UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

LIMITED

E/CEPAL/Conf.72/L.8
28 October 1980

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

C E P A L

Economic Commission for Latin America

Preparatory Activities for the International
Year of Disabled Persons (1981)
Regional Technical Meeting and Regional Seminar

Santiago, Chile, 5-11 November 1980

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION OF DISABLED PERSONS

(a) Major causes of disability in the region and joint action to counteract their effects;

(b) Measures of re-education and rehabilitation of disabled persons;

(c) Technical co-operation between countries of the region.

Brief notes for discussion of the item

80-10-2372

1. As stated in the notes for the provisional agenda of the Regional Seminar, the results of discussion on this subject will be extremely important components in the preparation of the international symposium planned for 1981, which will basically deal with technical co-operation among developing countries and technical assistance to disabled persons. With respect to the latter, paragraph 18 (b) (ii) of the Plan of Action (E/CEPAL/Conf.72/L.4) stresses that countries should be encouraged to undertake research aimed at the fabrication of prototypes and the mass production of educational, medical and vocational equipment by utilizing indigenous resources and technical expertise.

2. The major problem encountered in the prevention of disabilities and the rehabilitation of disabled persons arises from the fact that the needs are such that the available resources are insufficient if a country tries to meet them through its efforts alone. The general idea is that the joining of efforts makes it possible to increase the resources and acquire a critical basis which is a useful source of support for all of the countries of the region. The results of these efforts will not only serve regional aims, but may also reach interregional spheres. A specific example in this respect would be that of technical co-operation among developing regions for the mass production of technologies for disabled persons.

3. Although the solution to the problem of disabled persons is closely linked to global development at the national level, a co-operative approach among the countries of the region is indispensable for various and understandable reasons. This kind of co-operation can most easily be achieved, in connexion with international co-operation, on the basis of common background in fields such as the economy, geography and culture of the countries which eventually become involved in it. Furthermore, if some activities can not be carried out through international co-operation, the solution may be found in regional co-operation.

4. Without going into an analysis of the reasons, it is obvious that some of the countries of the region have acquired a larger degree of experience than others in the prevention of disabilities and the rehabilitation of the disabled. It would be prudent to consider the idea that the region should use that experience by elaborating and implementing programmes of horizontal

/co-operation among

co-operation among the countries within it; aside from being a great stimulus, this would become a source of contact among medical specialists, educators and experts in the various areas, including the participation of the disabled themselves.

5. Consideration of the topic and its sub-topics should lead to solutions to the following principal problems:

(a) identification of priorities among the region's problems in the fields of disability prevention and the rehabilitation of the disabled;

(b) selection of common problems whose solution can most easily be found through regional co-operation, principally in the following areas:

(i) regional research studies in order to find solutions in the field of disability prevention;

(ii) formation of regional rehabilitation centres from medical, educational and vocational centres for the exchange of information, personnel training and experimentation;

(iii) prevention of deficiencies;

(iv) application of science and technology. Instead of each country producing its own equipment, it would be less expensive for all the countries of the region to join efforts and manufacture for the region, medical, educational and vocational equipment for disabled persons.