



## World report on disability launched

**"We somehow know intuitively that disability is associated with social exclusion. But this report now sets out the evidence in such detail and with such authority that it commands our attention and demands our action"** said WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, at launch of the WHO/World Bank *World report on disability* at the United Nations in New York on 9 June.

Other speakers at the launch included Ms Tamar Manuelyan Atinc, Vice President of the Human Development Network at the World Bank, Ms Faustina Urassa, Kilimanjaro Association of the Spinally Injured, Professor Ron McCallum, chairman of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with Ministers of Health from Rwanda and Mexico, and the Australian Ambassador to the UN. A particular highlight was a video address by Professor Stephen Hawking, the world famous theoretical physicist.

The formal launch was followed by a chance to discuss each chapter of the *World report* in more detail, with feedback from expert discussants. The day's events concluded with a meeting on the intersections between disability and HIV/AIDS.

## Regional impact: Pacific Islands

The day after the New York launch, people with disabilities from many Pacific Island nations gathered at the WHO office to discuss priorities for implementing the *World report*, for example strengthening data collection and improving coverage of CBR programmes. This meeting, which was supported by AusAid, lays the foundation for further work in Pacific nations including policy dialogues, capacity building and data collection.

The WHO Disability and Rehabilitation newsletter is produced three times a year and distributed via e-mail. Subscription/unsubscription requests should be sent to WHO's Disability and Rehabilitation Team (DAR) via: [mackenzie@who.int](mailto:mackenzie@who.int)

The full report, summary, factsheets and other materials can be found at: [www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report)  
The summary version of the World report is now available in Braille, Easy Read and DAISY format in all 6 UN languages. Translation of the full document into all 6 languages is under way, beginning with French and Spanish versions.

As well as the report and summary, there are two-page fact sheets available, together with case studies, posters and media releases, all of which can be translated and adapted for use in different countries and settings.

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## Geneva launch of the *World report*

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On 27 June, the attention shifted to Geneva, where Ms Diane Richler, chair of the International Disability Alliance and Mr Shuaib Chalken, the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability, joined an illustrious panel of Ambassadors and WHO Assistant Director-Generals to welcome the *World report* and discuss ways of removing barriers and achieving the human rights of persons with disabilities. A particular emphasis of this meeting was on how WHO could ensure mainstreaming of disability across the technical work of the Organization.

A partners meeting at WHO following the Geneva launch identified actions which development actors, NGOs, DPOs, professionals and academics could take, together with support required from WHO. The goal now is to build a programme of work, supported by appropriate funding, to ensure that the *World report* translates into action in countries to remove barriers and promote health and inclusion of people with disabilities.

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## Iraq launch

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“Iraq pledges to step up efforts to enable access to mainstream services and to invest in specialized programmes to unlock the vast potential of people with disabilities,” stated

H.E Dr Majid Hamad Amin the Minister of Health in Iraq, when WHO Representative to Iraq Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain met with H.E Minister of Health in Kurdistan Regional Government Dr.Taher Hawramy at the Ministry of Health premises in Erbil on 21 June, together with the Director-General of Health for Erbil, senior level delegates from the Ministry of Health and international and national WHO experts.



A press conference was conducted in Helena Rehabilitation Center-Erbil at to launch the *World report on disability* in Iraq. The report was endorsed nationally by the Ministries of Health in Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs with the presence of WHO, activists living with disabilities and media representatives. Hashem Khalil Ibrahim, from the Association of People Living with Disabilities in Iraq, called on the Iraqi government to speed up the implementation of the CRPD, and to establish an independent national body concerned with the affairs of people with disabilities.

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## Next steps for the *World report*

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The intention is now to build on the momentum of the global launches, with launches and policy dialogues in up to 100 different countries. Already events have been held in Australia, Chile, Iraq and USA. We hope that donors will consider how the *World report* evidence and recommendations can inform their funding; that academics will address research gaps and will contribute to capacity building; above all that policy-makers will take note of good practice and

implement the recommendations of this Report, as a step towards achieving the CRPD and MDGs. Everyone has a role to play in this effort, starting with raising awareness of the report and of disability rights in the media, in schools, in workplaces, in communities.

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## Filling the research gaps

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A key recommendation of the *World report* was the need to strengthen research. Without evidence on issues such as need and unmet need, costs, impact of services, quality of life of people with disabilities, it is difficult for WHO to make recommendations for how countries can respond more effectively. Two forthcoming research symposia will contribute to addressing gaps in research on health and rehabilitation. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and University of Sydney are each sponsoring a meeting where new and established researchers will present their research.

The best papers from these meetings will be published in the journal *Disability and Rehabilitation*, one year after publication of the *World report*, together with other contributions which focus on the contribution of rehabilitation to improving the lives of persons with disabilities. Papers are encouraged which relate to recommendations for research outlined in the report:

- the impact of environmental factors (policies, physical environment, attitudes) on disability and how to measure it;
- measures of the lived experience of people with disabilities, including measures on quality of life and well-being;
- what works in overcoming service barriers in different contexts;
- effectiveness and outcomes of rehabilitation services and programmes; and
- the cost-effectiveness of public spending on disability programmes.

Wherever possible, research should reflect the active participation of persons with disabilities themselves, and be grounded in the human rights approach. The deadline for submissions of papers is January 15 2012.

Given that journals such as *Disability and Society*, *Alter* and the *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* have also welcomed the publication of the *World report*, there is scope for publication of research relevant to other issues - support services, accessibility, education, employment - in other journals.

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## The World report in the media

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The *World report on disability* was covered by global and national media, including CNN, Al Jazeera, BBC World Service and Islam TV, together with newspapers in many countries.

As part of the campaign to promote the *World report*, WHO commissioned a series of films featuring women with disabilities answering the question "What's disability to me?". Four films featuring women from Bolivia, Lebanon, United Republic of Tanzania and UK are available at [www.youtube.com/who](http://www.youtube.com/who)

As well as a compilation of these four films, the playlist also includes a short film of Professor Stephen Hawking endorsing the *World report on disability*. We hope to edit a film of the New York launch of the World report in the coming months. The films featuring Faustina and Rachel are now the most viewed films ever made by WHO! Please view all these films to show your support for WHO's work on disability, and feel free to use them in your own work.

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## Guyana update

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The MOH Guyana (National Rehabilitation Services and Disability Programme / Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre), with the technical support of the National Center for Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago will be hosting a workshop to develop Wheelchair Maintenance and Repair

Training between 24 to 28 October in Georgetown, Guyana, supported by WHO PAHO.

The objectives of this workshop are:

- to provide capacity building for persons with disabilities in servicing and repair of wheelchairs;
- to offer mobility impaired persons access to affordable wheelchair maintenance countrywide;
- to provide the opportunity to develop life skills for employment/entrepreneurs;
- to increase the visibility of persons with disabilities in the community.

For additional information, please contact:  
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## Interns update

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During our busy summer, **Hilary Veale**, from Melbourne, played a vital role supporting on logistics and liaison, particularly at the New York and Geneva launches of the World report. Hilary was followed by **Tinashe Dune**, from University of Sydney, who has worked on a literature review of interventions to promote sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities from low and middle income countries, in association with **Jessica Reidies**, from Gallaudet University, USA, who interned in the Reproductive Health and Research Department. **Amit Kumar**, a physiotherapist now studying rehabilitation at University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston, arrived at WHO in July to support work around rehabilitation and the interface between disability and ageing.

Meanwhile, **Dr Sonali Shah** spent a month with the WHO Human Resources Department, sharing her research experience on career paths of people with disabilities. Thanks to all our interns and volunteers for their eagerness and effort, which makes a major contribution to DAR's output and effectiveness.



Photo of Dr Sonali Shah at work

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## Upcoming events

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- ♦ **12-13 September 2011:** USA launch of the *World report on disability*, Washington D.C., USA
- ♦ **8 November 2011:** symposium on research gaps identified by *World report on disability*, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK  
<http://disabilitycentre.lshtm.ac.uk/news-and-events/equityhealthdisability/>
- ♦ **5-6 December 2011:** symposium on research gaps identified by *World report on disability*, School of Health Sciences, University of Sydney.  
[http://sydney.edu.au/health\\_sciences/disability-symposium/](http://sydney.edu.au/health_sciences/disability-symposium/)

### More information

For further information please contact: Disability and Rehabilitation Team,  
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