

# THE WHO NEWSLETTER ON DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION

Issue No. 2, August 2007

This is the second issue of a new WHO newsletter dedicated to disability and rehabilitation and aimed to keep you abreast of WHO's activities in this area. It will be produced three times a year and distributed via e-mail. Subscription/unsubscription requests should be sent to WHO's Disability and Rehabilitation Team at the following e-mail address: [pedersenr@who.int](mailto:pedersenr@who.int)

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### *World report on disability and rehabilitation*

#### Next steps

**Produced jointly by WHO and the World Bank in cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities, professional associations, nongovernmental organizations, experts and other UN agencies.**

On 18-19 June, WHO held the second meeting of the Editorial Committee for the *World report on disability and rehabilitation* at WHO headquarters in Geneva. The world report is being produced at the request of WHA Resolution 58.23 (May 2005) for launch in 2009. The Editorial Committee, which includes nine external experts from different regions of the world, oversees the report's development. This second meeting enabled the Editorial Committee, the lead authors for the first two chapters and staff at WHO headquarters to review the chapter outlines and define the next steps in the process of chapter development. Over the next five months all the lead authors will work with their chapter teams which include people with disabilities, academics and professionals with broad interdisciplinary and geographic orientation to write the chapters.

## WELCOME

Alana Officer, Coordinator Disability and Rehabilitation  
*Working together*



An underlying principal of WHO's work in disability and rehabilitation is the building of partnerships to support disability, rehabilitation and inclusion efforts. This is evinced by the broad range of stakeholders actively involved in our activities.

Working together is the key to engendering real change. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an excellent example of how by working together we can show the world that persons with disabilities have the right to be recognized on an equal basis with others. We now have before us a great opportunity. The Convention is far reaching and significantly advances the process to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities as objectives of charity, medical treatment and social protection to individuals capable of claiming their rights and making decisions for their lives. I want to pay tribute to the substantial and substantive role that people with disabilities and their organizations have had in transforming and up scaling the movement for equality and justice. It is by working together with a broad range of stakeholders including Member States, persons with disabilities and their organizations, development organizations, professional bodies and other UN agencies that we will ensure effective implementation of the Convention. As a first step WHO will convene a meeting of key partners in September to share information on the progress of activities and recent developments related to WHO's work on disability and rehabilitation and receive suggestions on how WHO can best support the implementation of the Convention. As the new coordinator for the WHO Disability and Rehabilitation Team, I look forward to working with you to transform our shared engagement to the Convention to practical measures with measurable outcomes for persons with disabilities.

The first draft of the report is expected in November 2007. Following a review by the Editorial Committee, the second iteration will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee which comprises of representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities, professional associations, nongovernmental organizations, experts and various United Nations agencies. Four regional consultations, based on WHO regional divisions, will also take place in 2008. The objectives of the regional consultations are to:

- Present a draft of each chapter of the report to regional stakeholders
- Review and comment on each of the draft chapters
- Provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to provide their perspectives (including additional data and information) for consideration
- Brief participants about the expected timeline for production, next steps in the process, and the global launch of the report.
- Provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to reflect on how the report can be used locally
- Discuss plans for other regional and country level events related to the launching and implementation of the report

For further information, please contact Ms Alana Officer at [officera@who.int](mailto:officera@who.int)

## CBR Africa Network Conference

### A joint initiative of CAN and WHO promoting CBR in Africa

The CBR Africa Network (CAN) is an information and knowledge sharing network for CBR workers in Africa. Established in 2002, the objective of CAN is to support CBR initiatives through the documentation of good practices. CAN was the first nongovernmental organization in Africa to systematically collect and disseminate information to support CBR initiatives. To further the process of exchange and dissemination, CAN hosts a conference every three years. The next CAN Conference will be held in Birchwood Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa from 30 October - 2 November 2007. The objectives of the Conference are to:

- Facilitate the participation of people from all levels and dimensions of CBR programmes in Africa
- Promote sharing of experiences on policy development relating to CBR in Africa

- Facilitate communication and understanding between key groups in order to enhance multi-sectoral partnerships
- Generate a knowledge base on CBR, inclusive policy and its implementation in different African countries
- Expand CAN to make it an "All African CBR Network"
- Link up CBR and the African Decade of Disabled Persons (2000-2009)

**Professor Sally Hartley, a member of the CAN Secretariat and a Professor of Communication and Health at the University of East Anglia, talks about the special features of this year's CAN conference**

"There are two special features to this year's CAN Conference. Firstly, WHO's participation this year has meant that we were able to reach countries in Africa which had not yet benefited to date from the network, in particular many francophone African countries. As the lack of access to rehabilitation services is more acute in francophone African countries as compared to others in the region, this is an important development. Secondly, for the first time, access to information will be improved for participants with hearing impairments through the provision of sign language and for participants with visual impairments through the provision of conference materials in Braille. As a result it is expected that around 400 people will participate in the conference: a two-fold increase on the last conference held in Malawi in 2004. This increased level of participation highlights the interest and importance of CBR to countries in Africa."



Members of the CAN committee: Barbara Batesaki (Treasurer), Daniel Tsengu (CBM) and Sally Hartley

For further information about the CAN Conference, please visit:

<http://www.afri-can.org/saconference.html>

**Did you know?** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities draws attention to the need to ensure access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas, to persons with disabilities to ensure that they have the same access as those who are not disabled.

For further information on the Convention, please visit <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml>

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## International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics

A report from the 12th World Congress

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The 12th World Congress of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) was held from 29 July - 3 August 2007 in Vancouver, Canada. This global event for multidisciplinary prosthetic and orthotic care was opened by Dr Etienne Krug, Director of WHO's Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability. With the theme "Moving Beyond Disabilities", the Congress succeeded in bringing together 1933 people from 61 countries who work to improve prosthetic, orthotic and wheelchair services on a global scale. The 2007 organizing committee recognized the essential contribution users of prosthetics and orthotics made in the Congress. Over 170 users attended the conference and half a day was dedicated to exchanges of experiences and information.

**ISPO** and **WHO** have been in official partnership since 1993 to promote mobility devices and rehabilitation services globally with a focus on developing countries. For further information, please visit: International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) <http://www.ispo.ws/>

Over the six days, delegates could choose from 116 scientific programme sessions, which included free papers, posters, basic and advanced instructional courses, symposia, and manufacturer workshops. These sessions were classified into discipline streams that allowed delegates to follow a topic of interest throughout the day across a number of different session types. Keynote lectures from users of assistive devices and leaders in the field were held each day. WHO was responsible for a series of symposium on prosthetics/orthotics, including wheelchair service provision, the training of rehabilitation personnel and linking CBR with programmes related to mobility devices. The high quality of the scientific programme confirms that the science and innovation supporting prosthetic and orthotic practice has improved over the last few years.

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## CBR Regional Strategy for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

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It is estimated that there are about 40 million people with disabilities in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. CBR is considered an effective strategy for the region to activate and build capacity of communities to equalize access to community assets and deliver services that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Dr Hussein A. Gezairy, Regional Director of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, stressed the need to further promote CBR in the region and to foster greater partnership between CBR and other community-based initiatives. As an initial step a workshop inaugurated by Mr Muhammad Nasir Khan, Honourable Federal Health Minister of Pakistan, was held in Bhurbhan, Pakistan from 16-18 July. Ministries of Health from 10 countries in the region were represented. After several theme presentations, focused group and plenary discussions, consensus was reached on a proposed CBR strategy for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region including vision, goal, objectives, key activities and indicators. This strategy will contribute to the implementation of CBR in line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Mr Muhammad Nasir Khan, Honourable Federal Health Minister of Pakistan, opening the workshop.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ms Noriko Saito left her position as Technical Officer on 31 July to work with JICA on creating barrier free environments in the rural area of the Philippines. Noriko is warmly thanked for her contributions to the advocacy work of the DAR team and her unfailing support and commitment.

**A new position for a Technical Officer** (Vacancy Number HQ/07/VIP/TA363) is current being advertised. The person selected will contribute to WHO's work on the implementation of the UN Convention and the World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation. The closing date is 26 September. For further information please visit WHO's e-Recruitment website at: [www.who.int/employment](http://www.who.int/employment).

## RESOURCES

A special issue of the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine has been released on human functioning and rehabilitation research under the title "The ICF: A unifying model for the conceptualization, organization and development of human functioning and rehabilitation research." Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine 2007;39(4):277-342. All articles of the special issue are open access and can be downloaded from the website of the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine at <http://jrm.medicaljournals.se/issue/39/4>

The authors are interested in your feedback.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 5-8 September 2007

DPI's 7th World Assembly in Seoul, Republic of Korea.  
More information at <http://www.dpiwa.net>

### 30 October – 2 November 2007

CBR Africa Network Conference  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
Jointly organized by CBR Africa Network and the WHO Regional Office for Africa  
Contact: Olive Kobusingye  
[KobusingyeO@zw.afro.who.int](mailto:KobusingyeO@zw.afro.who.int)

### 3 December

International Day of Disabled Persons  
More information at  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiddp.htm>

## Convention Barometer

The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and its **Optional Protocol** was opened for signature on 30 March 2007.

Total number of **Signatories: 102**

Total Number of **Ratifications: 5**

Croatia (15 August 2007) \*

Cuba (6 September 2007)

Hungary (20 May 2007)\*

Jamaica (30 March 2007)

Panama (7 August 2007)\*



\* Denotes Signature of both Convention and Optional Protocol

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