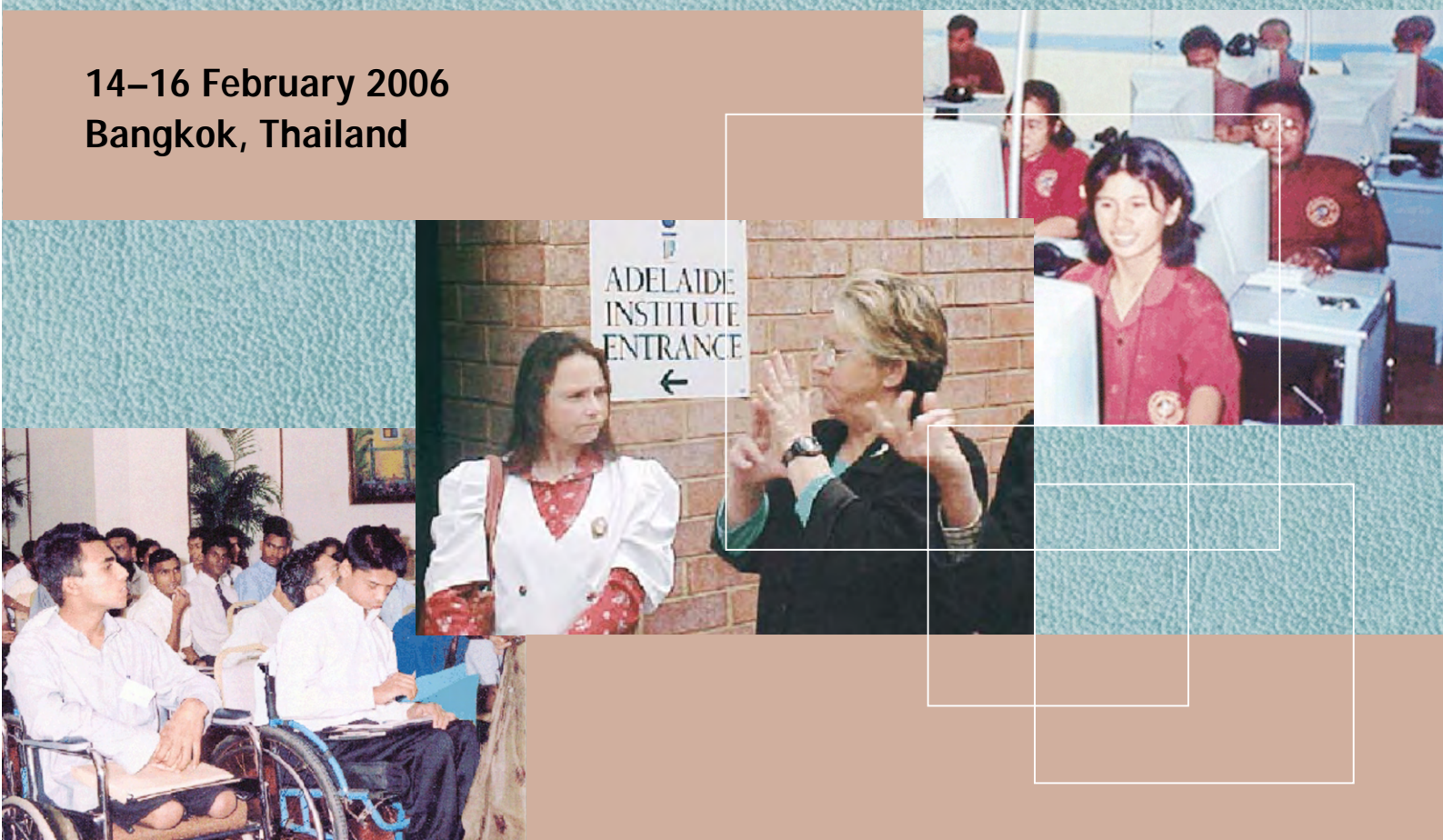


Proceedings of the Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training

14–16 February 2006
Bangkok, Thailand



International Labour Office | Regional Office
for Asia and the Pacific

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Expert Group Meeting on
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International Labour Office

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Preface

The social and economic inclusion of women and men with disabilities in mainstream society, including the formal and informal economy, has been promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) for decades. Human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations have upheld the rights of disabled persons to full access and participation in community life. ILO conventions and recommendations have called for the equal treatment and equal opportunity of disabled persons with regard to skills development and decent work. Many countries, including those in the Asia-Pacific region, have laws and policies calling for the integration of disabled persons in the same schools and vocational training programmes that all citizens can access.

Yet, we know that only an estimated 10 per cent of children with disabilities in this region have access to primary school education. We can assume that the participation rates in secondary school and vocational training programmes are even lower, although reliable data is lacking. In the few countries where data is available, the participation rates of disabled persons in mainstream vocational training programmes is as low as one tenth of one per cent.

It is widely acknowledged that people with disabilities have not had equal access to vocational training. While some charitable institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and governments provide training in separate centres for disabled persons, and some of these are exemplary institutions, examples of inclusive vocational training systems are lacking.

The Expert Group Meeting on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training was designed to identify the barriers and challenges to inclusion and to suggest practical solutions, tools and techniques to address them. While participants fully acknowledged that effective legislation and policies need to be in place, it was also duly noted that such directives do exist in most countries but they are not implemented. Why is this happening and what needs to be done about it?

The answers and issues are complex but the group of vocational training experts, disabled persons, and representatives of international organizations, governments and NGOs as well as workers and employers spent three days exploring them and using their knowledge and expertise to achieve the overall goal of the meeting. These Proceedings document the excellent presentations, lively discussions, active working groups, thoughtful strategies and final recommendations that emerged from the meeting. Barriers and solutions are noted as well as suggestions and descriptions of tools and techniques. The Proceedings list eight concrete recommendations for guiding stakeholders in assuring that women and men with disabilities have their rightful access to the training and the support services disabled persons may need to contribute to their families, their communities and the development of their countries.

You will also find at the back cover of the Proceedings a CD-ROM that contains a digital copy of this document, the materials that were distributed at the meeting and other useful documents and publications related to inclusive vocational training.

The ILO wishes to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Skills and Employability Department of the ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva for funding this important meeting. Thanks also go to the AbilityAsia Disability Programme and the Regional Skills and Employability Programme of Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP) for co-sponsoring this activity. In particular, Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation and Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, as well as Trevor Riorden, Senior Advisor, SKILLS-AP deserve acknowledgement for their concentrated work in organizing and facilitating the meeting. Behind the scenes, Michael Clyne, an intern, did an excellent job in helping to plan the meeting and to develop these Proceedings. Several experts served as resources for the meeting, most notably, Bryan Smyth King and Ngo Thi Thuy, who provided the perspectives of two diverse countries in the region, Australia and Viet Nam. The Bridging Pathways strategy, which has been implemented for more than five years in Australia, provides one example for countries in the region about how to approach this issue.

It is our hope that these Proceedings capture the dedication, excitement and commitment that came through at the Expert Group Meeting and that they provide guidance and practical advice to policy makers, administrators, practitioners and disabled persons about how to move forward to make vocational training systems more inclusive.



Lin Lean Lim
Deputy Regional Director
ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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1. Overview

1.1 Background

Although people with disabilities comprise a significant percentage of the world's poor, most have been excluded from the very opportunities—social, educational and vocational—that could lead them out of poverty.

More than half of the world's disabled people—about 400 million—live in the Asia-Pacific region. About two-thirds of them are of working age and they represent a significant, productive labour force whose potential is often unrecognized and whose talents may be lost to the workplace and society as a whole. However, people with disabilities often have little access to the skills training and associated support that could help them find and keep decent work.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates, only 10 per cent of children with a disability attend primary school in this region. The unemployment rate of adults with disabilities is estimated to be between 50 and 80 per cent. Even in some of the most developed nations in the region, only small percentages of people with disabilities receive any vocational training. Whether in segregated or mainstream settings, vocational trainers may be unaware of the special needs of people with disabilities, especially those who have substantial disabilities, such as blindness, intellectual impairments or cerebral palsy, to name a few. Even when training does exist, the proper links to employment services and a job may be lacking.

Clearly, for people with disabilities to find decent work, compete in today's workforce and participate in the economic mainstream, they must possess vocational skills and perhaps also have the business expertise to be an entrepreneur. When disabled persons have access to education, vocational training, employment and support services, they can make productive workers and successful employees and entrepreneurs. Those with severe disabilities may need special training methodologies, accommodations and support services to develop skills and succeed on the job.

The International Labour Organization recognizes that people with disabilities have a right to access the same vocational services available to all citizens, including training and employability programmes. This is promoted in a number of ILO instruments, including the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), two Recommendation¹ related to vocational rehabilitation and the ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace. Many other conventions also support the principle of including disabled persons in vocational training and related employability services. Most notable is

¹ Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99) and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168)

the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), which states that policies and programmes for human resource development, including counselling and skills development, whether in formal or informal systems, “shall encourage and enable all persons, on an equal basis and without any discrimination whatsoever, to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in accordance with their own aspirations....” More recently, this principle was reinforced in the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). One of the targets of the Biwako Millennium Framework of Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the implementing document for the second Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, calls for the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream training as well.

In spite of major efforts by international organizations, governments and non-government and disabled peoples’ organizations (DPOs), people with disabilities continue to encounter significant barriers to accessing mainstream vocational training or other skill-development opportunities that result in decent work. Women with disabilities, in particular, face even more severe disadvantages. The double discrimination they come up against and the gender dimensions of this issue must be considered in further analysis and when identifying strategies.

Many countries have policies for including people with disabilities into mainstream vocational training. But in practice, few disabled persons participate in a training course available to the general population, while training programmes dedicated to people with disabilities are often over-burdened and under-resourced. Several countries are beginning to look at models that would use segregated programmes only for people with the most severe disabilities and as resource centres to advise mainstream programme planners on how to integrate less disabled persons into their training. This approach offers many benefits, including significant expansion of training opportunities for persons with disabilities. Countries that are beginning to address the issue are proposing integrated approaches.

However, in most countries a full understanding of the practical issues and knowledge of useful models and resources for inclusive vocational training are still limited. Within the framework of its standards, the ILO initiated this Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training to address the barriers that keep people with disabilities from acquiring skills and finding decent work.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the Expert Group Meeting was to identify the barriers and challenges to the inclusion of disabled persons in mainstream vocational training programmes and to suggest practical solutions, tools and techniques to address the barriers and implement existing policies.

Specific objectives of the meeting were to:

1. Identify the characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system;
2. Identify and explore barriers to inclusion and methods of overcoming them;
3. Share country-level experiences and lessons learned related to the integration of trainees with disabilities into mainstream training;
4. Identify tools and resources needed at the country level to assist training providers in practising inclusion; and
5. Make recommendations for action to create more inclusive vocational training systems.

1.3 Participants

Thirty-five participants from 11 countries in the region and several ILO and UN representatives attended, with several officials from the ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva participating through a video conference link-up. The participants included:

- Government, employer and worker representatives;
- Representatives of DPOs;
- Vocational training experts;
- ILO senior specialists in vocational rehabilitation and skills training;
- Experts from related agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); and
- Representatives from countries that have expressed an interest in integrative approaches.

Invited participants were technical experts, trainers or service implementers who understand the situation of other training instructors, institutions and overall training policies and programmes in their countries. They represented either mainstream or disability-specific training systems.

For a complete list of participants, see Annex I.

1.4 Programme

The programme was designed to introduce and create a vision of an inclusive vocational system. Building on this foundation, the programme then covered examples of how two countries, Australia and Viet Nam, have already been making that vision a reality. Barriers to achieving an inclusive system were identified. Thereafter, the programme addressed the practical issues of tools and techniques needed, culminating with recommendations. A copy of the final programme follows.

Final Programme

Day 1: What's it all about?

08:30 Registration

09:00 Opening Activities

Welcome Address: Ms. Lin Lean Lim, Deputy Director, Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, ILO

Introductions, Expectations, Programme: Ms. Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO

10:00 Keynote Panel: What's happening?

Ms. Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO

Mr. Trevor Riordan, Senior Advisor, SKILLS-AP, ILO

Mr. Brian Smyth King, Disability Programs, Australia Department of Education

Ms. Ngo thi Thuy, Project Deputy Director, Swisscontact, Viet Nam

11:00 Tea Break

11:15 Response Panel: What do you think? What is your vision?

Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit, Regional Development Officer, Disabled Peoples' International—Asia Pacific, Thailand

Mr. Ramasamy Laksmanasamy, Assistant Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped, India

Ms. Meghamali Aluwihare, Senior Industrial Relations Advisor, Employers' Federation of Ceylong, Sri Lanka

11:45 Plenary Discussion

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Introduction to Working Group 1

What does an inclusive vocational training system look like?

13:45 Working Group 1

14:45 Tea Break

15:00 Working Group report out and consolidation exercise

16:00 Response and discussion

Responses from Employers, Workers, Governments and Disabled Persons' Organizations

16:45 Taking Stock: What have we agreed to so far?

17:00 Closing

Day 2: Barriers, Tools, Techniques and Strategies

- 09:00 Yesterday and Today
- 09:15 Presentations—Making the vision real: Experiences from Australia and Viet Nam
Mr. Brian Smyth King, Disability Programs, Australia
Ms. Ngo thi Thuy, Project Deputy Director, Swisscontact, Viet Nam
- 10:30 Introduction to Working Group 2
What are the barriers and what should be done about them?
- 10:45 Tea Break
- 11:00 Working Group 2
- 11:45 Working Group report out
- 12:30 Response and Discussion
Responses from Employers, Workers, Governments and Disabled Persons' Organizations
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Introduction to Working Group 3
Tools, Techniques and Strategies
- 14:15 Working Group 3
- 15:30 Tea Break
- 15:45 Working Group report out and discussion
- 17:00 Closing

Day 3: Now What?

- 09:00 Discussion: All together, all the time?
- 09:20 Scene setting: action taken by Workers' Organizations
Mr. Dang Quang Dieu, Deputy Director, Vietnam General Confederation of Labour
Ms. Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO
- 09:40 Introduction to Working Group 4
What needs to be done and by whom?
- 10:20 Working Group 4

| | |
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| 11:10 | Tea Break |
| 11:20 | Working Group report out and consolidation exercise |
| 11:45 | Response and discussion Responses from Employers, Workers, Governments and Disabled Persons' Organizations |
| 12:05 | Consensus on key recommendations |
| 12:20 | Taking Stock: How did we do? |
| 12:30 | Closing |

1.5 Resource materials

Prior to the meeting, participants received a background note and a preparatory worksheet about the issue (see Annexes II and III) and a draft resource manual, *Resource Guide for Inclusive Vocational Training*, which was developed by Jeffrey Tines, former ILO Disability Advisor in Afghanistan, as a training tool for vocational training instructors. Participants were asked to review the manual before the meeting and fill out an assessment form detailing their thoughts about it. The manual was also reviewed in Working Group 3 (see section 3.3).

Also prior to the meeting, government participants were asked to respond to a country report outline (see Annex III). Country reports were received from China, Hong Kong SAR, South Korea and the Philippines.

Participants received a binder that included the documentation for the meeting, texts of relevant ILO standards, UNESCAP's Biwako Millennium Framework of Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO's Bonn Declaration, publication lists from the ILO Disability Programme, country reports, information on the ILO SKILLS-AP network, UNESCO's International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC), internet resources and participant lists from other ILO disability meetings (for networking purposes).

Meeting documentation was provided in Braille format for participants who were blind.

2. Day 1: Inclusive Vocational Training What's It All About?

Ms. Richmond, ILO Skills Specialist, chaired the opening session entitled *What's it all about?* In addition to the opening address, introductions and an overview of the meeting, this session included a keynote panel. The purpose of the panel was to identify the issues, provide background information, describe ILO and UNESCAP regional initiatives and introduce the two country examples from Australia and Viet Nam, which were featured throughout the meeting. A response panel and discussion followed. Thereafter, the first working group session described the characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system and the plenary reached a consensus about the vision of what an inclusion vocational training system would look like.

2.1 Opening address

Lin Lean Lim, Deputy Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

In her welcoming comments, Ms. Lim described the gathering of experts as part of a concerted effort by the ILO to promote equal treatment of and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. She emphasized that skills development is crucial to guaranteeing human rights and access to decent work for people with disabilities and to addressing their social exclusion and poverty.

Ms. Lim noted that disabled workers have been on the ILO agenda since 1925. The Expert Group Meeting was a response to a series of recent recommendations from ILO meetings advocating skills development and mainstream vocational training for people with disabilities. These meetings included the 2003 ILO/Japan Regional Technical Consultation on Training and Employment of People with Disabilities, in which participants called for governments to take stronger action to implement the mainstreaming of people with disabilities, and a 2005 SKILLS-AP meeting in which participants identified inclusive vocational training as a regional priority. Ms. Lim also said that many national meetings have resulted in recommendations for inclusive vocational training, and constituent countries have asked the ILO for technical assistance on the matter.

The ILO has many standards specifically addressing disability issues, including the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 168). However, said Ms. Lim, there are many non-disability-specific standards that are also relevant to disabled persons. Particularly important to this meeting is the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which advocates skills development and lifelong learning as critical factors to decent work and national productivity.

Day 1: What's It All About?

Recommendation 195 also calls upon governments to promote access to education, training and lifelong learning for people with disabilities. Ms. Lim noted that inclusive systems are also being taken up by the United Nations Secretariat, which is currently drafting a UN Convention on the Rights and Protection of People with Disabilities. The secretariat's regional arm for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP, took the lead in promoting the second Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003–2012) and the Biwako Millennium Framework of Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, which implements the Decade. The latter document also promotes inclusive vocational training.

Ms. Lim explained that the participants were invited because of the unique perspective they have to offer, and she encouraged everyone to share their knowledge and experiences to develop a pragmatic approach in reaching the goal of inclusive vocational training for people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

Ms. Lim acknowledged the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the ILO Skills and Employability Department in Geneva and the Asia-Pacific Skills Network (SKILLS-AP), without which the Experts Group Meeting would not have been possible.

For the complete text of Ms. Lim's opening address, see Annex IV.

2.2 Introduction to the Expert Group Meeting

*Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation,
ILO*

Ms. Perry emphasized that the Expert Group Meeting would be a working meeting. As part of opening activities, she asked participants to converse with someone they did not know and then to introduce that person to the group.

She then asked participants to identify what they expected to get from the Expert Group Meeting and what they expected to give. Some participants shared their expectations aloud, and all participants' expectations were posted for viewing. Many participants expressed that they expected to gain insight into new areas and issues of vocational training by taking advantage of the diverse and complementary expertise available at the meeting. Some hoped to learn of new methodologies and approaches to developing an inclusive system, while others wanted to identify the barriers inherent in a mainstream system. Participants with a disability said that they would contribute their experiences with integration and barriers to opportunity. Government delegates seemed anxious to share information about their countries' vocational training systems and the strategies and steps that have been made towards an inclusive system. For a complete list of these expectations, see Annex V.

Ms. Perry emphasized that the Expert Group Meeting was not a policy meeting but a practical meeting. Formal presentations would be kept to a minimum, and the objectives would be reached through a series of four working groups. Working

groups would be followed by reporting out and consolidation exercises and response and discussion sessions.

2.3 Keynote panel presentations

Chair: *Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO*

“What Is Happening Globally and in the Region”

Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO

Ms. Perry's presentation focused on the changing concepts of disability, including disability as a rights-based issue and an economic issue. She explained that the charity model viewed disability as a tragedy to the welfare/medical model that saw the need to “fix” disabled people. More recently, society has adopted the social model of disability with a rights-based approach. The social model focuses on “fixing” society and environment to include and empower people with disabilities and allow for their full participation. The social model encourages legislation focusing on human rights and anti-discrimination.

As evidence of the global shift from the charity model to the social model, Ms. Perry cited the current drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights and Protection of People with Disabilities, the ratification rate of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), policy statements and disability initiatives by many donors, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, anti-discrimination and rights-based laws and the inclusion of people with disabilities in collective bargaining agreements between trade unions and management.

Ms. Perry repeated the list of ILO standards pertaining to equal opportunities for people with disabilities: the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99), the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 168), and the Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace. Through standards, the ILO promotes the adoption of national vocational rehabilitation policies that are based on equal treatment and equal opportunity and promote the employment of people with disabilities in the mainstream workplace. Also of interest to the Expert Group Meeting, Ms. Perry said, is the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which states that vocational training of people with disabilities should be mainstreamed whenever possible. Ms. Perry added that the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) is also an important support of the rights-based approach to disability in this region. One of the BMF's targets is inclusive vocational training. It also suggests that countries adopt a strategy of involving employers and unions in developing inclusive systems and promoting employment.

Ms. Perry also noted that of the many economic issues surrounding disability, the most prominent is poverty. People with disabilities are the poorest of the poor.

Day 1: What's It All About?

For countries with social protection and welfare systems, the public costs of their poverty and exclusion can be a huge economic burden for society. A study funded by the World Bank estimates such global costs as US\$1.37 trillion to US\$1.94 trillion annually.

Disability can also be an issue that impacts positively on economic issues. For example, when an economy faces labour shortages, employers look to less obvious sources of human resources. Labour shortages encourage employers to look to disabled people as a valuable, untapped resource. Currently, in the Asia and Pacific region, countries such as Australia and parts of China are in this situation.

As evidence that disability is increasingly becoming an economic issue, Ms. Perry cited the involvement of various business groups and employers' organizations in disability issues, welfare-to-work programmes, case studies documenting the productivity of disabled workers and the ILO/ESCAP Multinational Corporation Roundtable on Disability and Employment. The Multinational Corporation Roundtable brought together regional human resource representatives from several corporations to discuss the business case for hiring people with disabilities in July 2005.

Further, Ms. Perry added that the business case aims to show that hiring and retaining disabled or injured workers makes good business sense. Hiring disabled workers results in improved team spirit and productivity; the diversity contributes to a company's overall creativity and success and people with disabilities make dependable and productive workers. Additionally, disabled persons and their families and friends comprise a significant and overlooked customer base. By including disabled persons in their workers, companies increase the chance of tapping this market.

Switching to the issues of vocational training, Ms. Perry noted that there are many reasons for having an inclusive system:

- **The human rights perspective:** the right to choose one's education;
- **Limited resources:** resources are too limited for parallel disabled and mainstream training systems;
- **Economics:** labour shortages and costly welfare systems; and
- **Increased opportunity:** parallel training systems simply cannot accommodate everyone's needs.

To help explain the Expert Group Meeting's focus on pragmatic solutions rather than on legislation and policy, Ms. Perry described a 2002 ILO study of 14 Asia-Pacific countries that showed most of them (11 of the 14) had legislation and policies on inclusive vocational training but that few had implemented or had the institutional structure to support such policies. As a result, few countries had a significant number of disabled persons mainstreamed, although some encouraging examples could be found. She noted that even in the least-developed countries of Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, examples of inclusive educational programmes for children exist. In Afghanistan, Australia, Thailand and Viet Nam,

there have been increased efforts towards the mainstreaming of people with disabilities in vocational training settings. In countries where segregated training centres existed, there were alternative options for such centres, such as using them for research, pilot projects or setting them aside for the training of only the most severely disabled people. Some countries are exploring these options as they plan to make their mainstream systems more inclusive.

Ms. Perry ended her presentation with a reminder that people with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. People's needs depend on their type of disability and its severity, onset and visibility. She added that gender makes a huge difference, and all these factors must be considered in designing inclusive systems.

Finally, she noted that disabled people must be involved in all aspects of the integration process.

“Some Issues and Challenges for Training Systems and an Introduction to the Regional Skills Programme and Network”

Trevor Riordan, Senior Advisor, SKILLS-AP, ILO

In his presentation, Mr. Riordan said he aimed to speak from a training perspective because advocates of an inclusive system must understand the standpoint of training system managers—they are the ones who must still be convinced of disabled people's potential as workers.

Mr. Riordan explained that the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150), is in fact an inclusive framework because it addresses the entire population and says training must be made accessible to all groups in society. It recognizes that people with disabilities should secure decent work, for which government training systems should bear primary responsibility.

Regarding the integration of public training systems in Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Riordan pointed out some problematic areas: training systems have weak links with industry, tend to focus on the supply side of labour markets rather than the demand and do not fulfil industries' employment needs. Mr. Riordan said that training systems need more private sector involvement, adding that skills themselves do not guarantee a job; those skills have to be in demand by employers.

Another problem is that many training centres lack appropriate public financing and operate under poor conditions, which make them inflexible to reform. Mr. Riordan explained that, under these conditions, there is not enough room or incentive for institutions to incorporate people with disabilities. Inclusive vocational training is necessary, however, because isolated training is usually less effective, particularly for groups with special needs.

In the past, Mr. Riordan explained, the ILO helped Asia-Pacific countries develop their national training institutions. Now the ILO is revitalizing its skills network in Asia and the Pacific through a strategic framework focusing on skills and

employability. The first initiative of that framework is the Regional Skills and Employability Programme of Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP), which will bring together all ILO actors in skills development to assist countries in accessing information and expertise. The network uses an innovative approach to share knowledge and experience and provides a basis for technical cooperation among member states. Noting that it is also important to develop action rather than just share knowledge, Mr. Riordan said SKILLS-AP will develop practical action plans and programmes in skills development and employability.

At the 2005 launch meeting of SKILLS-AP in South Korea the tripartite conference identified key issues and challenges in skills development and networking. One of those issues was the development of skills as a means of inclusion and economic empowerment of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities.

Mr. Riordan explained that SKILLS-AP includes partner organizations with a variety of backgrounds, including governments, workers' and employers' organizations and research and technical institutions. Being a partner organization does not require membership or fees, just a willingness to bring and share information.

“Australia and Its VET System: Supporting People with Disabilities”

Brian Smyth King, Disability Programs, Australia Department of Education

In his first of two presentations, Mr. Smyth King provided an overview of what Australia has been doing in its vocational education and training (VET) system. His second presentation (to be delivered on Day 2) would explore the system in more detail.

Mr. Smyth King noted that more than 20 per cent (around four million people) of Australia's total population (of some 20 million people) have a disability as defined by the Australia's Disability Discrimination Act. This represents a diverse group of disabled persons, including those with visible and invisible disabilities, with three per cent of the group considered severely disabled. Australia's population is sparsely distributed yet very urbanized. Sri Lanka is about as populous as Australia, yet Sri Lanka is the size of the Australian state of Tasmania. Mr. Smyth King also noted that Australia's population is very diverse, being a country built up on immigration. This diversity thus requires a diverse training and employment system.

Explaining that Australia's VET system is nationally regulated and accredited, he added that each state and territory is responsible for development and delivery of its programmes. The national Government takes up the responsibility of employment-related services that follow training.

In 2000, Australia launched the Bridging Pathways strategy to better respond to the inequity facing people with disabilities in vocational training, to coordinate

programmes and services to increase access for people with disabilities and to invest in an inclusive vocational training system. In 2005, Bridging Pathways was revised and five new themes were added:

- Progressing with the “whole-of-life” approach to training;
- Better measurement of achievements;
- Improved delivery on the ground;
- Engaging key players; and
- Improved employment outcomes.

These themes will build on the original strategies of Bridging Pathways, such as strong planning, clear and flexible pathways, learning supports and capacity building. Bridging Pathways aims to market its information to people with disabilities as well as employers and community members. The Bridging Pathways framework requires assessment of its performance against key indicators and trends.

Mr. Smyth King ended his presentation by saying that Australia is simultaneously experiencing skill shortages, increased welfare dependency among disabled people and an aging population. In 2005, these problems led to a major overhaul of the national Government's general education, training and employment programmes. This overhaul will greatly affect the role of people with disabilities in the VET system.

“Strengthening Vocational Training Centres in Viet Nam”

Ngo Thi Thuy, Deputy Project Manager, Swisscontact, Viet Nam

In her first of two presentations, Ms. Thuy explained that she works for the NGO Swisscontact in Viet Nam, managing a project called “Strengthening of Vocational Training Centres in Viet Nam”. Swisscontact has partnered with 28 short-term (one week to one year) vocational education and training centres. These 28 partner centres share a belief in inclusive vocational training systems for people with disabilities and other marginalized people. Swisscontact provides the partner centres with organizational support to help develop demand-driven curricula, improve the training of instructors and upgrade training equipment.

Ms. Thuy highlighted two cross-cutting themes that Swisscontact hopes to promote in its partnership with the 28 centres:

- **Business orientation:** The project and its partners promote a business orientation among students that they hope will lead to successful entrepreneurship. Ms. Thuy reported that 90 per cent of businesses in Viet Nam are small or micro enterprises, so entrepreneurship is an important part of skill development. She said that Swisscontact and its partners believe institutions should teach entrepreneurial skills as well as occupational skills.

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- **Inclusion and integration of marginalized peoples:** Swisscontact aims to empower marginalized groups with jobs and the business and social skills they need to succeed. Ms. Thuy said that this must be done within an inclusive system that accommodates the needs of vulnerable and marginalized people and promotes awareness among all stakeholders.

Ms. Thuy believes that both cross-cutting issues can be applied to the inclusive training of people with disabilities and that they should be taught the same business orientation and entrepreneurial skills as Swisscontact's partner centres aim to teach students without a disability.

Almost one million of Viet Nam's general population receive some type of training per year, in either long-term centres (totalling 260 centres) or short-term centres (totalling over 400 centres). Viet Nam, a country of more than 80 million people, has roughly five million people with a disability. Proportionately, Ms. Thuy noted this is far lower than Australia's disabled population. Of all Viet Nam's vocational training centres, 10 specifically cater to people with disabilities, training only 1,000 students per year. Viet Nam's National Congress declared that by 2010, 720 of the country's training centres should be made inclusive for people with disabilities, although it is not known exactly how many people with disabilities are expected to enter these centres.

Ms. Thuy added that vulnerable people are typically the ones denied access and opportunities in the labour market due to internal or external circumstances. She believed that through inclusive vocational training and with appropriate support, marginalized people, including those with a disability, can gain equal opportunity in the labour market so that they can earn a living, become better integrated into society and make a contribution to the sustainability of both their local communities and Viet Nam as a whole.

Response panel

Facilitator: *Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO*

A three-member response panel was arranged to lead a discussion on the keynote presentations:

- Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit, Regional Development Officer of Disabled Peoples' International in Asia and the Pacific from Thailand;
- Mr. Ramasamy Laksmanasamy, Assistant Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped from India; and
- Ms. Meghamali Aluwihare, Senior Industrial Relations Advisor of the Employers' Federation of Ceylon from Sri Lanka.

Mr. Topong started off by commenting on the diversity of participants at the Expert Group Meeting. He said that while it was not a policy meeting, policies should be looked into because some pose barriers to the training and employment of people with disabilities. He also noted that accessibility is an important issue for inclusive vocational training. For example, an inclusive vocational training system requires an accessible transportation network to get students to and from training centres.

Mr. Laksmanasamy said he was surprised by the disability figures for Australia, noting that most countries have a disabled population of around 10 per cent, although he believes it is a deflated statistic. In India, as a part of the movement from segregated to inclusive training, he helped develop a community-based vocational programme that was an inclusive system aimed at training people in good business skills demanded by local industries.

Ms. Aluwihare voiced concern that a major problem with general vocational training systems is society's perception of it. She said that many people view vocational training as a last resort for weak learners, and this can doubly affect people with disabilities in vocational training who are already marginalized and often viewed as inferior. She said that people must work to improve the overall image of vocational training.

In the open discussion that followed, an observer from UNESCAP agreed with Mr. Topong's comment that accessibility can be a barrier to an inclusive system and added that policies also can be barriers.

A participant from Malaysia informed the group about her country's quota system, which requires that one per cent of a company's workforce be composed of disabled workers. She suggested that this meeting gather information on policies from different countries, such as the successes and failures of quota systems and accessibility legislation. Another participant noted that in Pakistan there is an ordinance requiring that two per cent of employees in the private sector be disabled, otherwise the company is fined.

Another participant emphasized that in many countries there is a lack of appropriate data for developing a successful inclusive training system.

Keynote speakers respond to comments

In response to comments on Australia's high disability figures, Mr. Smyth King explained that Australia's Disability Discrimination Act defines disability and who should be classified as disabled. It does not differentiate among types of disabilities, and it includes disabilities that would otherwise go unnoticed. Many of the four million people with a disability in Australia never need assistance, he added.

Ms. Perry said that data is critically important in measuring both the need for services and the success of those services. Many countries grossly underestimate the disabled population because people with disabilities are often hidden or do not recognize or admit to their disability. Further, misinformed or poorly trained enumerators and census takers are also an issue. She encouraged everyone to help improve data collection at their respective ministries and organizations.

Other participants took time to raise their concerns about data, with one person noting that qualitative data is also important, such as reasons why companies do not hire people with disabilities. Another participant raised the issue of people with intellectual disabilities and how they are often inadvertently left out of census data.

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Mr. Riordan said he agreed with the statement that policy can create barriers to inclusion. For instance, if a ministry has one department dealing with disability and another one dealing with skills development, then exclusion becomes institutionalized. As long as there are separate agencies and institutions assigned with the task of training disabled people, the public may think inclusive training is unnecessary. Mr. Riordan said there were also some disability groups that might resist inclusive vocational training if they believed it would mean another group or agency taking over their role.

Ms. Thuy said that the quota for employment of people with disabilities in Viet Nam is three per cent but that there was a significant gap between the policy and its enforcement. She added that the important issue was not to look at the quotas themselves but how to close the gaps. She agreed with the comment that accessibility to, from and within training centres is a key issue.

2.4 Working Group 1: What does an inclusive vocational training system look like?

Participants were organized into four different working groups of mixed representation (i.e., government, employers, DPOs, etc.). They were asked to respond to the question: *What does an inclusive vocational training system look like?*

Each group identified key characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system and reported back its findings, which were consolidated into a list of characteristics of an inclusive system. The findings of this working group were the basis for subsequent work throughout the Expert Group Meeting.

Prior to the reporting out and consolidation exercise, six ILO participants of the Skills and Employability Department joined the meeting through a video link from the ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva. They did not participate in the consolidation exercise but did so in the response and discussion session that followed. The new participants were:

- Mr. Mpenga Kabundi, Director
- Ms. Barbara Murray, Senior Disability Specialist
- Ms. Akiko Sakamoto, Training Specialist
- Ms. Heather Labanya, Programme Assistant
- Ms. Pia Korpinen, Associate Expert
- Ms. Stacey Horman, Intern

Consolidation exercise

Facilitator: *Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO*

During the consolidation exercise, one group would tack a statement describing a characteristic of inclusive vocational training systems on the board and read it aloud. Other groups would then add statements that were similar to or of the same theme as the one posted. This process was continued until all the statements

were tacked to the board and categorized by theme. A summary follows. For the complete consolidation results, see Annex VI.

The working groups highlighted the following main issues:

- The need for a **definition of the term “inclusive”**. Some groups believed inclusive means training under “one roof”, while others saw it as an inclusive system with the option to choose among different institutions with access to specialized support services. Common to the groups’ responses was the integration of disabled and non-disabled people in one overall system.
- The **involvement of disabled people in all aspects** of an inclusive training system was a key theme that will require various methods, such as targeted outreach to disabled persons, the participation of disabled people in designing an inclusive system and developing accessible programmes and the hiring of disabled people as trainers and teachers. One group reported that a training centre’s mission statement is critical to setting a standard of inclusion and should be written with the input of people with disabilities.
- A **barrier-free environment** will mean the elimination of all barriers, including psychological. Infrastructure construction must be done with disabled people in mind so that facilities are accessible. Non-accessible facilities will need to renovate, making accommodations and systems accessible to all people, including people who are blind and deaf. Transportation to, from and within a training environment must be made accessible.
- To ensure that disabled people take part in mainstream classrooms, **teaching methods will have to be adapted and assistive learning devices made available**. Classroom materials and information should be presented in different formats. Training systems should provide personal attendants and other support services.
- **Career choice** will be an important aspect for disabled and non-disabled people graduating from an inclusive system. It will necessitate individualized assessments of students’ skills and proactive career guidance that does not discriminate against people with a disability. Disabled students should be seen as candidates for top management and highly skilled positions as well as prepared for less skilled and demanding jobs.
- To ensure the quality of training, training programmes will have to be **market driven** so that they link up with employment opportunities. One group believed quality assessment should focus on the end product rather than training processes, and another group suggested the use of tracer studies to establish the level of success and impact of training. It was agreed that post-training assistance is necessary to maintain a programme’s success.

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- **Attitude change** will be an important component and a determinant of success of an inclusive training system. Non-disabled students and staff must have positive attitudes towards disability and integration issues if there is going to be a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. This, along with **familial support**, will help disabled people have a positive attitude about themselves, their education and employment opportunities.
- The **capacity of staff** in an inclusive system will depend on their knowledge of and sensitivity towards disability issues. Staff must be trained to adapt teaching methods and techniques in support of all students, including those with disabilities. They should also have sensitivity training to create a healthy mindset towards disability issues. Back-up assistance from **disability specialists** should be made available in assessing special needs.
- **Employer involvement** is important for any vocational training system. As their hiring of graduates is essential to success, employer advice must be taken seriously and training programmes and skills should be developed to fit their needs. A couple of groups advocated partnerships between employers and training institutions that would lead to the investment or contribution of new training equipment and assistive devices.
- Institutions will need **adequate resources** that support the training of all types of students.
- To ensure everyone has the **adequate preparation** to succeed in vocational training, children with disabilities must attend and succeed in their basic education. Better linkages should be made between secondary schools and vocational education systems so that skills training builds on previous education.

Response and discussion

Facilitator: *Trevor Riordan, Senior Advisor, SKILLS-AP, ILO*

One participant expressed concern over the language used during the Expert Group Meeting, noting that language had become dichotomized around people with disabilities and people without disabilities. In a truly inclusive system, she said, there should not be such a focus on differences. She also asked others to avoid using the “PWD” acronym for people with disabilities.

One participant commented that the goal of any training programme is employment. He said that employers should be more involved in the training process to help ensure graduates find work. Another participant said that graduates often do not have enough information to find employment and that more proactive matching and job placement would be helpful.

A couple of people strongly suggested that integrated vocational training systems should reach out to and consult with DPOs and people with disabilities. They believed that, typically, training centres do not have adequate knowledge of disability issues and need relevant input. They both applauded the Australian

system for their inclusion of people with disabilities in the development of the Bridging Pathways strategy.

Mr. Riordan opened the floor to the Geneva participants, who variously noted that vocational training centres must carefully construct their policy and mission statements to include people with disabilities.

Ms. Murray, who had recently attended the Ad Hoc Meeting on the UN Convention on the Rights and Protection of People with Disabilities in New York, said that at the meeting there was a majority agreement that countries should develop entirely inclusive systems and that an agreement was not be reached on whether segregated institutions should still receive government support. Ms. Murray asked for participants' opinions on the prospect that, under a new UN convention, governments may not be able to provide support for segregated institutions, except under severe circumstances.

Mr. Smyth King offered the opinion that a vocational training system can be set in different contexts or even locations and still be inclusive so long as everyone has access to the same framework.

Ms. Perry believed that creating choice is the first step towards inclusion and a rights-based approach; people should still have the choice to attend the training centre they want. Ms. Perry said that in many Asia-Pacific countries, people with disabilities do not have any choice about occupation or the selection of training programmes. Another participant agreed, saying that disabled people in some Asia-Pacific countries often have "negative choice".

One disabled participant said that there will still be a need for segregated centres, especially for people with severe needs. He believed that segregated training centres should be eligible for government support because they will maintain an important role.

Another disabled participant voiced concern that integration of disabled students too suddenly might cause alarm and problems among the non-disabled students.

Agreement was made to revisit the issue of segregated settings within an inclusive system in Day 3 discussions.

2.5 Concluding Comments

*Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation,
ILO*

Ms. Perry said that the Expert Group Meeting was part of a concerted, ongoing and international effort to further develop a rights-based approach to the training and employment of people with disabilities. Just the previous month, Ms. Murray had been in Bangkok for a technical consultation on a rights approach to the employment of people with disabilities, which included looking at inclusive vocational training from a policy perspective. Ms. Perry believed that Ms. Murray's

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account and the group's pursuant discussion of the Ad Hoc Meeting in New York on the UN Convention on the Rights and Protection of People with Disabilities gave everyone great motivation, because it showed the international perspective was moving towards a rights-based approach where people with disabilities will have the right to fully participate in society, including in mainstream vocational training.

The day's proceedings provided an overview of what was going on both globally and regionally in vocational training systems, and there was valuable insight into the national cases of Australia and Viet Nam, two very different countries that recognize the need for an inclusive system and are pursuing it.

Ms. Perry noted that SKILLS-AP was a great opportunity for those interested in inclusive vocational training systems to gain access to a diverse network of vocational training institutions, policymakers and practitioners.

In closing, she recognized the group for its excellent and insightful work during the first day of the Expert Group Meeting, which they would build on in the next two days.

3. Day 2: Barriers, Tools and Techniques

Day Two's session focused on barriers to an inclusive system and identified the tools and techniques to reach the vision. Ms. Lay Cheng Tan, Technical and Vocational Education consultant with UNESCO chaired the morning session which began with detailed presentations on two contrasting experiences, the five-year plus national Bridging Pathways strategy in Australia and the recently-initiated Swisscontact programme in Viet Nam. These presentations were followed by a response and discussion session. Participants were then led through two working group sessions. Working Group 2 was to identify the barriers to the inclusive system described during Day 1 and ways of overcoming them. Working Group 3 of the day used the suggested solutions from the previous working group session to further analyze, discuss and develop specific tools and strategies.

3.1 Making the vision real in Australia and Viet Nam

Chair: *Lay Cheng Tan, Technical and Vocational Education Consultant, UNESCO*

“Australia and Its VET System”

Brian Smyth King, Disability Programs, Australia Department of Education

Mr. Smyth King said that he was presenting Australia's experiences in inclusive vocational training in the hopes that participants would draw on its problems and experiences and apply them to their countries and the challenges they faced. He stressed that some of Australia's needs and issues are very specific to Australia and that each country must take into account its unique situation. He did not believe Australia has all the right or final answers but that they are on a positive track.

Mr. Smyth King's presentation included three video clips that portrayed the lives of disabled workers, stressing the importance of having a clear vision of what the positive outcomes of an inclusive system should look like.

First video: Simon Pace, has been in the pre-cast concrete business for more than 15 years. He was injured in 1994 in a vehicle accident, which resulted in the amputation of his legs. When Mr. Pace's former employer went out of business, Mr. Pace and his brother bought the company. Mr. Pace works at all levels of the business, from planning to sales and customer liaison services. The factory is a multistoried building lacking elevators and ramps, and Mr. Pace adjusts by climbing up ladders and stairs without his wheelchair. After the accident, "my whole life adjusted, so to speak," Mr. Pace said. "I had to learn to do things just in a different manner, to think about the job a lot more [and] how [I was] going to do it." Mr. Pace said he believed people with disabilities make more reliable employees than those without a disability because they have something to prove. They will "make sure the job gets done 110 per cent," he added.

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After the viewing, Mr. Smyth King explained that the video's purpose was to demonstrate that someone acquiring a disability later in life can return to work with confidence and be reintegrated. He went on to give an overview of the disability system in Australia, noting that a 1992 review of the Disability Discrimination Act found it to be ineffective in reducing discrimination against people with disabilities, particularly in the areas of education and training. In 2005, the Australian Government enacted new disability standards that would set benchmarks for the further integration of education and training institutions, whether they are public or private. The new standards facilitate integration in the areas of enrolment, class participation, curriculum, student support and anti-harassment policies.

Mr. Smyth King showed a series of population pyramid graphs representing Australia's aging population. Currently, most Australians are of middle age, but by 2051 most will be senior citizens. This trend creates problems on a few different fronts, he noted. Australia's welfare system supports senior citizens and it will become strained as the population ages. Further, the incidence of disability increases after the age of 40, and currently 5.2 per cent of those on welfare access a disability pension as well. A linear projection graph showed that this 5.2 per cent will surely rise. As the population ages, there will be more incidents of disability and more recipients of the disability pension. Along with the general welfare payments to an aging population, these pensions will put a greater strain on the Australian welfare system.

Mr. Smyth King said that it has become a source of concern for the Government that people with disabilities were not entering the workforce and noted that their pensions were straining the Australian economy. This concern was a catalyst in Australia's creation of the Bridging Pathways strategy, which focuses on the integration of people with disabilities into Australia's VET system in order to take them off the welfare system and put them into the workforce.

Second video: Phillipa Gormly has been a barrister on the bar of Australia's Supreme and Federal Courts for nine years. Ms. Gormly has multiple sclerosis and started using a wheelchair five and a half years ago. Although Ms. Gormly said she cannot cook or make herself a cup of tea, she continued to successfully work as a barrister. While some people may see her as less imposing because of her wheelchair, they quickly learn they have underestimated her. Ms. Gormly said that if she did not work, she would never feel like an equal member of society. She has never let her disability stand in the way of her job or success. As Ms. Gormly calmly explained, "I never let anything become insurmountable."

Mr. Smyth King said that Ms. Gormly's example shows how far disabled people can go in the workplace as long as disability systems and accommodations are in place in the society. If the systems were not in place, Ms. Gormly would have had to stay home once her condition worsened and rely on disability pension benefits.

When the Australia Government first started developing the Bridging Pathways strategy in 2000, the people involved did not have an initial understanding of the

problem's magnitude or how to coordinate levels of government in creating a new training system accountable for people with disabilities.

As it developed, four goals were identified:

- **Opening the door** to improve pathways and accessibility to people with disabilities into training centres;
- **Improving the learning experience** with client-focused training and by providing the training sector with skills for teaching and working with disabled persons;
- **Achieving employment** by linking training centres with employers; and
- **Creating an accountable system** to ensure compliance with legislation and by implementing inclusive resource allocation practices.

Mr. Smyth King said he could not be sure how successful Bridging Pathways was in reaching those goals, but he did have figures that would help people decide for themselves. Of the general working age population (those aged 15 to 60 years), 11.8 per cent are engaged in VET, but of people with disabilities between 15 and 60 years old, only 3.3 per cent are engaged in VET. Presented in a linear graph, there was a large gap between the two populations attending VET, but it was shown to be closing over recent years.

When looking at the population already engaged in VET, there were encouraging trends in the state of New South Wales. That state trains 34.4 per cent of all of Australia's VET students. But its share of the country's disabled VET students is much higher, at 43.4 per cent. Mr. Smyth King said that this was because New South Wales' Technical and Further Education system (TAFE) has the most generous levels of support for people with disabilities. This fact reinforces his hypothesis that where support is available, people with disabilities will be successfully integrated into the VET system.

As far as employment prospects, any Australian who completes a VET programme has a 77 per cent chance of getting a job. Among people with disabilities, however, it is only 51 per cent. Before the Bridging Pathways strategy was implemented, it was 45 per cent among people with disabilities.

He noted that Australia does not have a perfect system but that this data suggests they are moving in the right direction. VET enrolment among people with disabilities has been rising where support services are provided, and more disabled VET graduates are being employed.

Mr. Smyth King said that the first phase of the Bridging Pathways revealed a number of problem areas that were addressed during a revision of the strategy in 2004. The first phase found that "one size does not fit all" when it comes to vocational training and that empowering people with disabilities requires a multifaceted approach covering all areas of life. In response to these findings, the 2004 revision focused on a "whole-of-life" approach to vocational training for people with disabilities. The first phase also revealed disappointing results in the areas of employment and employers' perceptions of disabled workers. The 2004

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revision aimed to more actively engage employers to improve employment outcomes, to develop new ways to effectively measure Bridging Pathways achievements and to increase the overall number of disabled people in the VET system.

Third video: Dale Atkins, Mark Loudoun and Roy Weatherill are self-employed tradesmen in Australia. All three men are Deaf. They come from different backgrounds, either having learned their trade at a young age from parents or later in life. Mr. Atkins trained through TAFE, which he said gave him the confidence to overcome the prejudices disabled people often face when employed. Mr. Weatherill worked his way up and when he eventually became a subcontractor he hired Deaf workers for his projects. The success of his team of Deaf employees has proven to other employers that Deaf people can perform a trade as well as anyone else. He and his workers take special precautions, but he said they have never had a safety incident on site.

Commenting on the video clip, Mr. Smyth King said that TAFE courses have made many adjustments to include Deaf and hard-of-hearing students and he pointed out the special safety precautions that Mr. Weatherill mentioned in the video.

In describing the future, Mr. Smyth King noted that diversity and inclusion in VET must encompass people who are indigenous and isolated in rural areas as well as people with disabilities. The concept behind the disability approach to Australia's VET system can also be applied to those groups and to people who are typically underachievers in or excluded from the VET system. He also noted the need to increase the numbers of non-formal agencies and programmes that assist and train people who have dropped out of formal education systems.

“Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training From the Perspective of the Project, ‘Strengthening of Vocational Training Centres in Viet Nam’”

Ngo Thi Thuy, Deputy Project Manager, Swisscontact, Viet Nam

In beginning her presentation, Ms. Thuy said that the movement in Viet Nam towards an inclusive vocational training system is relatively new compared to Australia's, therefore her presentation and perspective would be different. She described a disabled friend who grew up in the United States, a woman who lived a full life from all perspectives—vocational, social and personal. She said her friend could not have accomplished the same if she had grown up in Viet Nam, where opportunities for disabled people either in its VET system or in the job market were lacking.

Ms. Thuy showed photographs from a vocational training seminar in a local village and of mobile training classes being given to people of ethnic minority groups. However, none of the photos contained anyone with a disability, which she believed was indicative of a poor inclusion rate of people with disabilities in vocational training in Viet Nam overall.

The situation of inequality, however, is being tackled by some concerned parties, such as The Disability Forum, an unofficial group in Hanoi advocating for equality and better accessibility.

She also described a December 2005 stakeholder meeting in Hanoi on the theme “Gap Analysis and Initiatives to Address Training and Employment for People with Disabilities”. The meeting focused on people with disabilities and rural migrants because these groups were considered the most vulnerable. The meeting’s key issues were policy, training organizations, accessibility and mobility, and employment. The following main findings and recommendations that surfaced in that meeting:

Policy

- Policies on inclusive vocational training are in place at the macro level but there is inadequate implementation at the meso level. The meeting participants suggested establishing a monitoring body and that local governments promote awareness and mobilize efforts at their level.
- A draft of Viet Nam’s Vocational Training Act has no specific mention of people with disabilities. The legislature was urged to include a new chapter addressing disability issues in inclusive vocational training.

Training

- Equipment and facilities at training institutions are often inadequate or inappropriate for people with disabilities. Equipment should be redesigned and facilities should undergo practical renovation to improve the prospects for including disabled people.
- Public training centres are plagued by low budgets that barely cover overhead costs. The meeting participants called for the Government to pay more attention to training centres and to provide better financial support.
- Because many trainers perform their job out of good will, many of them lack expertise and have not received proper instruction. There should be better research into appropriate curricula and the preparation of trainers, especially in disability issues.
- There is a lack of coordination among social organizations and between mainstream training centres and disability training centres. To solve this problem, there must be better linkage among all stakeholders, including NGOs and different training centres.

Accessibility and mobility

- People with disabilities are more likely to live in rural areas where transportation and access to training is limited. Mobile training classrooms are needed. The meeting participants also suggested transportation to and from a central centre and lodging.
- Poor health conditions and poor medical treatment exist in rural communities as well as a lack of access to other services. There should be better medical support and psychological counselling for people with disabilities and better information on access to job fairs and training resources.

Employment

- There is a lack of job guidance and labour market information for people with disabilities. There should be a concerted effort to establish more training and job guidance centres for people with disabilities and better access to information.
- Employers and the industrial community do not participate in training centres nor do they seem to see an advantage in recruiting or hiring disabled employees. On an individual basis, people with a disability have a high rate of productivity. Employers must abandon their stereotypes and learn that the productivity of disabled workers is high.

Regarding the last issue, Ms. Thuy described a successful job fair in Viet Nam, attended by more than 20 potential employers. During that fair, some 250 people with disabilities were hired on the spot. Clearly, more activities of this nature are needed.

The stakeholder meeting's findings and recommendations clarified some issues for the integration of people with disabilities in vocational training in Viet Nam. While participants believed the integration of people with disabilities can take place in existing centres, as long as they can be adapted for disabled students, Ms. Thuy noted that some centres lack funds or are not ready to make structural adaptations. Raising community awareness about disabilities and confidence-building and self-knowledge among disabled persons were also needs that Ms. Thuy mentioned. She emphasized that people with disabilities are geographically dispersed in rural areas, without much mobility or transport, and that training and integration efforts thus need to be localized and address the needs of remote communities.

Ms. Thuy closed her presentation with a message from disabled people. Referring to a disabled woman's comment from The Disability Forum in Hanoi that "*nothing is insurmountable*", Ms. Thuy said that people with disabilities in Viet Nam do not see a need for special privileges or preferential treatment. They prefer that others see similarities rather than differences when comparing disabled and non-disabled workers.

Response and discussion

Facilitator: *Lay Cheng Tan, Technical and Vocational Education Consultant, UNESCO*

Regarding the figure that only 51 per cent of disabled Australians going through training get jobs, a participant asked what happens to the other 49 per cent that do not receive jobs. Mr. Smyth King responded that there is no way to be sure what happens to these graduates but that a number of them enter training again. Sometimes, they re-enter the training system over and over in hopes of eventually getting a job. Mr. Smyth King invoked the metaphor of a treadmill that students cannot get off without better direction inside the vocational training system.

A participant from South Korea noted some of the problems challenging the Korean disability pension system. Some disabled people who complete training

and find employment revert to the pension system because it is higher than their earned wages, he said. Mr. Smyth King was asked how disability pension payments in Australia compare to income that would be generated through work. He responded that pensions came in biweekly payments of AUD\$400 and could not be considered generous when compared to the cost of living in Australia. People completing a training programme and securing employment would make a higher income than the pension provides.

Questions were raised as to the funding of Bridging Pathways programmes. According to Mr. Smyth King, the Government allocates resources that are distributed to states and territories in the agreement that local governments will set performance targets, and if they do not meet those targets, they are penalized.

A government delegate asked if the Australian Bureau of Statistics included senility or other disabilities naturally resultant from old age in Australia's disability figures, suggesting that such a practice might overshadow the needs of disabled persons of working age. Mr. Smyth King confirmed that the 4 million disability figure includes all ages but that Australia kept separate figures for disabled people of working age (between 15 and 64 years-old), who total about 2.7 million people. He added that of those 2.7 million, 25 per cent receive disability pensions.

A participant commented on Mr. Smyth King's distinction between a Bridging Pathways *framework* rather than a *programme*, saying that it is easier to measure a framework's success vis-à-vis its objectives. Mr. Smyth King said that developing a framework rather than a programme is critical because a programme would create a system that is too uniform and would never work for such a diverse population.

An observer asked for the reasons behind the recent rise in employment of people with disabilities who have completed a vocational training course. Mr. Smyth King attributed the improvement to partnerships between industry employers and training centres. "Communities of Learning" between industries and training centres have been formed, which have led to greater employment opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities.

Ms. Perry added that the Bridging Pathways strategy is also detailed in the ILO publication *Moving Forward*, which was available at the Expert Group Meeting and is also available by contacting her. The document contains a profile of a VET centre in New South Wales that has succeeded in attracting Deaf students through special outreach, support services, literacy training and staff awareness training. The VET centre created a comfortable environment and the services needed for students with disabilities to succeed.

Ms. Perry went on to ask Ms. Thuy to further describe the issue of VET staff training on disability issues in Viet Nam. Ms. Thuy explained that trainer preparation is a serious problem in Viet Nam because trainers often lack technical expertise as well as experience working with people with disabilities. They need greater disability awareness training, including on accessibility and inclusive teaching

Day 2: Barriers, Tools and Techniques

methods. She noted that there was obvious disparity between the Australia and Viet Nam examples on the issue of staff training.

Some participants were interested in learning more about the roles employers play in Australia's Bridging Pathways strategy. This issue was addressed when the Bridging Pathways strategy was revised in 2004, Mr. Smyth King advised. In the revised framework, industry and businesses are involved in the development of relevant curricula and some are involved in disability issues directly.

A participant asked about Australia's TAFE system and what kind of services it provides to people with disabilities. TAFE systems are largely autonomous in the way they deliver services and practices differ between states and territories, Mr. Smyth King explained. As for New South Wales, all TAFE departments make accommodations for people with disabilities.

Mr. Smyth King stressed the importance of awareness raising. "Creating awareness of disability issues is not enough; you must affect people enough to make them see the problems," he said. Only then, he added, will awareness training evoke a sense of responsibility in people to take action and solve the problems.

3.2 Working Group 2: What are the barriers and what should be done about them?

Participants were organized into four different working groups (green, red, orange and blue) of mixed representation (i.e., government, employers, DPOs, etc.). They were asked to respond to the question: *What are the barriers, and what should be done about them?* Participants were given the results of the Working Group 1 consolidation exercise, which represented the positive vision of an inclusive vocational training system. The barriers identified by this working group would, in turn, form the basis of Working Group 3 on tools, techniques and strategies.

Group reporting

Facilitator: *Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO*

During the feedback session, each group reported their top three barriers and solutions. These "top three" selections are noted in the chart below. For a complete list of the working groups' barriers and solutions, see Annex VII.

| Barriers | What should be done about them? |
|--------------------|--|
| Green Group | |
| Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop flexible curricula• Provide quality assurance• Change the delivery but not the content of curriculum |

| Barriers | What should be done about them? |
|---|--|
| Motivation of disabled people from rural areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide flexible training services for rural disabled populations |
| Resources and adaptation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make assistive technology available• Prepare instructors for disabled students• Develop an inclusive training manual for instructors |
| Red Group | |
| Physical, information and attitudinal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite and encourage disabled people to be role models• Institute government policies• Share good practices• Begin inclusive education at a young age |
| Insufficient resource allocation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor implementation of budget• Set up measurable indicators |
| Lack of employer involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officially involve employers with vocational training centres, such as on the board of directors or other positions• Provide entrepreneurship training |
| Orange Group | |
| Resistance of training bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share experience from other countries• Provide orientation programmes for teachers |
| Some disabled people are unprepared for vocational training because they lack basic education | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialized training centres should upgrade their academic skills• Provide community-based job coaching• Employers should provide direct training |
| Lack of training outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect data to inform adequate vocational guidance• Improve coaching and involvement of employers |

Day 2: Barriers, Tools and Techniques

| Barriers | What should be done about them? |
|--|--|
| Blue Group | |
| Inadequate budgeting and misallocation of training centre funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish checks and balances on how government budgets are spent• Provide student loans so that trainees can pay for training, and so training centres will begin to think of students as customers |
| Negative attitudes of students (including feelings of discouragement about training not leading to employment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct awareness and confidence building campaigns, which could draw on lessons from advertising and social marketing campaigns, such as with HIV/AIDS in Thailand• Begin awareness building at a young age to instil values in early |
| Incompetence of trainers in disability issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite everyone, disabled and non-disabled alike, to become trainers• Integrate inclusive training methods into trainer certification• Use the “whole-of-life” approach so that disabled students are supported throughout their lives and careers• Institute better accreditation and monitoring systems to ensure quality of training |

Response and discussion

Facilitator: *Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO*

An employer delegate stressed the importance of attitudinal problems, which could be a major barrier to an inclusive system. He believed that such attitudinal barriers can be overcome by incorporating awareness and tolerance into elementary education.

A Deaf participant spoke about the attitudes of disabled students and of employers, noting that disabled people must motivate themselves. However, he recognized the importance of a supportive environment to their success. Regarding employers' negative attitudes towards disabled workers, the participant said that he is personally disturbed when he hears about a company's low evaluation of disabled workers because he knows that if the workers were given the appropriate support, their productivity would be no lower than that of other workers.

He stressed the need for integration in training and all aspects of life, noting that the many accommodations benefit both disabled and non-disabled people and that they should not be seen as a nuisance. For example, the closed-caption television system helps Deaf people as well as hearing people when they are in a noisy environment; putting ramps in a hotel helps wheelchair users as much as parents with young children in strollers and anyone towing luggage. Including Braille in textbooks causes no disturbances to sighted people. The participant said he envisions a society that is open for everyone, where inclusive education and training will be a natural component.

One participant explored the business case for inclusive vocation training by comparing it to an investment by both government and employers. He said that effective inclusive training for people with disabilities would reduce the number of pension recipients and thus the welfare burden on governments. Employers that fund their own inclusive training systems will see a return on investment in gaining productive employees who have been trained with the company's own methods in a specific skill that the company demands.

A government delegate said that from her experience, it is difficult to recruit people with disabilities for training. She said that there must be a proactive approach that reaches out to people with disabilities and also their community, family members, DPOs and relevant NGOs. Partnerships among these stakeholders would be important in both recruitment and in integration efforts. Another participant agreed and said there should be a designated coordinator for such large partnerships.

Another government delegate cautioned that people with disabilities will have to adapt to the mainstream curriculum. Accommodations and support must be provided so that disabled people can learn on the same level as everyone else.

A participant said that to overcome attitudinal barriers, schools will have to supply counsellors to students with and without a disability. Counselling for non-disabled students will teach them about disability issues and help them in adapting to and welcoming disabled classmates.

3.3 Working Group 3: Tools, techniques and strategies

Working Group 3 identified tools, techniques and strategies to overcome the barriers identified during Working Group 2.

Ms. Perry and Ms. Richmond introduced five themes that would each be taken up by a separate working group. The themes or topics were based on the barriers identified in Working Group 2. The initial organization of each working group was done in Open Space fashion, meaning each participant chose a group based on the theme he or she was most interested in. After participants registered their choices, Ms. Perry and Ms. Richmond moved some participants around to balance the size and makeup of each group and eliminated the least popular group, making four groups total. Any participant who changed groups went to their second or third choice and did so on a consensual basis.

Day 2: Barriers, Tools and Techniques

The four groups contained mixed representation (i.e., government, employers, DPOs, etc.) and were tasked as follows:

- **Group 1:** Develop items for a theoretical code of practice for inclusive vocational training
- **Group 2:** Review the *Draft Resource Guide for Inclusive Vocational Training* and provide comments for improvement
- **Group 3:** Discuss issues involved in developing partnerships with employers and workers
- **Group 4:** Develop a plan of outreach to people with disabilities to engage them in inclusive vocational training

Prior to the reporting out and response and discussion session, five ILO participants from the Skills and Employability Department joined the meeting through a video link from the ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva. The participants were:

- Ms. Barbara Murray, Senior Disability Specialist
- Ms. Akiko Sakamoto, Training Specialist
- Ms. Heather Labanya, Programme Assistant
- Ms. Pia Korpinen, Associate Expert
- Ms. Stacey Horman, Intern

Group reporting

Facilitator: *Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO*

Group 1: Develop items for a theoretical code of practice for inclusive vocational training

Group 1 developed ideas and a draft outline for a theoretical code of practice on inclusive vocational training. For the full results of this group's discussion, see Annex VIIIa.

The group's rapporteur said that a code of practice on inclusive vocational training would serve everyone equally, whether they are disabled or not. A code of practice would aim to improve outcomes of inclusive vocational systems and monitor their accountability and create one global practice for inclusive vocational training systems.

The rapporteur reported that the global practice should be mutually developed by different training institutions. As a base, there should be accessibility for all, and students should be treated as individuals with a focus on individual needs. He also said institutions should develop a case management system to better keep track of the needs and prospects of its students and that accessible accommodations should be adopted with the input and consultation of disabled students and DPOs.

The group concluded that training centres should provide career counselling and use a case management system and other innovative means to support graduates' efforts in finding employment. The group also suggested that institutions utilize

teaching methods outside of the four-walled classroom to provide students with a better idea of a real workplace.

Group 2: Review the *Draft Resource Guide for Inclusive Vocational Training* and provide comments for improvement

Group 2 reviewed the *Draft Resource Guide for Inclusive Vocational Training*, a training tool for vocational training instructors in inclusive practices. All meeting participants received the draft manual and an assessment form as part of their pre-meeting package of information.

The group agreed the manual was an important tool and recommended that the ILO continue to develop it. The manual received high marks in the areas of practicality, usefulness and structure. It received lower marks in comprehensiveness, which the rapporteur said was probably due to the manual being incomplete and still in draft form. She reported there was disappointment that it contained no mention of psychiatric disabilities, which should be addressed.

The group suggested that the manual include a glossary, international examples and sets of brief guidelines on how to adapt practices to individual countries. The group agreed that it was very important that the manual be reviewed by disabled people. One group member said he found some inaccuracies in the manual's references to people who are Deaf and Deaf-Blind.

Commenting that the resource manual had developed a lot of interest, the rapporteur noted that the working group's outcome included the decision to form a permanent working group to continue to revise the manual.

Group 3: Discuss issues involved in developing partnerships with employers and workers

Group 3 looked at how to strengthen partnerships between inclusive vocational training centres, DPOs and employers. Members found it necessary for centres to develop a sales pitch to employers and trade unions, promoting the fact that people with disabilities make good workers. Since the employer base is so diverse, the pitch must address small, medium, large and multinational enterprises and companies.

Sales pitches should include examples of best practices that support the business case. As one group member said, nothing convinces business people more than the bottom line. Employers should be shown current practices where the performance of disabled employees is actually better than of non-disabled employees. Employers should also be convinced that the hiring and training of disabled workers expands their consumer base because the people whom they train and hire—and those people's friends and families—will in turn become customers. Hiring disabled persons also diversifies a company's workforce, which can expand its consumer reach.

The group also reported that there should be partnerships with retirees or veteran workers, who may be willing to instruct training courses or conduct on-the-job training.

Group 4: Develop a plan of outreach to people with disabilities to engage them in inclusive vocational training

Group 4 explored outreach methods and tools to involve more disabled people in an inclusive vocational system. For the full results of the Group 4 discussion, see Annex VIIIb.

The group concluded that social outreach campaigns should be a responsibility shared among government ministries and the private sector. They should also make a greater effort to involve DPOs in promoting and advocating the inclusion of disabled people into mainstream training. The group advocated for the hiring of disabled people as trainers as an outreach tool. Additionally, the group suggested that mobile training units, a product of government and NGO collaboration, be used as an outreach tool to disabled persons, especially in rural communities. The group's rapporteur also reported that skill competitions or demonstrations by disabled students can build confidence among disabled people about their skill potential and raise awareness about vocational training options.

Response and discussion

Facilitator: *Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO*

Ms. Korpinen, through the video link from ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva, emphasized the importance of an institution's mission statement by sharing her experience working at a vocational training school. The school began integrating immigrant students, but there was no mention of immigrant students in the school's mission statement. Thus, there was never a consensus among teachers or administrators on how to deal with integration or immigrant issues and teachers did not know what to do. All the unresolved issues fell onto the school's only counsellor familiar with immigrant issues and integration techniques.

Ms. Murray, also through the video link from ILO Headquarters Office, commented on Group One's advocacy for a case management system in inclusive training centres to track the needs and prospects of its students. She noted that a case management support system is a valuable tool that is already used in segregated systems, but she wondered if disabled students should still be supported by a tool from the old segregated system or if alternative tools should be explored.

Ms. Richmond said that another way to look at case management systems was that they are a positive feature missing from mainstream training. Ms. Richmond agreed that if the system were brought in from segregated institutions as something only being applied to disabled students, then no matter how helpful it was, it would carry a bad connotation. But if something similar to a case management system (with a different name) was made available to all students in an inclusive system, it would benefit everyone.

Another participant suggested that if a case management system were managed as part of a greater guidance or counselling programme, it could apply to all students—disabled and non-disabled alike—and perhaps would not carry a negative stigma.

Mr. Smyth King said that a case management system, or something similar to it, is vital to keep disabled students in an inclusive system. Mr. Smyth King said that people with disabilities have certain needs, including support. If they don't have support from the system, they lose confidence and drop out, he warned.

Ms. Perry brought up the issue of basic academic skills and that some students may not have adequate literacy skills to participate in mainstream settings. Mr. Smyth King added that this is a relevant issue in any generic vocational training institution—inclusive or not.

Ms. Aikyama said that the issue of basic education and literacy took on particular prevalence among disabled students because less than 10 per cent have had access to primary education at all in the Asia-Pacific region. For many disabled people, vocational training seems unrealistic. Ms. Aikyama suggested that the disabled community needs role models that prove vocational training and skilled jobs are not out of reach for disabled people. This would better motivate them to complete basic education. She also said that the deconstruction of stereotypes about poor work performance of disabled people is important and must be conducted on local levels and in local languages, paying close attention to local issues and culture.

Ms. Thuy brought up the use of portfolios (work samples). She said that developing and updating students' portfolios is time consuming, but it is being done in Ho Chi Minh City with success, with each trainee having a concrete example of his or her work to show employers.

In discussing Group Four's outreach tools, Ms. Murray suggested a system of inclusive peer groups consisting of disabled and non-disabled students that could aide in breaking down social barriers. Ms. Murray also said that some disabled students would likely make very good role models, for disabled and non-disabled students alike.

Ms. Horman, through the video link from ILO Headquarters, spoke about her experience in setting up inclusive peer groups at Cornell University in the United States. These groups brought together students who otherwise might not have known each other, and it was an effective tool in awareness building, especially when non-disabled students learned about the unique challenges that disabled students have encountered and overcome. Learning what it is like to have a disability is a very valuable experience for non-disabled students, she added.

Three other participants agreed that inclusive peer groups would be effective in confidence building and outreach efforts.

Regarding Group Three's work on partnerships, a participant suggested that DPOs are another valuable partner to inclusive training centres, adding that they often have excellent facilities donated by NGOs and they could serve as a training venue for some centres.

A blind participant noted that technological tools can only do so much to aid in the training of disabled people. For example, computer software could be made accessible for a person who is blind, but it will not be enough if trainers or classmates do not make—or do not know—the other accommodations needed. The most important tool is public information, and its improvement must accompany the introduction of tangible tools. Society is one of the most amenable tools around and should be used to our advantage, he added.

Ms. Richmond applauded everyone's comments and the discussion, finding them illustrative of the rights-based approach, adding that the final comment showed it is not about fixing a person but about fixing society.

3.4 Concluding Comments

Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO

Ms. Richmond applauded everyone's comments and the discussion, finding them illustrative of the rights-based approach, adding that the final comment showed it is not about fixing a person but about fixing society. She said the tools and techniques developed during Working Group 3 challenged society's institutions and assumptions to make it more inclusive.

Ms. Richmond said that Day 2 saw active participation from many different participants. She encouraged those who had not spoken up yet to do so during Day 3, which would include the meeting's final working group and would produce a set of final recommendations to be disseminated by the ILO.

Other participants commended the day's presentations and working groups, particularly the use of multimedia in Mr. Smyth King's presentation and the review of the draft resource manual during Working Group 3. One participant voiced the common hope that the visions and strategies discussed during the meeting will become a reality in her country.

4. Day 3: What Now?

Day 3, chaired by Anne Richmond and Debra Perry, addressed the question, *What now?* The day began with a further discussion of an inclusive vocational training system and what it means. Subsequently, the role of trade unions in stimulating inclusive systems was explored by reviewing the achievements of the confederation of trade unions in Viet Nam and other examples from around the world. With this additional background, participants were led through the final activity to identify several key statements that would represent the essential findings and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting. Eight recommendations resulted. Participants also completed personal action plans identifying what they would do to move the issue forward as a result of the Expert Group Meeting.

4.1 Discussion: All together, all the time?

Facilitator: *Anne Richmond, Skills Development Specialist, ILO*

Ms. Richmond drew the meeting's attention to the following question: *Does "inclusive" mean that everyone is all together, all the same, all the time?*

Ms. Richmond recalled that in Working Group 1, some participants explained the inclusive training system model using the metaphor of *one roof*. Later, others expanded the metaphor to *separate rooms, one roof* or *separate roofs*. Ms. Richmond asked that everyone participate in a discussion on what one roof or separate roofs mean and whether an inclusive vocational training system can exist in separate or specialized settings.

A government delegate said he believed people with disabilities should be trained under the same roof in an inclusive classroom but that accommodations must be made for those in need of assistance.

Another participant said she believed students in an inclusive system can be trained in separate facilities as long as the system uses the same qualifications, standards and assessment methods and that the results are equal. She said that some disabled students, such as those with intellectual disabilities, have different educational needs that may be overlooked in a mainstream setting. These students may need a separate setting with specific accommodations.

Mr. Smyth King said that inclusion means looking at everyone's total needs and that some needs may have to be addressed in different settings, if the standards, framework and outcomes are the same across those settings. Many participants nodded or voiced agreement.

Ms. Perry asked participants if a system that put disabled and non-disabled students in separate settings but provided equal funding should be considered an inclusive system.

Day 3: What Now?

In response, Mr. Smyth King gave an example of rural training programmes in Australia for indigenous people who are often reluctant to leave their community. He said that if the Government did not deliver separate training facilities to them and instead relied on them moving to an inclusive centre, most indigenous people would receive no training at all. Mr. Smyth King said that disabled people sometimes identify themselves in similar community structures and that specified training centres might have to come to them. To Mr. Smyth King, this was an acceptable form of inclusive training as long as the quality, framework and outcomes of the settings were the same.

Ms. Perry said that funding separate training settings or systems will not affect only people with disabilities, but everyone in the VET system. She was cautious about separating or segregating people with disabilities (or other groups) in an inclusive system and that the goal should be total inclusion, whenever possible.

Mr. Smyth King agreed with Ms. Perry that there should not be segregation within an inclusive system. He said what is important in accommodating specialized needs is a system's flexibility. An inclusive training system can be flexible in its methods, delivery and even its settings without compromising its outcomes.

Ms. Richmond asked for a point of clarification on the use of segregation versus specialization. The group unanimously agreed that the discussion should be on specialized services within an inclusive system, not segregated services.

A government delegate said he did not believe an inclusive training system should totally replace a country's training systems and institutions. He believed there were separate training centres that should continue to exist, especially for people with intellectual disabilities.

A disabled participant said that if a system is flexible enough to cater to everyone's needs, there should be no need for separate settings. He also pointed out that he didn't like the metaphor of separate rooms under one roof because of the physical separation it implied.

Ms. Thuy commented that in any classroom, there are people from diverse backgrounds and educations and with diverse needs. Including disabled students may not be much of a change; the institution will become more diverse than it already is, and as with other groups, instructors will have to accommodate certain needs and train all students to reach the same skill level. She maintained that institutions must still ensure that each student masters the skills, or he or she should not be certified.

Ms. Akiyama said she believed there was too much talk on flexibility in an inclusive system that has not even been developed yet. She said that talking so much about flexibility and separate settings this early on will lead to segregation when the system is developed.

One participant said the preponderance of words worried him. He believed many participants were essentially saying the same thing even though their comments

seemed at odds with each other, because many words have the same meaning but carry different impressions. For instance, participants had admonished the word “segregation” in an inclusive system, but many participants maintained students should have freedom of choice in choosing between separate settings. He said segregation, separation, flexibility, specialization and freedom of choice will lead to the same outcome, but “freedom of choice” is a benevolent-sounding phrase that people do not disagree over. He contended that although participants may use different words and have different approaches, they are still supporting the same goal of inclusive vocational training with specialized settings.

Ms. Richmond concluded that the group seemed to reach a point of agreement on an inclusive system that would leave room for specialized services and settings.

4.2 The role of trade unions

*Dang Quang Dieu, Deputy Director, Vietnam General
Confederation of Labour*

Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO

To provide further information on the role of trade unions, Mr. Dieu, of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, was asked to speak about the role of Viet Nam’s trade unions in the training and employment of disabled people. He began his presentation noting that Vietnam General Confederation of Labour’s concern for disabled workers is stipulated in its constitution, which protects the rights and interests of both disabled and non-disabled workers.

Trade unions in Viet Nam actively plan and contribute to legislation and policies covering training and employment of disabled persons. Trade union members take part in the drafting of relevant legislation before its submission to the Viet Nam Assembly. Trade unions regularly consult with people with disabilities and DPOs and involve them in the development of employment and training policies for disabled workers.

Mr. Dieu said that Viet Nam trade unions operate a system of 40 employment training centres and four technical schools, which are vital to providing Vietnamese enterprises and businesses with a skilled labour supply. Through this system, trade unions introduce 60,000 people to new job areas each year and have helped place more than 130,000 people in employment, including 30,000 disabled people. He said the trade union confederation runs two specialized vocational training centres specifically for disabled workers.

Ms. Perry said that she had visited some of the training centres Mr. Dieu spoke of and had been very impressed by their work in the training and job placement of disabled people, including people with intellectual disabilities. She added that trade unions have important linkages in employment networks and help make up national vocational training councils, where they have tremendous influence. That is one reason she encourages DPOs to get involved in their trade unions. In Australia and India, some trade unions have unionized disabled people working

Day 3: What Now?

in sheltered workshops, helping raise wages and protect workers' rights in those settings.

Ms. Perry gave an example from Japan of the Kanagawa Regional Council of the Japanese Electrical and Information Union, which operates three training and employment centres for people with disabilities. As part of the centres' activities, retired union members coach disabled trainees on the job, often in companies where the retirees used to work. On-the-job training is an effective form of inclusive training, and retirees make ideal on-the-job trainers because they are familiar with and welcomed in the workplace. Further, she acknowledged that RENGO, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, has been a major donor to disabled persons activities in Thailand, especially related to sports.

One participant who said he was very impressed by Mr. Dieu's presentation, asked how the trade union's 40 employment centres integrated disabled people into the workplace and if the centres were separated based on skill area. Mr. Dieu replied that after training is completed, it is up to private enterprises to integrate disabled workers. The centres are only separated by geographical area covered, not by the skills taught.

Another participant added that trade unions are very important in terms of mediation and intervention when problems arise between employees. He spoke of a situation in India where non-disabled employees were interfering with the work of their disabled coworkers because the disabled employees' higher productivity had created bitterness among non-disabled coworkers. The problem was resolved through trade union intervention.

4.3 Working Group 4: What needs to be done and by whom?

Participants were organized into four different working groups (red, orange, green and blue) of mixed representation (i.e., government, employers, DPOs, etc.). They were tasked with making final recommendations for promoting inclusive vocational training. Recommendations should answer the questions, *What needs to be done and by whom?*

Ms. Perry said the recommendations will be disseminated as part of the meeting proceedings and through other ILO mechanisms. They will also be reported to the ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva, SKILLS-AP and UNESCAP as a contribution to the Biwako Millennium Framework, whose targets include inclusive vocational training.

Consolidation

Facilitator: *Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO*

During the reporting out exercise, a rapporteur from each group identified the top two or three recommendations the group had come up with. Those top recommendations were consolidated into eight recommendations according to their theme and similarity. For each group's top two or three recommendations,

see Annex IXa. During the working group session, most groups had developed around ten recommendations total. For the complete list of the total recommendations developed during the meeting, see Annex IXb.

Ms. Perry applauded the groups' recommendations and said the diversity of suggestions reflected the broad expertise of participants. She cautioned that codes of practice are very formal instruments of the ILO, and the development of a new one for inclusive vocational training could take a long time. Mr. Riordan concurred, saying that codes of practice often take many years to develop. However, guidelines for developing an inclusive system would not require such a formal and timely approval process.

To have more impact, Ms. Perry said the meeting should narrow the scope of recommendations and prioritize them. In a weighted voting process, each participant could vote for up to three recommendations that he or she believed were the most important of the eight. The following list gives the recommendations in order of priority.

**Final Expert Group Meeting recommendations
in order of priority**

1. The ILO should develop a code of practice (or similar guidance) and a manual on inclusive vocational training and disseminate the information to all stakeholders in the region. (12 votes)
2. Governments should implement policies and laws on inclusive vocational training systems and universal education; they should adopt such policies and legislation if they do not yet exist. (8 votes)
3. Each country's national forum of disabled persons (or the equivalent) should develop a database on training courses, employment opportunities and employment agencies relevant to people with disabilities. (7 votes)
4. A knowledge management system should be developed to capture inclusive curricula and resources so that any school in the world wanting to implement an inclusive training system can access programmes and resources that have already been developed and tested by other schools. (5 votes)
5. Government and training bodies should make sure inclusive vocational training is available in rural communities. (4 votes)
6. SKILLS-AP should research the incentives for governments, trade unions and NGOs in implementing inclusive vocational training systems. (4 votes)
7. Governments should develop a multisector mechanism that includes the participation of DPOs, employer organizations and trade unions to assess the needs for developing inclusive training programmes. (3 votes)
8. DPOs should partner with other stakeholders to advocate for inclusive vocational training and monitor the implementation of legislation; the ILO should work with DPOs to help strengthen their advocacy skills. (2 votes)

4.4 Closing

Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, ILO

In her closing comments, Ms. Perry asked participants to write their personal commitments on how they planned to move forward with and support the group's recommendations. She promised to mail a copy of the personal commitments in a few months after the meeting to remind participants of their personal action plans.

Participants completed evaluation forms and several made verbal comments expressing their appreciation as well. For example, a government delegate said the meeting had taken place at "just the right time", as inclusive vocational training is gaining momentum as an issue in Asia-Pacific countries.

As a closing activity, each participant voiced one word to describe their feelings of the Expert Group Meeting. Some of those words were *enlightened*, *expectations*, *useful* and *grateful*.

Annex I. List of Participants

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Annex II. Background Note

The following is the original Background Note and Preparatory Work instructions that participants received from the ILO before the Expert Group Meeting.

Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training 14–16 February 2006

Background Note

Issue

There are an estimated 238 million people of working age with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. This represents a significant, productive labour force whose potential is often unrecognized and whose talents may be lost to the workplace and society as a whole. Persons with disabilities are over-represented among the poor, and while work offers a way out of poverty, people with disabilities often have little access to the skills training and associated support that could help them find and keep decent work.

Many countries have policies for including people with disabilities into mainstream vocational training, but in practice, few disabled persons participate in training available to the general population, while training programmes dedicated to people with disabilities are often overtaxed and under-resourced. Several countries are beginning to look at models that would use segregated programmes only for people with the most severe disabilities and as resource centres to advise mainstream programmes on how to integrate less-disabled persons into their training. This approach offers many benefits, including significant expansion of training opportunities for persons with disabilities.

However, in most countries a full understanding of the practical issues and knowledge of useful models and resources for inclusive vocational training are still limited. This expert meeting brings together a group of practitioners to address this gap and to identify practical tools and the means to apply them.

Background

Although people with disabilities comprise a significant percentage of the world's poor, most have been excluded from the very experiences—social, educational and vocational—that could lead them out of poverty. More than half the world's disabled people—a total of 370 million—live in the Asia-Pacific region. In many countries, they are identified as among the poorest of the poor and are the most socially excluded and politically neglected group.

According to UN estimates, only 10 per cent of disabled children attend primary school in this region. The unemployment rate of adults with disabilities is estimated to be between 50 and 80 per cent. Even in some of the most developed nations in the region, only small percentages of people with disabilities receive any vocational training. When they are trained, too often it is in substandard segregated facilities rather than mainstream vocational training institutes. Whether in segregated or mainstream settings, vocational trainers may be unaware of the special needs of people with disabilities, especially those who have severe disabilities, such as blindness, intellectual impairments or cerebral palsy, to name a few. Even when training does exist, the proper links to employment services and a job may be lacking.

Yet, we know that when disabled persons have access to education, vocational training and employment and support services, they can make productive workers and successful employees and entrepreneurs. Clearly, for people with disabilities to find decent work, compete in today's workforce and participate in the economic mainstream, they must possess some vocational skill and perhaps also have the business expertise to be an entrepreneur. Those with severe disabilities may need special training methodologies, accommodations and support services to develop skills and succeed on the job.

Through its system of standards, the ILO recognizes that people with disabilities have a right to access the same vocational services available to all citizens, including training and employability programmes. This is promoted in a number of ILO instruments, including the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), two Recommendations² related to vocational rehabilitation and the ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace. Many other conventions also support the principle of including disabled persons in vocational training and related employability services. Most notable is the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), which states that policies and programmes for human resource development, including counselling and skill development, whether in formal or informal systems, "shall encourage and enable all persons, on an equal basis and without any discrimination whatsoever, to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in accordance with their own aspirations...." More recently, in 2004 this principle was reinforced in Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning. One of the targets of the Biwako Millennium Framework of Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the implementing document for the second Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, calls for the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream training as well.

In spite of major efforts by international organizations, governments, and non-government and disabled peoples' organizations, people with disabilities continue

¹ Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99) and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168)

to face significant barriers to accessing mainstream vocational training or other skills development opportunities that result in decent work. Women with disabilities in particular face even more severe disadvantages. The double discrimination they face and the gender dimensions of this issue must be considered in further analysis and the identification of strategies.

In a 2002 ILO study of 14 countries in the region, most of the countries reviewed had legislation or policies stating that people with disabilities have a right to access mainstream vocational training; yet, in reality few disabled persons are involved in the training available to the general population. Only five of the 14 countries studied kept data on the numbers of disabled persons who participated in mainstream training, and in most cases these figures showed that less than one-tenth of 1 per cent of the trainees were people with disabilities. It is evident that even with policies in place, mainstream centres are not prepared to integrate disabled persons into their programmes on a large scale.

The barriers that prevent integration and the tools and techniques to implement policies and participation of disabled persons need to be further explored, as well as existing examples of good practice. One such example is the Bridging Pathways initiative in Australia, which is designed to increase the participation of people with disabilities in TAFE (Technical and Further Education) training institutes throughout the country. Other good practices also exist.

Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the proposed Expert Group Meeting is to identify the barriers and challenges to inclusion of disabled persons in mainstream training and to suggest practical solutions, tools and techniques to address the barriers and implement existing policies.

Specific objectives of the meeting are to:

1. Identify the characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system;
2. Identify and explore barriers to inclusion and methods of overcoming them;
3. Share country-level experiences and lessons learned related to the integration of trainees with disabilities into mainstream training;
4. Identify tools and resources needed at the country-level to assist training providers in practising inclusion; and
5. Make recommendations for action to create more inclusive vocational training systems.

Participants

Twenty to thirty participants will be invited to attend the expert group meeting. They will include the following:

- Vocational training experts from selected countries in the region, including representatives of government, employer and worker perspectives;
- Representatives of the disability community;

- ILO senior specialists on vocational rehabilitation and skills development;
- Experts from related UN agencies, such as UNESCO, UNESCAP and FAO; and
- Representatives from countries that have expressed an interest in integrative approaches.

Experts will represent either mainstream or disability-specific training systems. Gender balance will be sought in selecting invitees. All invited participants are expected to be technical experts, trainers or service implementers who understand the situation of other training instructors, institutions and overall training policies and programmes in their countries. They should be able to contribute to identifying issues and concerns as well as assessing the practicality of proposed means to address these.

Vocational training experts will be members of the ILO Asia-Pacific Skills Network and will have a responsibility for taking the main issues and conclusions of this meeting to the network, for advocating within it for action at the country level and for practical support between members. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the ILO SKILLS-AP Network will provide support to the meeting. Staff of the network and the ILO Disability Programme will consider issues raised for inclusion within its work plans.

Methodology and preparation

This will be a highly interactive working meeting. The programme includes a series of working groups, which will be informed by presentations and panel discussions from ILO experts, invited resource persons and the social partners.

Even prior to the meeting, participants are required to prepare an information report, setting out their national perspective and experience on the issues being discussed. They will also be asked to report on any tools or models they are aware of that would serve for further development of regional dissemination and use. Additionally, each will be given a draft manual on inclusive vocational training and will be asked to make comments.

The background and outline for the country report is attached to this background note (see “Preparatory Work” pages). The manual will be sent to the nominated candidate with his or her acceptance package.

Language

The meeting will be conducted in English and all participants are expected to have an excellent command of the English language and to be able to converse on technical issues and in small group discussions in English.

Tentative programme

The tentative programme is attached for your information.

Annex III. Preparatory Work

The following is the preparatory worksheet that meeting participants received prior to the meeting. It includes an outline for developing country reports.

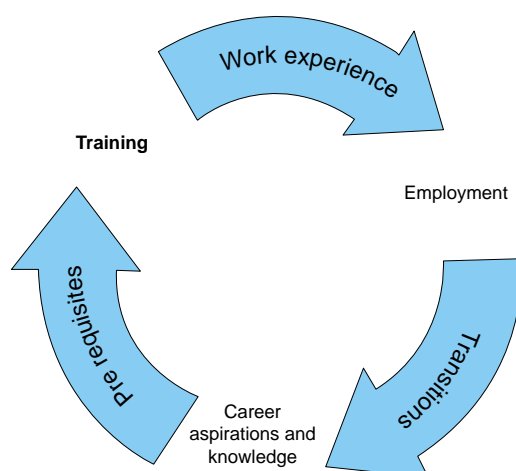
Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training 14–16 February 2006

Preparatory Work

Background

One of the major themes of the meeting will be identifying practical means to implement the policy commitments made in many countries to ensure disabled people are able to access the full range of vocational training and employment skills development opportunities available—as they exist now and as they are improved in the future.

While the meeting will focus on training, the underlying context is wider. Individuals pursue training because of beliefs and aspirations they have about possible work, and training is most effective when it helps a person secure decent work, as illustrated in the following sketch. In addition, accessibility of training, and its effectiveness, depends, on the one hand, on availability of prerequisite preparation and the recognition of such preparation, and on the other hand, on the ability of trainees to access employment. In all elements of this cycle, there are a host of stakeholders and people who can influence or make decisions affecting an individual's choices and access.



When discussing the barriers to full inclusion of persons with disabilities and the tools to address these barriers, participants may need to consider factors in

addition to those directly associated with vocational training institutions or systems (such as physical access, instructor readiness, etc.). For example: Parents may not be aware of work opportunities available for their children and may restrict their choices or involvement in preparatory learning, and employers or institutions that assist individuals to self-employment may be biased against persons with disabilities.

Practical approaches to implementing inclusive vocational training will have to anticipate such barriers and include means to address them.

Anticipated discussion questions for the meeting

The discussions will be structured around four issues:

1. What does an inclusive vocational training system look like?
2. What are the barriers that prevent this from being realized?
3. What tools and techniques will realistically address the barriers that have been identified?
4. What should be done to move the issue forward?

Country reports

Country reports serve two purposes: They should provide information useful to others as reference on the general policies and approaches to the issue in the different countries, and they should ensure that participants can maximize the quality of their participation in discussions.

Country reports will not be formally presented as a whole but will be printed and distributed to all participants in advance of the meeting, and the information will be used by participants in working groups and discussions. Participants may be asked to serve on a panel to present their country's approach or perspective on a specific topic.

The report should be in two parts. **Part A** should give an overview of the participant's country's vocational training system and how disabled people are served in the general training system, in a specialist system for people with disabilities (if there is one), and in both formal and non-formal systems.

Part B should address the four discussion issues and provide either or both a country-based perspective on the issue or a description and examples of how the country is approaching the issue.

Reports should be no longer than 15 pages (five pages for Part A), in English, and should use bullet points, tables and other means of conveying key information concisely. Reports should be provided to ILO by **1 February 2006**, in electronic form. A detailed outline of the report is provided.

Review of a draft manual

Participants will also be expected to review and provide comments on a draft manual, developed originally in Afghanistan. One of the small groups in Working Group 3 will focus on this manual, using the written comments of all participants provided in advance. The draft manual and an evaluation form will be sent with the confirmation letters; participants are requested to provide their response on the evaluation form to the ILO by 7 February 2006.

ILO Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training Country Report for _____

Part A: Overview of the vocational training system and participation by persons with disabilities

Please describe your country's situation, referring to the following points and considering both the formal and non-formal training systems in your country:

1. Policy framework (legislation, decrees, funding, roles and responsibilities, etc.)
2. Nature of methods used to implement the policy (institutions, training providers, role of industry, formal vs. non-formal training, accreditation, etc.)
3. Training options available (to people generally (At what ages? Under what conditions?) and to people with disabilities)
4. Participation and success rates of disabled persons in both segregated and mainstream systems (What percentage of trainees are disabled compared with the percentage in the population of the same age? What success measures are used and what are the results? What have trends been over time?)
5. Please provide information on how gender, ethnicity, type of disability and other factors are addressed in your country's approaches and how these factors impact the access of disabled persons to training

Part B: Preparation for the working groups

Please consider each of the following discussion areas and provide information concerning your country's experience and perspective. Provide concrete examples where relevant (including references or links to further details).

1. What does an inclusive vocational training system look like?
 - Considering the nature of your country's population and its approach to vocational training (formal and non-formal); what would be the features of an inclusive approach? Be as specific as possible; for example, *"Needs assessments in villages done as the basis for developing mobile training would include assessors with disabilities and would actively ensure that needs and opportunities for local people with disabilities were included in the needs assessment and in the delivery of training. Disabled people would participate in training to the same percentage as non-disabled people, and would have*

the same success rate in subsequent employment as their non-disabled fellow trainees.”

- Consider the nature and prevalence of different types of disability in your country and hence the percentage of total trainees who would potentially have what type of disability.
 - Consider factors outside of training itself and the impact they could have: parent's attitudes, employer's willingness to give persons with disabilities access to capital for small business start up, etc. and what would have to be different.
2. What are the barriers that prevent this from being realized?
- Consider what factors, internal to the training system, external or both, prevent full inclusion of persons with disabilities, as described in the first point.
 - If your country has identified some specific barriers, what are they and how were they identified?
3. What tools and techniques will realistically address the barriers that have been identified?
- Have individuals or groups in your country, inside or outside the formal training system, developed ways of including people with disabilities in training? Examples should be given, along with an assessment of the appropriateness of this approach to wider scale or other contexts (for example, a programme to recruit and train physically disabled persons to work in call centres might not be appropriate for deaf persons but could apply to blind persons).
 - Consider a full range of tools and techniques: from basic awareness raising to detailed guidance and hands-on support. Consider the different audiences that need to be reached to address all the barriers and what will “work” for them.
 - Consider cultural and economic contexts for the effectiveness of tools.
4. What should be done to move the issue forward?
- The meeting will conclude by developing recommendations for different groups to take action. Who in your country should take what type of action?
 - What support would be needed from others and therefore should be a recommendation for their action?

Annex IV. Opening Address

Lin Lean Lim, Deputy Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

On behalf of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, I am very pleased to welcome you to this Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training. This meeting is part of a concerted effort by the ILO to promote the equal treatment and equal opportunity of people with disabilities in our region. It is in response to a series of ILO meeting recommendations that strongly advocate for skills development and access to mainstream vocational training for disabled persons.

These events have included the last ILO Asia Regional Meeting, held in 2001, where the delegates made particular note that disabled persons must be provided with appropriate training and productive employment. In 2003, the ILO/Japan Regional Technical Consultation on Training and Employment of People with Disabilities called for governments to take stronger action to implement mainstreaming policies related to training. Delegates also emphasized the particular training barriers faced by women with disabilities, those with substantial disabilities and disabled persons living in rural areas.

Disability-related regional meetings in 2005, including an ILO co-sponsored Pacific Forum meeting on disability in Fiji and two fellowship training sessions sponsored by the ILO/Korea Fund, also recognized the need for disabled persons to have greater access to education and training if they are to become full and productive members of society. Large employers participating in the ILO/ESCAP Multinational Corporation Roundtable on Disability and Development said they need to develop better linkages with training institutions. All roundtable participants agreed that training for disabled persons must be more available and market oriented.

The Asia and Pacific Skills Network, with membership from training institutions, workers and employers in all 28 regional ILO member countries, held a meeting in November 2005. One of the priority outcomes of the meeting was to include people with disabilities in training programmes that result in employment. And, just last month, the ILO, with support from the Government of Ireland, held a regional technical consultation to promote a human rights approach to decent work and disabled persons, which includes their right to access mainstream vocational training. Many national-level meetings have resulted in similar outcomes and ILO constituents are increasingly asking technical assistance on how to include disabled persons in training.

Clearly, we have heard from many stakeholders that we must continue to move forward on this issue.

The ILO recognizes that people with disabilities have been socially and politically excluded. Creating mainstream education and training that includes proper supports for disabled persons will be a major step towards addressing their exclusion, poverty and lack of access to decent work.

Promoting the rights of people with disabilities has been on the ILO agenda since 1925. The ILO has encouraged the development of workers' compensation and security-based programmes for injured and disabled workers. We began to advocate for vocational rehabilitation and inclusion of disabled persons in mainstream employment and training programmes as early as 1955 with the adoption of the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99). As many of you know, a convention is the strongest ILO standard-setting instrument and in 1983, the ILO adopted the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), again dealing with the rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons. Convention, 1983 (No. 159) requires that ratifying countries adopt a policy of vocational rehabilitation and employment promotion that is based on the concepts of equal opportunity and equal treatment of disabled persons in training and employment. The ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace, adopted in 2001, encourages employers to extend these principles to the hiring, training and promotion of disabled employees.

Many non-disability-specific standards also address disabled persons as well. Most relevant to your meeting is the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). It updates the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), by addressing the realities of a rapidly changing and globalized workplace. Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), recognizes that skills development and lifelong learning are critical to decent work and national productivity. It specifically calls upon governments to promote access to education, training and lifelong learning for people with disabilities.

If all the ILO did was set standards, we would fall short of our mandate. In addition to advocacy, the ILO promotes knowledge development and technical cooperation. You are invited here today to share your knowledge and experiences on how to reach this goal of inclusion of disabled persons in mainstream education, training and lifelong learning. This meeting is about a pragmatic approach. What can we do to turn policy into reality?

In this meeting you are being asked to put forward a vision of what an inclusive vocational training system might look like, to identify the barriers to such a system and to suggest strategies, tools and techniques that are needed. That is no easy task for less than three days!

This meeting is called an Expert Group Meeting. You may or may not feel like an expert on the topic but you were invited because of the unique perspective you have to offer. For this meeting to succeed, you all must participate and share so we can benefit from the synergy of expertise that is in this room.

Access to skills development is part of a comprehensive approach to guaranteeing human rights and access of people with disabilities to full community participation. This holistic approach is reflected in the current deliberations for drafting of the proposed UN Convention on the Rights and Protection of People with Disabilities. Similarly, a holistic philosophy underpins the Biwako Millennium Framework of

Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. Simply referred to as the BMF, it is the implementing framework for the second Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons of which UNESCAP has been a major driver. Among other things the BMF calls for governments to ratify ILO Convention, 1983 (No. 159) and to integrate their vocational training systems.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome our colleagues from UNESCAP and from UNESCO to this meeting. Both agencies have been active in promoting the inclusion of disabled persons in community life and specifically in education and training, as has the FAO. I also want to draw attention to our social partners from employers' and workers' organizations who bring unique knowledge about the workplace to this meeting. Finally, ILO standards call for consultations with organizations of and for people with disabilities in policy development, implementation and evaluation. We are pleased to have similar representation at this meeting as well. We also have other representatives from government and NGOs around the region. To succeed in this effort, we must all join in partnership and share our expertise and insights.

Ladies and gentlemen, before closing, I wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Republic of Korea and the Skills and Employability Department of ILO Headquarters Office in Geneva. Their resources and support of the *AbilityAsia* Disability Programme and the Asia Pacific Skills Network has been ongoing. The meeting represents an integrated and mainstream approach to ILO programming of disability issues, a trend that we will continue to encourage.

In closing, I wish you all the best in your deliberations. I hope they result in pragmatic solutions that foster inclusive vocational training systems—a step critical to people with disabilities accessing decent work. Thank you for coming and for your attention.

Lin Lean Lim
Deputy Regional Director
ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Annex V. Meeting Expectations

In an opening activity on expectations, participants were asked to write down what they expected to get out of the Expert Group Meeting and what they expected to contribute. The following is the compilation of those expectations.

What I expect to GET from the meeting:

- Practical solutions to solve problems of employment stereotyping for disabled persons
- Practical solutions to improve inclusion of persons with disabilities in vocational training that leads to gainful employment
- Information on how vocational training centres for people with disabilities can collaborate with other institutions to help more graduates find employment
- Solutions and experiences in placing disabled people in jobs from experts from different countries
- How the Deaf can receive vocational training in an enjoyable environment
- Information on labour issues to bring back to the World Federation of the Deaf's Regional Secretariat for Asia and the Pacific Representatives Meeting, to be held later this year
- How to get around in Bangkok!
- Strategies and programmes on the training of disabled people in other countries
- Strategic and realistic approaches to the inclusive training for disabled people who have little or no education
- Information on uniformity of accessibility of buildings and places for disabled people throughout the region
- The knowledge and experiences of other delegates
- Guidelines on the methodology of implementing skills training for disabled people
- To learn from experiences throughout the region about the training of disabled people
- To learn more about inclusive vocational training systems in the other countries
- How people with disabilities can be given opportunities in finding jobs suitable for them
- To formulate new ideas on the inclusive vocational training of people with disabilities
- To learn about the practice of other countries in the area
- To learn more about the needs of an inclusive vocational training systems from disabled people
- To learn suggestive methods for the future
- Practical tools to include disabled people in skills training at "ordinary" vocational training centres in Viet Nam
- Information and expertise from different countries on how to provide training to people with disabilities

Meeting Expectations

- Information on best practices of and new approaches to inclusive vocational training
- New friends in the field of vocational training and employment of people with disabilities
- New solutions on the inclusion and mainstreaming of disabled people in vocational training and employment
- Experiences of disabled people in vocational training
- To learn more about how technical and vocational education can accommodate disabled persons into their programmes
- Opinions and visions from my friends about vocational rehabilitation and vocational training
- Understanding the barriers to including disabled people in vocational training and how to overcome them

What I expect to GIVE:

- Information on the Biwako Millennium Framework and the work of UNESCAP
- Experience in the training of blind people to be masseurs
- Input from the standpoint of the Deaf
- Opportunities for people with disabilities in skills training
- Experiences from vocational training in Hong Kong SAR
- Experiences and information in inclusive vocational training systems
- The perspective of a wheelchair user
- Information on China's practices in vocational training of people with disabilities
- Opinions and discussion
- Information on the Start and Improve Your Business programme and how to integrate people with disabilities into the programme
- Unique perspectives on such a large and complex issue
- Experiences in the training of disabled people, particularly among those who are visually impaired
- New tools for the inclusive vocational training of blind persons
- Experiences and knowledge on providing job opportunities to people with disabilities, especially blind people
- The viewpoint of a disabled person on job opportunities and vocational training
- Input from a gender perspective, especially at the grassroots level
- Information and figures on people with disabilities in Viet Nam
- Knowledge and experience in the coordinating and implementing of skills training for non-disabled people
- Input and experience, in the hopes of better delivery to the less privileged
- Information on the system in Sri Lanka regarding inclusive vocational training schemes
- Experiences from vocational rehabilitation and vocational training
- Suggestions and assistance, as much as possible, to promote inclusive education and training

Annex VI. Working Group 1: Consolidation

The results of the consolidation exercise of Working Group 1, “What does an inclusive vocational training system look like?”:

| Theme | Characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system |
|---|---|
| Definition of the word inclusive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One house • Disabled people and non-disabled people together • The freedom of choice in training—on what and where • Inclusion without respect to disability, sex, background, even if training approaches are different • Training is accessible and inclusive, with some specialized services for people with disabilities remaining • People with all types of disability are considered |
| Involvement of disabled people in all aspects of an inclusive training system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities are trainers and teachers • Inclusion of disabled people in the development of training programmes • Linkages to NGOs, DPOs and other organizations to build the confidence of disabled people • Outreach to DPOs and consultation with disabled people on the design, implementation and review of the system • Attention paid to opinions, as seen in the Australian system • Government policies take into account the impact on people with disabilities • Mission statement and policy outlines connect with disabled people • Courses are designed with disabled people in mind |
| Barrier-free environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical accessibility to training facilities • No psychological barriers • Infrastructure is designed with disabled people in mind • Infrastructure includes supporting technology and assistive devices • Buildings are accessible for disabled persons, such as ground floor classrooms • Buildings have devices and systems to orient blind people • Barrier-free work and transport for all • Accessible transport • Accessible dormitories where room and board is a part of the training programme |

| Theme | Characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system |
|--|---|
| Ensuring that people with disabilities take full part in classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistive devices• Adaptation of methods and processes• Information transmitted in many formats (e.g. visual, audible, tactile)• Someone who works with family members to engage support• Personal attendants and support services |
| Career choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive career guidance that does not limit disabled people• Needs assessments that are individualized and promote choice• Fair assessment of suitability and training needs• Vocational training is seen as a positive choice and not as something for “losers”• People with disabilities are trained for top management and highly skilled positions |
| Quality of training | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market driven• Leads to employment and self-employment• People with disabilities obtain jobs or become self-employed after training• No difference in outcomes between disabled and non-disabled trainees• Market-demand analysis• Tracer studies to establish impacts• Post-training assistance and links to employment• Post-training supports for self-employment (such as credit) equally available among disabled and non-disabled people• Training is relevant to market needs and uses current techniques• Training is available in many different places and formats and all are equally valued• Assessment is based on competency, not on the training methods used—assessment methods should focus on the end product not the process |
| Attitudes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People with disabilities have positive, pro-employment attitudes about themselves• Friendly atmosphere in classrooms and workplaces• Families of people with intellectual disabilities and people with multiple disabilities support their children and expect them to fully participate in society and employment• Every organization believes including people with disabilities is an important issue to them (not “someone else’s job”) |

| Theme | Characteristics of an inclusive vocational training system |
|-------------------|--|
| Capacity of staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training staff are trained to adapt knowledge and techniques to support all learners, including those with disabilities• Mindset of training staff is adjusted• Staff are prepared and have undergone sensitivity training• Specialist assistance is available to assess special needs and provide back-up assistance to the instructor• Trainers are sensitive to trainees' needs and have a positive attitude towards all students |
| Employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers want to hire people with disabilities• Employers are involved in the training programme and advise institutions on skills they demand and the competencies they require• Employers participate in training, identifying their needs and providing work experience opportunities• Training is a partnership between business and training institutions• Businesses invest in specialized equipment and other training tools for training institutions• Employers are matched with disabled students• High-tech companies contribute new training aids and devices |
| Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resources are adequate to support good training for all |
| Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100 per cent of children with disabilities attend and succeed at basic education• Secondary schools and formal training systems are linked so that skills in the latter build on the former |

Annex VII. Working Group 2: Results

The following reflects the results of Working Group 2, “What are the barriers and what should be done about them?”:

| Barrier | What needs to be done? |
|--|---|
| Policies “force” institutions to accept people with disabilities, and institutions resist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a support package for institutions • People should understand the reasons for institutions’ resistance and how to fix them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resources to help trainers with extra work (that usually isn’t paid) – Orientation for new instructors – CD-ROM training for specific issues, e.g. basic sign language for instructors |
| Structure of vocational training is carried out by too many ministries and there is no coordination among ministries or a single office designated for disability issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be an access/information point for disability issues |
| Train people with disabilities in electronics and combine that with rehabilitation | |
| Lack of trained teachers for disabled students and not enough money for proper support | |
| Some disabled people are not adequately prepared for success in a vocational training system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided in informal and community-based settings • Involve employers in the provision of basic and preparatory skills (Canada’s model is good example) • There should be an important role for specialized training centres to prepare and link disabled students to mainstream vocational training systems |

| Barrier | What needs to be done? |
|---|---|
| Employers are concern about safety | |
| Training does not meet employers' needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve employers at different levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Training boards to define sector needs – Advising on course curricula – As a bridge to future employment |
| Poor placement of people with disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better counselling • Post-training supports • Job coaches • Supports to the employer (e.g., wage incentives, capital incentives, tool adaptations) |
| Physical, institutional, informational and attitudinal barriers Lack of awareness among disabled people, trainers, governments and employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments should provide support (e.g., policy, pilot projects and affirmative action) • Sharing of good practice and its replication • Inviting disabled people to share their experience and to demonstrate their capabilities in vocational training • Families should be encouraged to enrol disabled members at mainstream vocational training centres • Inclusive education from an early stage of life |
| Insufficient resource allocation and inadequate budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public fundraising campaigns • Funding from international organizations • Governments should set specific policies, budgets and measurable indicators and monitor funding • Governments should allocate needed budgets and use them effectively—there should also be checks and balances on how it is spent • All stakeholders to contribute funds for the training of people with disabilities |

| Barrier | What needs to be done? |
|---|---|
| Lack of employer involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve employers as an official part of vocational training centres with responsible positions (e.g., board of directors)• Disabled people should also be trained to be self-employed• Coordination among employers, DPOs and training centres |
| Negative attitudes among disabled students, non-disabled students and trainers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct advocacy campaigns on the skills of people with disabilities• Document success stories of disabled employees and disseminate them through the media |
| Incompetence of trainers and curricula in dealing with disability issues and supporting lifelong learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop disabled people to become trainers• Use employed disabled workers as advocates on the issue• Integrate disability modules into the instructor training programmes• Accreditation programmes in schools and companies |
| Lack of information on available jobs | |

Annex VIII. Working Group 3: Results

The following reflects the results of two groups from Working Group 3, “Tools, techniques and strategies”.

Annex VIIIa. Group 1

Group 1: Developing a code of practice on inclusive vocational training

The following is an outline for sections of a theoretical ILO code of practice on inclusive vocational training:

| | |
|--|---|
| General provisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectives• Principles |
| General responsibilities of training providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serve all• Adjust• Treat people as individuals |
| Data—results | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track and report performance• Track impact• Make efforts to improve outcomes• Accountability |
| Case management—support individual plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efforts to connect graduates with employment• Innovative means for students to demonstrate skills and competency while in training• Job placements during training• Specialist career placement officer for students with disabilities• On-the-job follow-up for people with disabilities |
| Dignity and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive atmosphere• Non-harassment policy• Victimization and stigmatization (refusal to serve)• Presumptive streaming into occupations• People should not presume disabled workers make low wages |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory group of education professionals, employers, workers and people with disabilities |
| Enrolment—access | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Methods for training institutions to facilitate enrolment• Students with disabilities should be entitled to the services and supports they choose and should have assistance in accessing them if need be |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full access on the same basis as other students• Reasonable accommodation negotiated between individuals and institutions to ensure specific participation (e.g. in the classroom, recreational activities) |
| Curriculum accreditation and delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptations for people with disabilities in industry, and encourage such adaptations to be shared across institutions• Links with employers• The same performance standards, certificates and value to employers regardless of a student's disability status• Processes may look different as long as the results are the same• Acknowledge performance differences that cannot be overcome• Staff and trainers are equipped to deliver the performance• Recognition of competencies achieved even if full certificate not met so that skill areas are still recognized by employers |
| Support for instructors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance expectations• Staff are aware of services available to students and have the information to assist access to these services by disabled students• Appropriately trained support staff (e.g. specialist teachers, interpreters, note takers)• Basic awareness briefings• Special training materials for teachers on new skills (e.g. basic sign language)• Accessible information to students and staff |

Annex VIIIb. Group 4

Group 4: Outreach to people with disabilities

The following is a table developed by Working Group 4 during the third working group session on outreach methods to involve more people with disabilities in vocational training

| Area of concern | Recommended Actions | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| | Strategy & activity | Expected outcomes | Responsibility | |
| | | | Government | Disability system |
| Lack of awareness of inclusive vocational training | Social marketing to promote Inclusive Vocational Training systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of good practices • Testimonials by successful disabled graduates • Establish networks of disabled students to advocate within and beyond the community • Develop the disabled viewpoint among trainers • Obtain information on persons with disabilities by contacting DPOs and accessing government records (e.g. registrations) Utilize existing facilities, particularly those of DPOs, as a venue for training | More open attitudes and more acceptance | Department in charge of vocational and educational training | DPOs in partnership with private sector |
| Outreach to rural areas | Mobile training Community-based training | | Local government agencies in collaboration with NGOs | |
| Lack of sufficient knowledge base on the inclusive training | Research (results are shared in the national language) | | | |
| Confidence building | Mentorship Demonstration of skills by role models from local communities and beyond Skill competitions and demonstrations among persons with disabilities | | | DPOs in partnership with private sector |
| Gap between high-achieving disabled people and those without access to basic education | Demystify the stereotypes of low-skilled and low-paying jobs for disabled people | | | Disabled people's family members and DPOs |

Annex IX. Working Group 4: Results

The four groups during Working Group Session 4 produced a total of 38 recommendations.

Annex IXa. Working Groups' Top Recommendations

A rapporteur from each group reported on the top two or three recommendations the group came up with. Most groups had developed around ten recommendations. For the complete list of these recommendations, see Annex VII.

The Red Group recommended the following:

- Governments should develop a multisector mechanism that includes the participation of DPOs, employer organizations and trade unions to assess the needs of developing inclusive training programmes.
- The ILO should develop a code of practice and manual on inclusive vocational training and disseminate the information to all stakeholders in the region.
- Each country's national forum of disabled persons (or the equivalent) should develop a database on training courses, employment opportunities and employment agencies relevant to people with disabilities.

The Orange Group recommended the following:

- Governments should implement inclusive vocational training systems if there are policies and legislation already in place; they should adopt policies and legislation on the issue if they do not yet exist.
- Governments and training bodies should ensure that inclusive vocational training is available in rural communities.
- DPOs should partner with other stakeholders to advocate for inclusive vocational training and monitor the implementation of legislation; the ILO should work with DPOs to help strengthen their advocacy skills.

The Green Group recommended the following:

- The SKILLS-AP network should research the incentives for governments, trade unions and NGOs to implement inclusive vocational training systems.
- The ILO should work with governments and the private sector to promote inclusive vocational training systems and draft a code of practice in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Blue Group recommended the following:

- Governments should implement a policy to make education a universal investment and to make an educational institution's inclusiveness a measure of its success.
- The ILO should study how easily and realistically an inclusive vocational training code of practice can be implemented, especially in rural areas.
- A knowledge management system should be developed to capture inclusive curricula and resources so that any school in the world wanting to implement an inclusive training system can access programmes and resources that have already been developed and tested by other schools.

Annex IXb. Complete List of Recommendations

The following presents all the individual final recommendations from Working Group 4, in an un-prioritized order.

Recommendations calling for specific action by governments and training institutions:

- Governments should support legislation, codes of practice and enforcement for inclusive training for all people, including those with disabilities.
- Governments should make progress in implementing inclusive vocational training systems if there are policies and legislation in place, and they should create policies and legislation if they do not yet exist.
- Responsible levels of government should promote a barrier-free environment everywhere.
- Governments and mainstream training institutions should develop a plan of action for inclusive training.
- Vocational training centres should improve their accessibility.
- Governments should provide an effective support system to employers who employ disabled workers; this could include quota legislation.
- Governments should provide better support for disabled persons to succeed in self-employment.
- Governments should develop employment standards on disabled persons.
- Governments should ratify and enforce ILO Convention, 1983 (No. 159) and ensure that there are inclusive training systems both formal and informal.

Recommendations specific to existing vocational training other systems:

- Governments should ensure better linkages between rehabilitation and support services and training services to ensure that they are complementary and fit individuals' needs.
- Institutions should encourage social connections between trainees and the whole of society.
- Governments and training bodies should make sure inclusive vocational training is available in rural communities.
- Governments should develop a multisector mechanism that includes the participation of DPOs, employer organizations and trade unions, to assess the needs and begin developing inclusive training programmes.
- In each country, a national forum of disabled persons (or the equivalent) should develop a database on training courses, employment opportunities and employment agencies relevant to people with disabilities.
- SKILLS-AP should research the incentives for governments, trade unions and NGOs in implementing inclusive vocational training systems.

Recommendations calling for the development and dissemination of good practices and models:

- The ILO and local universities should research and give feedback on vocational training in rural areas, including implementation and monitoring, tools and performance.
- Media, employers and the ILO should provide good corporate citizen investor information (e.g., the FTSE 4 Good Index) so investors can put their money into companies that follow guidelines—including micro credit.
- More research to identify requirements.
- The ILO should develop a code of practice and manual on inclusive vocational training and disseminate the information to all stakeholders in the region.
- The ILO should work with governments and the private sector to promote inclusive vocational training and draft a code of practice in collaboration with key stakeholders.
- The ILO should study how easily and realistically a code of practice on inclusive vocational training can be implemented, especially in rural areas.
- The ILO and UNESCAP should jointly pilot inclusive training models.

The role of DPOs and other organizations as lobbyists for action and where the need to build their capacity was noted:

- Call on unions and DPOs to work together to extend opportunities for people with disabilities to engage in inclusive vocational education and training and employment.
- DPOs should partner with other stakeholders to advocate for inclusive vocational training and monitor the implementation of legislation, and the ILO should work with DPOs to help strengthen their advocacy skills.
- Employers' and workers' organizations and DPOs should be active advocates in this area.
- DPOs should undertake marketing and awareness campaigns through publications profiling successful employers, enterprises and employees.

Recommendations referencing the role of different social partners:

- Existing national coordinating bodies should have real influence on government decisions.
- Employers should participate in defining and designing training and should provide work experience opportunities.

Recommendations ensuring that information and ideas are documented and shared:

- Stakeholders should form networks to share good practices and technology developments.
- A knowledge management system should be established for inclusive coursework so that any school in the world wanting to implement an inclusive

training system can access programmes that have already been developed and tested by other schools.

- Governments should develop network systems to coordinate development throughout the country and at all government levels.
- The ILO should collect examples of good practice and role models.

Recommendations calling for increased resources and suggesting the need for accountability:

- Governments should implement policy to make education a universal investment and to make an educational institution's inclusiveness a measure of its success.
- Establish funding to support inclusive vocational training and access by disabled people.
- There should be equal opportunity for all, and institutions should be held socially accountable by means of social contracts or media audit.

Recommendations on raising awareness:

- Champions of the system should be identified to promote positive role models.
- Parents and families of disabled persons should be educated to promote awareness and responsibility.

Finally, one group recommended:

- The recommendations from this working group should be circulated to all stakeholders by ILO.

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