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Preparatory Activities for the International
Year of Disabled Persons (1981)

Regional Technical Meeting and Regional Seminar

Santiago, Chile, 5-11 November 1980

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

List and texts

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2856 (XXVI). Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons

The General Assembly,

Mindful of the pledge of the States Members of the United Nations under the Charter to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization to promote higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development,

Reaffirming faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms and in the principles of peace, of the dignity and worth of the human person and of social justice proclaimed in the Charter,

Recalling the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the standards already set for social progress in the constitutions, conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other organizations concerned,

Emphasizing that the Declaration on Social Progress and Development has proclaimed the necessity of protecting the rights and assuring the welfare and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally disadvantaged,

Bearing in mind the necessity of assisting mentally retarded persons to develop their abilities in various fields of activities and of promoting their integration as far as possible in normal life,

Aware that certain countries, at their present stage of development, can devote only limited efforts to this end,

Proclaims this Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons and calls for national and international action to ensure that it will be used as a common basis and frame of reference for the protection of these rights:

1. The mentally retarded person has, to the maximum degree of feasibility, the same rights as other human beings.

2. The mentally retarded person has a right to proper medical care and physical therapy and to such education, training, rehabilitation and guidance as will enable him to develop his ability and maximum potential.

3. The mentally retarded person has a right to economic security and to a decent standard of living. He has a right to perform productive work or to engage in any other meaningful occupation to the fullest possible extent of his capabilities.

4. Whenever possible, the mentally retarded person should live with his own family or with foster parents and participate in different forms of community life. The family with which he lives should receive assistance. If care in an institution becomes necessary, it should be provided in surroundings and other circumstances as close as possible to those of normal life.

5. The mentally retarded person has a right to a qualified guardian when this is required to protect his personal well-being and interests.

6. The mentally retarded person has a right to protection from exploitation, abuse and degrading treatment. If prosecuted for any offence, he shall have a right to due process of law with full recognition being given to his degree of mental responsibility.

7. Whenever mentally retarded persons are unable, because of the severity of their handicap, to exercise all their rights in a meaningful way or it should become necessary to restrict or deny some or all of these rights, the procedure used for that restriction or denial of rights must contain proper legal safeguards against every form of abuse. This procedure must be based on an evaluation of the social capability of the mentally retarded person by qualified experts and must be subject to periodic review and to the right of appeal to higher authorities.

*2027th plenary meeting,
20 December 1971.*

3447 (XXX). Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Mindful of the pledge made by Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization to promote higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development,

Reaffirming its faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms and in the principles of peace, of the dignity and worth of the human person and of social justice proclaimed in the Charter,

Recalling the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹³ the International Covenants on Human Rights,¹⁴ the Declaration of the Rights of the Child¹⁵ and the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons,¹⁶ as well as the standards already set for social progress in the constitutions, conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other organizations concerned,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1921 (LVIII) of 6 May 1975 on the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of disabled persons,

Emphasizing that the Declaration on Social Progress and Development¹⁷ has proclaimed the necessity of protecting the rights and assuring the welfare and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally disadvantaged,

Bearing in mind the necessity of preventing physical and mental disabilities and of assisting disabled persons to develop their abilities in the most varied fields of activities and of promoting their integration as far as possible in normal life,

Aware that certain countries, at their present stage of development, can devote only limited efforts to this end,

Proclaims this Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and calls for national and international action to ensure that it will be used as a common basis and frame of reference for the protection of these rights:

1. The term "disabled person" means any person unable to ensure by himself or herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of a normal individual and/or social life, as a result of a deficiency, either congenital or not, in his or her physical or mental capabilities.

2. Disabled persons shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. These rights shall be granted to all disabled persons without any exception whatsoever and without distinction or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, state of wealth, birth or any other situation applying either to the disabled person himself or herself or to his or her family.

3. Disabled persons have the inherent right to respect for their human dignity. Disabled persons, whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, have the same fundamental rights as their fellow-citizens of the same age, which implies first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life, as normal and full as possible.

4. Disabled persons have the same civil and political rights as other human beings; paragraph 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons applies to any possible limitation or suppression of those rights for mentally disabled persons.

5. Disabled persons are entitled to the measures designed to enable them to become as self-reliant as possible.

6. Disabled persons have the right to medical, psychological and functional treatment, including prosthetic and orthetic appliances, to medical and social rehabilitation, education, vocational training and rehabilitation, aid, counselling, placement services and other services which will enable them to develop their capabilities and skills to the maximum and will hasten the process of their social integration or reintegration.

7. Disabled persons have the right to economic and social security and to a decent level of living. They have the right, according to their capabilities, to secure and retain employment or to engage in a useful, productive and remunerative occupation and to join trade unions.

8. Disabled persons are entitled to have their special needs taken into consideration at all stages of economic and social planning.

9. Disabled persons have the right to live with their families or with foster parents and to participate in all social, creative or recreational activities. No disabled person shall be subjected, as far as his or her residence is concerned, to differential treatment other than that required by his or her condition or by the improvement which he or she may derive therefrom. If the stay of a disabled person in a specialized establishment is indispensable, the environment and living conditions therein shall be as close as possible to those of the normal life of a person of his or her age.

10. Disabled persons shall be protected against all exploitation, all regulations and all treatment of a discriminatory, abusive or degrading nature.

11. Disabled persons shall be able to avail themselves of qualified legal aid when such aid proves indispensable for the protection of their persons and property. If judicial proceedings are instituted against them, the legal procedure applied shall take their physical and mental condition fully into account.

12. Organizations of disabled persons may be usefully consulted in all matters regarding the rights of disabled persons.

13. Disabled persons, their families and communities shall be fully informed, by all appropriate means, of the rights contained in this Declaration.

¹³ Resolution 217 A (III).

¹⁴ Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

¹⁵ Resolution 1386 (XIV).

¹⁶ Resolution 2856 (XXVI).

¹⁷ Resolution 2542 (XXIV).

31/82. Implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3447 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 proclaiming the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons,

Desiring to achieve the effective implementation of the rights and principles laid down in the Declaration,

1. *Recommends* that all Member States should take account of the rights and principles laid down in the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons in establishing their policies, plans and programmes;

2. *Recommends* that all international organizations and agencies concerned should include in their programmes provisions ensuring the effective implementation of those rights and principles;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly, in the form of a summary annexed to his reports on the world social situation, of the measures adopted by Member States and by the international organizations and agencies concerned with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the rights and principles laid down in the Declaration and of the present resolution.

*97th plenary meeting
13 December 1976*

31/123. International Year for Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its deep-rooted faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms, the principles of peace, the dignity and worth of the human person and the promotion of social justice, as proclaimed by the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling its resolution 2856 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971 proclaiming the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons,

Recalling its resolution 3447 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 proclaiming the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons,

Recalling its resolution 31/82 of 13 December 1976 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons,

1. *Proclaims* the year 1981 International Year for Disabled Persons, with the theme "full participation";

2. *Decides* to devote that year to the realization of a set of objectives, including:

(a) Helping disabled persons in their physical and psychological adjustment to society;

(b) Promoting all national and international efforts to provide disabled persons with proper assistance, training, care and guidance, to make available to them opportunities for suitable work and to ensure their full integration in society;

(c) Encouraging study and research projects designed to facilitate the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life, for example by improving their access to public buildings and transportation systems;

(d) Educating and informing the public of the rights of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to various aspects of economic, social and political life;

(e) Promoting effective measures for the prevention of disability and for the rehabilitation of disabled persons;

3. *Invites* all Member States and the organizations concerned to give their attention to the establishment of measures and programmes to implement the objectives of the International Year for Disabled Persons;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to elaborate, in consultation with Member States, specialized agencies and the organizations concerned, and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session a draft programme for the International Year for Disabled Persons;

5. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-second session an item entitled "International Year for Disabled Persons".

*102nd plenary meeting
16 December 1976*

32/133. International Year for Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 31/123 of 16 December 1976, by which it proclaimed the year 1981 International Year for Disabled Persons and decided to devote that year to the realization of a set of objectives, including:

(a) Helping disabled persons in their physical and psychological adjustment to society,

(b) Promoting all national and international efforts to provide disabled persons with proper assistance, training, care and guidance, to make available to them opportunities for suitable work and to ensure their full integration into society,

(c) Encouraging study and research projects designed to facilitate the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life, for example by improving their access to public buildings and transportation systems,

(d) Educating and informing the public of the rights of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to various aspects of economic, social and political life,

(e) Promoting effective measures for the prevention of disability and for the rehabilitation of disabled persons,

Recalling, in particular, paragraph 4 of its resolution 31/123 in which it requested the Secretary-General to elaborate, in consultation with Member States, the specialized agencies and the organizations concerned, a draft programme for the International Year for Disabled Persons,

Recalling its resolution 31/93 of 14 December 1976 on the medium-term plan, in paragraph 6 of which it urged organs to refrain from undertaking new activities not programmed in the medium-term plan and the subsequent programme budget unless a pressing need of an unforeseeable nature arises as determined by the General Assembly,

Having considered with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year for Disabled Persons⁸⁰ and the draft programme for the Year annexed thereto,

⁸⁰ A/32/288.

1. Approves the proposals of the Secretary-General, contained in his report, for preparatory work for the period 1978-1979;

2. Authorizes the Secretary-General to undertake the measures required to implement these proposals, including the necessary information activities prior to and during the International Year for Disabled Persons;

3. Decides that the International Year for Disabled Persons represents such a pressing need of an unforeseeable nature;

4. Decides to establish an Advisory Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons, composed of the representatives of fifteen Member States to be appointed, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, by the Chairman of the Third Committee, in concurrence with the regional groups;⁸¹

5. Decides that the task of the Advisory Committee shall be to consider, and to consult with Member States and specialized agencies on, the draft programme for the International Year for Disabled Persons prepared by the Secretary-General;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to convene the Advisory Committee no later than March 1979 at the Headquarters of the United Nations and to submit the report on that meeting to the General Assembly for consideration at its thirty-fourth session;

7. Appeals to Member States to make in due time generous voluntary contributions for the International Year for Disabled Persons;

8. Encourages Member States and the organizations concerned to take specific action in the preparation of the observance of the International Year for Disabled Persons;

9. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fourth session the item entitled "International Year for Disabled Persons".

*105th plenary meeting
16 December 1977*

⁸¹ The composition of the Advisory Committee will be announced subsequently.

33/170. International Year for Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 31/123 of 16 December 1976, in which it proclaimed the year 1981 International Year for Disabled Persons,

Recalling also its resolution 32/133 of 16 December 1977, in which, *inter alia*, it:

(a) Decided to establish an Advisory Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons, composed of the representatives of fifteen Member States to be appointed, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, by the Chairman of the Third Committee, in concurrence with the regional groups,

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to convene the Advisory Committee no later than March 1979 at the Headquarters of the United Nations,

Taking into consideration the fact that it has not yet been possible to proceed to the appointment of

the members of the Advisory Committee on the basis of the formula laid down in General Assembly resolution 32/133,

Convinced of the necessity of ensuring that the Advisory Committee can be convened by the date specified in resolution 32/133,

1. *Decides* that the Advisory Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons shall be composed of the representatives of twenty-three Member States to be appointed, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, by the Chairman of the Third Committee, in concurrence with the regional groups;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the necessary information activities for the International Year for Disabled Persons are initiated, starting from 1 January 1979, and to make the requisite financial provisions.

*90th plenary meeting
20 December 1978*

34/154. International Year of Disabled Persons

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 31/123 of 16 December 1976, by which it proclaimed the year 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons,

Recalling also its resolutions 32/133 of 16 December 1977, by which it established the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, and 33/170 of 20 December 1978,

Recognizing that the International Year of Disabled Persons should promote the realization of the right of disabled persons to participate fully in the social life and development of the societies in which they live and their enjoyment of living conditions equal to those of other citizens, as well as an equal share in the improvements in living conditions resulting from social and economic development,

Recognizing also that the International Year of Disabled Persons should enhance the contributions disabled persons can make as full members of society,

Acknowledging that disability should be viewed as a relationship between an individual and his or her environment,

Convinced that the International Year of Disabled Persons should result in societies responding more fully to the special difficulties which disabled persons may encounter in developing their human potential,

Convinced also that, since a large number of disabled persons are victims of war and other forms of violence, the International Year of Disabled Persons could be appropriately used as an occasion to emphasize the need for continued and reinforced co-operation among nations for world peace,

Stressing the importance of following up the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons with a long-term programme of action,

Noting that the Secretary-General will appoint an Executive Secretary for the International Year of Disabled Persons,⁶⁹

Noting also the relevant parts of the 1978 Report on the World Social Situation,⁷⁰

Taking note of the report of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons on its first session, held from 19 to 23 March 1979,⁷¹

1. *Decides* to expand the theme of the International Year of Disabled Persons to "Full participation and equality";

2. *Approves* the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons at its first session, contained in the report of the Secretary-General,⁷² and adopts them as the Plan of Action for the International Year of Disabled Persons;⁷³

3. *Stresses* the pragmatic orientation of the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons;

4. *Affirms* that the major focus of the International Year of Disabled Persons is at the national level, with supporting activities at the regional and international levels;

5. *Invites* Member States to consider activities at the national level along the lines of the Plan of Action and in ways that are in conformity with the culture, customs and traditions of each country;

⁶⁹ See A/34/158/Add.1, para. 27.

⁷⁰ E/CN.5/557/Add.2 and 3.

⁷¹ A/34/158 and Corr.1, annex.

⁷² *Ibid.*, sect. III.

⁷³ The Plan of Action for the International Year of Disabled Persons adopted by the General Assembly consists of the text appearing in paragraphs 57 to 76 of the annex to document A/34/158 and Corr.1, with the deletion of the phrase following the words "(see subpara. (i) below)" in paragraph 74 (c), of paragraph 74 (a) and of the words following the word "nationally" in paragraph 75 (b).

6. *Also invites* the relevant specialized agencies and the concerned United Nations bodies to devote special attention to the implementation of the Plan of Action;

7. *Affirms further* that, in the implementation of the Plan of Action, special attention should be given to the disabled in developing countries through the provision of technical assistance, both multilateral and bilateral, for the prevention of disabilities and for rehabilitation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in this regard, to accord priority to the organization of an action-oriented international symposium of experts on technical assistance in the field of disability and technical co-operation among developing countries, as recommended by the Advisory Committee;⁷⁴

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to explore the possibilities of continuing the activities of the International Institute for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Developing Countries and to submit a report in this respect to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session;

10. *Invites* the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to participate in promoting the observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons, and requests the Secretary-General to provide every means to assist him in this regard, including liaison functions at Headquarters;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the secretariat of the International Year of Disabled Persons with all the resources necessary to follow up the implementation of the Plan of Action, including the public information activities;

12. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to convene a meeting of the Advisory Committee in 1980 to examine the implementation of the Plan of Action and to

begin the consideration of a long-term programme of action;

13. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to take urgent steps to publicize fully the International Year of Disabled Persons and, in this connexion, to choose an emblem for the Year at the end of 1979;

14. *Requests* the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies concerned to prepare concrete and co-ordinated plans for the International Year of Disabled Persons, to be submitted to the Advisory Committee at its session in 1980;

15. *Invites* the regional commissions of the United Nations and other regional intergovernmental organizations to formulate, as early as possible, their contributions to the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons;

16. *Stresses* the importance of the active participation of non-governmental organizations, especially organizations of disabled persons themselves, at both the national and international levels, in support of the International Year of Disabled Persons;

17. *Welcomes* the voluntary contributions already made by some Governments to the International Year of Disabled Persons and appeals for further voluntary contributions for the Year;

18. *Invites* Member States to submit national reports to the Secretary-General on their implementation of the Plan of Action and, in particular, to consider elaborating, on the basis of their experiences, national long-term programmes of action in the field of disability;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fifth session an item entitled "International Year of Disabled Persons" and requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution.

⁷⁴ Sec A/34/158 and Corr.1, annex, para. 74 (b).

