overcoming social exclusion, combating poverty and ensuring social and economic sustainability.

Mainstreaming disability in development, or inclusive development, is the process of “assessing the implications for persons with disabilities of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels.”

However, mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, disability-specific policies and programs, and positive legislation; nor does it do away with the need for disability units or focal points.

This so-called twin-track approach focuses on building the capacity of persons who may be excluded through addressing special needs but treats disability as a cross-cutting issue at the same time. These special needs may include access to physical rehabilitation, mobility aids, psychological support, et cetera.

The twin track approach aims at removing barriers to participation and mainstreaming disability into every sector and every development action with the overall goal of increasing the general level of awareness.

Disability mainstreaming requires that efforts are made to broaden the equitable participation of persons with disabilities at all levels of decision-making.

Furthermore, the integral involvement of civil society, including of organizations of persons with disabilities, in national and international mechanisms is an essential ingredient in effectively guiding the development agenda towards integrating and including persons with disabilities.

Institutional capacity-building is also an important component of integrating disability issues into development programming. All actors, including States in a position to assist, need to be educated and equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand disability issues and to create programming and an environment that promote the full participation of persons with disabilities.

To ensure that inclusive development issues are effective, clear political will and the allocation of adequate resources, including financial and human resources, is necessary.

However, mainstreaming disability in development is not a cost, it is an investment. According to the World Bank, investing in disability can yield significant returns.

It reduces social costs through increased chances for the participation of persons with disabilities in economic and social life and reduces the probability that they will become burdens on social expenditures.

Mainstreaming contributes to greater social equity, inclusion and cohesion through human capital formation. Development and maintenance of capacity is particularly important for persons with disabilities who otherwise might not have a chance to break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

Mainstreaming increases the effectiveness of individual social sector programs.

And, mainstreaming enables greater labor force participation of other family members, thus improving the overall family welfare.

To conclude, inclusive development is a process that leads towards the goal of an inclusive global community. It is the process of ensuring that all marginalized / excluded groups are included in the development process.

Inclusive development has the potential to assist States Parties in achieving the ultimate aim of victim assistance – the full and effective participation and inclusion of mine survivors and the families of those killed or injured, including girls, women, boys and men, in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities.