

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

SUNDBERG DECLARATION*

The World Conference on Actions and Strategies¹ for Education, Prevention and Integration organized by the Spanish Government in co-operation with Unesco and held in Torremolinos, Malaga, Spain, from 2 to 7 November 1981,

Bearing in mind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments of the United Nations and particularly the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the Declaration on the Rights of the Disabled Persons and the Declaration on the Rights of the Mentally Retarded Persons,

Stressing the urgent need to apply the conclusions and suggestions of the present conference, the principles which inspire the Long-Term Plan of Action of the United Nations Advisory Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons and such guidelines as provided by recent recommendations, declarations and programmes of action,²

Deeply concerned at the fact that ten per cent of the world population is affected in one way or another by handicaps and that the prospects are worsening,

Reaffirms the need to ensure full observance of these guidelines and declarations;

Emphasizes that prevention³ is a most important action and that all strategies conceivable on the basis of present knowledge should be applied to avoid handicaps, with every family and every person being provided with the necessary services;

Underlines the importance of rehabilitation⁴ and integration⁵ as far as possible of disabled persons, steps being taken to ensure that every person receives rehabilitation services and other support and assistance that might be needed to reduce the handicapping effects of disability, in order to bring about the maximum possible integration of disabled persons and enable them to play a constructive role in society;

Mindful of the crucial importance of education, science, culture and information in the life of all persons, and wishing to implement the above-mentioned recommendations and principles, with a view to promoting the self-fulfilment of all disabled persons and their full participation in social life,

Affirms that public authorities, competent organizations and society as a whole should take into account, when preparing any medium or long-term strategy concerning disabled persons, the fundamental principles of participation, integration, personalization, decentralization (sectorization), and interprofessional co-ordination, such that:

- (a) Full participation of disabled persons and their associations in all decisions and actions concerning them shall be ensured;
- (b) Disabled persons shall have the benefit of all services and participate in all activities of the community; likewise actions and strategies of a general character decided on for the community as a whole shall take due account of disabled persons;

* In memory of Nils-Ivar Sundberg, in charge of the Unesco Programme for Special Education, 1968-1981.

¹ Participation by 103 countries, 6 international and 4 regional organizations, 17 international governmental and non-governmental organizations, listed in Annex VI.

² Programme declaration of the Ministers of Health and Social Security of the American Area, Madrid, October 1981. Report of the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped, Canada, House of Commons, February 1981.

³ For example, recommendations of the Joint Commission of WHO and the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped; Plan Nacional Español de Prevención; UNICEF

⁴ Rehabilitation International: 'Declaration of the Charter for the 80s'.

⁵ OECD report on 'the Education of the Handicapped: Adolescent Integration in the School'.

- (c) Disabled persons shall receive from the community services adapted to their specific personal needs;
- (d) Through decentralization and sectorization of services, the needs of disabled persons shall be taken into account and satisfied within the framework of the community to which they belong;
- (e) The activities of the various professional organizations and special bodies catering for the needs of disabled persons shall be co-ordinated in such a way as to promote the overall development of their personality;

Urges governments, competent governmental and non-governmental organizations, public opinion, persons who are disabled, their families and all those who are associated in one way or another with their everyday life, educators, researchers, managers, statesmen, to disseminate and put into practice the principles of the following Declaration, which it

Unanimously decides to adopt and solemnly proclaims:

Article 1

Every disabled person must be able to exercise his fundamental right to have full access to education, training, culture and information.

Article 2

Governments and national and international organizations must take effective action to ensure the fullest possible participation by disabled persons. Economic and practical support must be given to actions aimed at the educational and health-care needs of disabled persons, and for the establishment and running of associations of disabled persons or their families. These associations must take part in planning and decision-making in areas that concern disabled persons.

Article 3

Disabled persons must be given the opportunity to utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential to the full, not only for their own benefit but also for the enrichment of the community.

Article 4

Educational, cultural and communication programmes in which disabled persons are to participate must be conceived and implemented within a global framework of lifelong education. In this respect, more attention should be given to the educational aspects of vocational rehabilitation and training.

Article 5

So as to put the maximum of their capacity at the service of society, all persons with handicaps, especially those with communication problems, must have access to educational, cultural and information programmes adapted to their specific needs.

Article 6

Education, training, culture and information programmes must be aimed at integrating disabled persons into the ordinary working and living environment. Such integration must begin as early as possible in the person's life. In order to bring this about, disabled persons must receive appropriate education and training, whatever their personal situation (in institutions, at home, in schools, etc.), for as long as necessary.

Article 7

In order to reduce the incidence of handicaps and their harmful effects, governments have the responsibility, in co-operation with non-governmental organizations, for ensuring early detection and appropriate treatment. Educational programmes, in which information and guidance for parents plays a very important role, must be organized from early infancy.

Article 8

Family participation in the education, training, rehabilitation and development of all disabled persons must be increased. Appropriate assistance must be provided to help the families to fulfil their role in this area.

Article 9

Educators and other professionals responsible for educational, cultural and information programmes must also be qualified to deal with the specific situations and needs of disabled persons. Their training must, consequently, take account of this requirement and be regularly brought up to date.

Article 10

In view of the media's influence on public attitudes, and with a view to increasing the level of public awareness and solidarity, the content of the information disseminated by the media as well as the training of media staff must include aspects corresponding to the needs and interests of disabled persons and prepared in consultation with their associations.

Article 11

Disabled persons must be provided with the facilities and equipment necessary for their education and training. To this end every effort must be made to enable the necessary equipment to be manufactured in the developing countries.

Article 12

All projects concerning urban development, the environment and human settlements should be conceived in such a way as to facilitate the integration and participation of disabled persons in all community activities, particularly in the field of education and culture.

Article 13

Research aimed at increasing knowledge and its application in furtherance of the aims of this Declaration, especially for adapting modern technology to the needs of disabled persons and reducing the cost of fabrication of equipment, must be encouraged and the results of such research disseminated widely in order to promote the education, cultural development and employment of disabled persons.

Article 14

Positive action on the part of governments, firms, professional organizations and trade unions is required to introduce special career guidance, recruitment, training and job advancement schemes in order to increase the career opportunities of disabled persons.

Article 15

Greater international co-operation among governmental and non-governmental, regional and inter-regional organizations, including technical assistance with the particular aim of setting up data banks and regional centres for personnel training and the preparation and dissemination of programmes, is a prerequisite for implementing the principles set forth in the present Declaration.

Article 16

It is the responsibility of states to implement the present Declaration; to this end they should take all possible legislative, technical and fiscal measures and ensure that disabled persons, their associations and specialized non-governmental organizations participate in the elaboration of such measures.