

FDRE



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**Statement of the Intercessional Meeting
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GENEVA

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman!

Distinguished delegates

Dear participants.

I speak on behalf of the Ethiopian government and people to share with you what the country has achieved since the 10th MSP in relation to disability in general and intervention on victim assistance in particular.

First of all, I wish to inform you that the country is progressively realize the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of anti-personnel mines and the deadly impact of ERW and UXO. Hence, a number of efforts have been made to fulfill its obligation and minimize the occurrences of APM accidents from the affected areas.

Although, a large quantity of its activity rests on prevention and rehabilitation of PWDs in general, the country has embarked upon in providing significant level of attention to victim assistance.

Most importantly, it has been understood that disability is a human right issue and development in Ethiopia which has been given maximum considerations at all levels of interventions such as education, all matrix of rehabilitation including (*health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment*) employment opportunity, accessibility, and the like.

With this understanding, Ethiopia remains committed to and comply with, Policies of the government, the international conventions (*the Anti- Personnel Ban Convention, UNCRPDs, the ILO conventions*) and other human rights declarations.

These commitments have been expressed in a numbers of ways.

With regard to organizational set ups,

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) was established as a governmental organ to coordinate among others all issues of PWDS in the country. Eleven Regions (local) government offices are established to work for the betterment of PWDs in their respecting communities by providing various rehabilitation programmes and services. Quite a good numbers of international and local NGOs are also assisting the programs of the government by providing various services in their areas of competence.
- As we have announced, in the 10th MSP, there are eight national associations of PWDs in the country who voice for their right and exercise their potential. An umbrella organization by the name of 'Federation of National Association of Persons with disabilities' to coordinate their activities was created. The government encourages these associations in terms of technical and financial support. During this

reporting period all associations have received support of 160, 000 .00 Et Birr from MoLSA.

- There is inter-ministerial and inter- sectoral coordinating mechanisms consisting of GOV't and NGOs, civil society organizations PWDs themselves.

With regard to Policy, laws, guidelines

- The Developmental Social Welfare Policy of 1996 is under the final stage of revision by incorporating social protection as an emerging mechanism for effective and timely intervention for socio-economic development of all vulnerable target groups including the elderly PWDs and victims of social problems. Though a great deal of efforts has been exerted to finalize this new policy document to put it as this level, it is now ready to be endorsed by the council of ministers.
 - The National Physical Rehabilitation Strategy of the country which was developed earlier by the support of ICRC and with the participation of concerned stakeholders has been finalized for implementation. This will come into force very recently after final endorsement by the council of ministers.
 - Directives for implementation of the proclamation for the right to employment for PWDs has been signed on May 2011 by the minister of MoLSA and was sent to all legal entities to act upon in case if discrimination exercised.
 - UN CRPD has been published in both English and Amharic, local languages. After subsequent popularization, an ad-hoc committee drawn from nine prominent stakeholders to formulate work plan for implementation is also formed. The remaining task is to strengthen the national council which is also in the process of establishment.
 - A National Plan of Action of PWDs (2010-2020), with (13 priority area) has been developed and is ready for implementation.
 - According the Ethiopian Revenues & Custom Authority Directive No.36/2006 PWDs is exempted from Tax for imported physical appliances except cars.
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- Two legislations on public and private pension have been enacted in April 2011 by the House of People Representatives. The public pension legislation is an amendment to the previous one; whereas the latest is a new legislation. In both legislations if the survivor of a pensioner is PWDs, he or she is guaranteed special provision that extends more years of pension benefit than other survivors.

With regard to capacity building and enhancement of Physical Rehabilitation Services,

- The ICRC provides technical, material and educational support to eight prosthetic orthopedic centers.

- The Addis Ababa prosthetic- Orthopedic center (POC) is serving as a supply and also training centre on orthopedic technology and physiotherapy conducted in partnership with MOLSA and the ICRC and is the largest centre in the country. The national Rehabilitation center in the compound of A.A.U medical Faculty which was established by the emergency Demobilization and Reintegration project. Through the coordination of MOLSA and in collaboration with ICRC, it started a training programme in the field of prosthetics-orthopedic diploma course. Currently a training programme of Orthopedic Technicians in diploma course category IV is being provided to 24 youngsters who are selected from all regional states in which for next year, they are expected to be graduated and will be deployed to their respective regions. \
- In parallel to centre-based rehabilitation services community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs also carried out in many parts of Ethiopia. Cheshire service Ethiopia supports nine CBR Projects in and around Addis Ababa and also in Dire Dawa, Hawassa and Harar.
- In addition to the already existing 13 prosthetic-orthotic centers in the country, one was established in Somali regions and another four are planned to be constructed in Afar, Benshangul, Oromia and Gambella regional administrations very recently.
- A National Rehabilitation Productive Center which is the first of its kind is planned to be established next year in order to serve as a warehouse for Prosthetic Orthotic appliances and to produce locally made parts and components.
- From April to June 2011 more than 350 orphan and vulnerable children have got various types of appliances that can enable them facilitate their accessibility. This activity was done with the support of UNICEF.
- Implementation of the Ethiopian Building Proclamation Code No. 624/2009 (*Concerning physical accessibility for wheelchair users & toilet facilities*) in public buildings is already come on board. Directive has been developed, awareness made, MOU with relevant Ministries is ready to be signed.
- Expansion of inclusive education and enhancement of special education Sign language courses have been introduced, but there is still a shortage of interpreters in the country and Sign Language does not have legal recognition as a national language. Braille production is contracted out by the Ministry of Education to the national association of the blind and to a private firm.

In areas of awareness and advocacy work

- Messages that develop the self reliance of survivors and that create behavioral change in the attitudes of the public are continuously disseminated in the public media. This year the country colorfully celebrated the international disability day, day of white cane, world

leprosy day with the theme *'keeping promise mainstreaming disability in the MDGs forwards 2015 and beyond'*. The issue of victim assistance was one of the areas where publicity took place. Also popularize the proclamation of the right of disabled persons to employment, and conduct symposium on the implementation of CRPD.

With regard to research and data collection we have managed to produce baseline survey on disability. Study was conducted on the adverse effect of HIV/Aids on person with Disabilities. Moreover data on disability was organized to create data base.

Our Future Focus

In the future we are planning to extend this endeavor in all fields of PWDs and land mine victim assistance by linking with the country's 5 year growth and transformation plan. The major ones are:-

- Strengthen POCs in terms of physical plants, equipment, raw materials & trained manpower/to extend physical rehabilitation services/
- Establish & strengthen Disability Councils both at Federal & Regional levels
- Implement the Convention
- Create a collaborative mechanism among the various executive bodies to improve accessibility issues
- Incorporate the issue of disability in the Growth and transformation plan of the country.
- Revise Policies, Laws, NPAs & other programs to include Disability issues/already started
- Develop Physical Rehabilitation Strategy to enhance accessibility/already started/
- Expand SP schemes to reduce poverty, vulnerability & exclusion

Mr. Chairman!

Finally, let me express my appreciation to all our partners particularly ICRC, UNICEF, ILO, Handicap International, for the support and contribution they provide in our efforts to change the quality of lives of persons with disabilities in general and victims of landmines in particular.

Let me conclude my statement by saying that in spite of the efforts that the Ethiopian governments is doing, there are a lot of gaps that need to be minimized. These gaps cannot be addressed by the government and insufficient donor support alone. Further support from Implementation Support Unit of GICDH and other development partner is highly demanded to bring significant change in the field.

Thank for your kind attention.