



Submission to AusAID Disability Taskforce

**From Australian Pacific Island
Disability Support Ltd.**

August 2008



Introduction

Congratulations on the release of your consultation paper, *Development of a disability strategy for Australia's aid program*. This is a significant development for people with disabilities in the Pacific.

Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support Ltd. (APIDS)¹ is a not for profit company that works with Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) in order to improve the lives of people with disabilities in the Pacific Islands of Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. These are the island member states of the Pacific Forum. APIDS also works with a Disabled Peoples Organisation in Timor Leste, which is an observer member of the Pacific Forum.

APIDS has consulted with the following partners in the development of this submission:

Fiji Disabled Peoples Association
Te Toa Matoa (Kiribati)
Pacific Disability Forum
PNG National Assembly Of Disabled Persons
Nuanua O Le Alofa Inc (Samoa)
Disabled Peoples Association of Solomon Islands
Kra'as Hadomi Timor Oan (Timor Leste)
Naunau 'o e Alamaite Tonga Association
Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (Vanuatu)

APIDS believes that Disabled Peoples Organisations must be empowered to meet the objectives that they have prioritised for people with disabilities in their own countries. In order to do this effectively, appropriate resources need to be provided. These resources include but are not limited to training, funds, and support/networking opportunities.

¹ Information on APIDS Directors is contained in Appendix Two

Response to consultation questions

Question 1 - What definitions and models that describe disability are helpful to consider for the Disability Strategy?

The definition from The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the most appropriate, as it reinforces both the social model of disability and the rights based approach.

The third paragraph under 2.2 Social Inclusion must be stronger, especially given the principles which follow. We suggest that it reads:

*Social exclusion is a major contributor to the level of poverty which people with disabilities experience, particularly those who live in developing countries. **In order to achieve the targets set for the Millennium Development Goals and to alleviate poverty, people with disabilities must be actively included in development processes and activities.***

APIDS has a strong commitment to the rights based approach. By this we mean that:

- there must be an appropriate group held accountable for enjoyment of rights by all (usually government),
- rights must be extended to all equally,
- people must be empowered to actually enjoy their rights,
- rights must be backed by a legal framework,
- processes promoting rights must be sustained and sustainable, and
- development and implementation of such programs must use a genuinely participative approach, i.e. people with disabilities in the affected communities should be involved in the creation of such policies and programs.

The involvement of people with disabilities is not arguable under the rights based approach.

The rights based approach should also be emphasised in discussing the spectrum of programs.

Prevention should be prevention and early intervention – many disabilities can not be prevented, but early intervention can limit the social and economic consequences for individuals. For example, (1) mainstream education with appropriate supports improves social, educational and economic outcomes for young people with disabilities; (2) early identification of signs of psychosis usually reduces the need for acute hospital care and/or intervention of the justice system for people with mental illnesses.

Similarly other disabilities, which in many Pacific Island Countries are not identified early, result in people not accessing education or training. Thus a blind/vision impaired child or a deaf/hearing impaired child may not be sent to school or drop out quite early and as a young person be diagnosed as also having an intellectual disability simply because he/she is illiterate, not socialised and lacking in any independent living skills.

Also, prevention should not focus only on the prevention of impairments but the prevention of disability – the latter being the elements in society which turn impairments into exclusion, discrimination, lack of access etc. This means that prevention is as much about changes in society (e.g. service delivery, Government systems, legislation and policy development) as it is about health care and community education which prevents accidents, illness and other disabling events.

Question 2 - Are these suitable principles to guide our work? Are there others?

We agree that the principles are suitable, but stress that the overarching principle should be that the approach to the Australian Disability Strategy is rights based, with the other principles falling underneath. We would like to highlight the following:

The first principle, *Active role for people with disabilities* has the following implications:

- i) Funding must be provided to Disabled Peoples Organisations in order for their leadership to be supported, effective and sustainable.
- ii) It also is an accepted principle in Australia that people with disabilities without employment are provided with a payment for their expertise when consulted. We believe that this principle must be adhered to when the Australian Government is consulting with people with disabilities in the Pacific and Asia. Currently consultants are paid for collecting such information and Pacific Islanders and Asians with disabilities are not recognised for their equally valuable time spent.

The second principle, *Recognise rights* should be an over-arching approach to all AusAID's disability work, not one of six principles. The rights based approach starts **all work** on the basis of the six principles set out above and the UN Convention, rather than simply sees rights as things to be respected and protected.

As with our comments on Question 1, the focus in principle three should be prevention and early intervention. "Prevention of impairments" is not something that should be highlighted in a disability policy but rather in relevant policies such as health, family violence or traffic. The disability policy should be primarily about the rights of people with disabilities.

The fourth principle, *Focus on Women and Children* is vital. Disability policy must recognise that women and men experience disability differently. Therefore gender analysis will be appropriate in order to ensure all programs are soundly based (as with all Australian aid activities). It is also important that policy has a positive impact on both women and men; as well as a positive impact on relationships between women and men and their respective roles and responsibilities. Importantly, the policy should recognise the collective nature of societies in which aid programs operate and therefore the importance of working with groups.

The fifth principle, *Understand Country Differences*, is critical. While there will be some similarities, as well as the obvious cultural differences, each country will have their own areas of priority. This is one of the reasons why a regional program which focuses on a specific issue or priority is not recommended, although there is value in regional funding/management and occasional sharing of lessons between different countries.

Question 3 - Is mainstreaming a useful approach for the disability strategy? How can we make sure mainstreaming of disability is meaningful, and not simply and 'add-on'?

This question assumes there is an "either/or" situation. In other new areas of aid work that are relevant to whole societies or countries, it is important to both consider how to provide specific support as well as to ensure all aid relevant activities take the issue into account. Neither mainstreaming on its own nor specialised programs in isolation are likely to be highly effective in the short term, especially given Australia's lack of experience and capacity in disability programming. APIDS considers that it could be quite some time before this approach would be useful at all.

The rights based approach, described above, requires both mainstreaming and specialised support/services but not does make the distinction between them in practice. For example non-discriminatory approaches and legal frameworks support mainstreaming while empowerment of the affected community is largely about targeted and specialised support.

In our experience of gender mainstreaming, we are not optimistic that mainstreaming in relation to disability will be widely effective on its own. However, that does not mean that AusAID should not try to ensure all its activities include efforts which make services and buildings accessible, policies disability-friendly and strategies inclusive.

In terms of making existing aid programs disability mainstreamed, it will be a matter of introducing the idea within existing joint management systems (e.g. the next Project Coordination Committee meetings or equivalent) with partner Governments, and assessing the openness to collaboration. There is clearly no point in imposing this policy on Governments who are not interested. It will achieve nothing but resentment. A realistic but firm planning horizon must be set by which development implementers (contractors, NGOs, multilateral agencies etc.) are expected to ensure that their programs actively take into account the needs and rights of people with disabilities. Then monitoring processes would need to be established to ensure compliance with the AusAID policy.

The only way to avoid disability being an “add-on” is to adequately resource all aid activities so that the appropriate analysis is undertaken, strategies developed and personnel appointed. This is not going to happen in the short term, but should be aimed for in the next 5-10 years. AusAID should consider developing capacity in this area, perhaps commissioning the development of training programs for aid workers in all states on disability inclusiveness etc.

Please also refer to comments in Question 12 about the Biwako Millennium Framework.

Question 4- Which countries in the Pacific and Asia regions may be good locations to start the implementation of a disability mainstreaming approach and why? What are the criteria that AusAID may use to make these choices?

The first countries to start working in generally should be those where there are governments or Disabled Peoples Organisations that want to work with Australia on the topic; preferably both in the beginning so AusAID may enjoy and learn from some early success. The only way to find out whether there is interest is to ask within a partnership context.

Disability programs should not be undertaken regionally, but bilaterally, working with national governments or Disabled Peoples Organisations that are interested in working collaboratively with the Australian Government or Australian NGOs.

It is also recommended that activities start small, build in steps to encourage learning about what works well and why, and then do more of what works well. Ideally programs would consider existing policies and programs and seek to build on what is working. If there is also a desire to fill gaps then AusAID would consult with Disabled Peoples Organisations in those countries which have developed disability policies with a view to supporting activities in their plans and policies that have not yet been implemented.

Since Australia has no track record in this area, and other donors' work has been in different cultural contexts and within different policy paradigms, Australia and its partners need to work out for themselves what kinds of relationships and programs

will work for them both. There is no ideal model, but a set of principles and lessons learned from other aid activities and others' experiences of working with people with disability on disability issues.

In the Pacific, AusAID should work in consultation with other donor agencies to select partner Governments and agencies. NZAID and regional organisations such as Pacific Disability Forum and Disabled People International (Asia Pacific) are the main examples.

One way for Australia to generate and promote interest by national governments in disability strategies, is to support the advocacy capacity of national Disabled Peoples Organisations, so they are able to advocate to their Governments on their priorities.

Question 5 - How can multilateral and regional programs be used as a vehicle to improve disability outcomes at the national level?

Multilateral and regional programs should only be used where they have a proven commitment to and demonstrated capacity to implement disability activities. Several multilateral agencies have particular experience – e.g. ILO in relation to access of people with disabilities to work; UN ESCAP in relation to disability rights in Asia and Pacific; UNICEF in relation to child-friendly schools (although they are only just beginning in this area in 2008) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat regarding regional and national policy development. Unfortunately, many UN agencies do not have expertise in this area or have a poor record.

Question 6 - What are the priority disability specific initiatives that AusAID should focus on and why?

The Biwako Millennium Framework does not just focus on disability specific initiatives – in fact the approach combines mainstreaming and disability specific initiatives without seeking to divide them. We believe that dividing the approach into disability specific and mainstreaming is not necessary given the principles stated earlier.

Research and consultation need to be undertaken to identify what can be done in the short, medium and long-term. AusAID would not develop any other programs in a vacuum and disability should be treated the same. The focus in each country or context needs to be negotiated and should be expected to evolve over time on the basis of:

- joint planning with partners,
- a progressive engagement , and
- a commitment to action research to find out what works well and why.

These are all generic development cooperation principles that apply to all activities. Disability should not be treated differently.

It is unrealistic to identify single initiatives without careful analysis of what partner countries (either Governments or Disabled Peoples Organisations) want to prioritise. It is inappropriate for Australia to determine initiatives which it thinks will be relevant to multiple, dynamic and complex contexts, without dialogue and analysis. Every country is different in terms of its current approaches and systems vis-à-vis disability, in terms of its current capacity and level of interest and in terms of its willingness to collaborate with Australia.

At the most generic level, activities which relate to children's access to school, people with disabilities' access to work, and access to information and public buildings may be appropriate, but again, in each context, the focus and processes will differ.

Question 7 - How should the Strategy define and address the prevention of impairment?

The Strategy should simply say that AusAID's health strategy should be revised to consider the prevention of the negative effects of disability. It is not centrally a role for the disability policy, which should be more focussed on the rights of the 10 to 20% of people who have disability now.

An emphasis on the prevention of the negative effects of disability will incorporate:

- early identification and intervention programs for children with disabilities; and
- policies and systems which redress society's negative approach to people with disabilities. These policies and systems need to be strengthened across all service delivery and other programs so that discrimination, exclusion and lack of participation in development are reduced.

Question 8 - How do we ensure that we get the correct balance between mainstream and disability specific initiatives?

Research and analysis, plus negotiation and consultation with the wide variety of stakeholders in the current program and with Disabled Peoples Organisations and Governments, in the context of the principles of a rights based approach, will help to identify the priorities and opportunities in terms of Australian assistance. Really, there is no such thing as "the correct balance" – the distinction is relatively meaningless in reality, because the current Australian aid program, (into which mainstream activities will be inserted) is a construct of the Australian Government, not based on any global definition of "correctness". A balance could mean anything from the number of activities, the dollar allocations, the amount of effort expended or anything else. There is no point in pre-determining "a correct balance" because the priority should be on working out what is possible in each country, and it is not known in advance what country partners and organisations will prefer and wish to hear from Australia about.

What is important is to work out a variety of ways to improve current Australian activities, gradually working out what is possible and what is effective, as well as undertake a range of activities, within trust-based partnerships, which will contribute to improving the lives of people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

Question 9 - What are the criteria that AusAID could use to make these choices for Qs 6-8 above?

The best way for AusAID to proceed is to do what partners want within current and future partnerships with Australia within the context of advancing the rights of people with disabilities, and develop a series of practical strategies and programs over time. Our view is that Australia risks being seen as arrogant and imposing if it produces a coherent, watertight, fixed, results-based and definitive plan of specific projects in an area where it has such little expertise internationally. While Australia has some excellent programs among people with disability in Australia, this does not mean we have a great deal of expertise in disability issues internationally.

The implication of this is that AusAID's Disability and Development Strategy should include a staged approach:

- to learning and then raising awareness and understanding about disability issues
- to building relationships
- to supporting existing organisations to implement their existing objectives and priorities, based on the current round of consultations with partner Governments and Disabled Peoples' Organisations

- to learning about the new context of work, from Australia's and others' experiences
- to building on what already exists and what we learn over time.

These three steps will increase Australia's credibility in the area and in the medium term contribute to the identification and delivery of more concrete development processes and results. Short, medium and long-term steps can be included in the Strategy. We should not try to do everything at once

Question 10 - How can people with disabilities have an increased role in improving knowledge and understanding of disability and development? What assistance is needed to support this increased role?

People with disabilities already know their situation and are well aware of the constraints and challenges they face, including their exclusion from development processes. Many Disabled Peoples Organisations, in our experience, also have an acutely sensible understanding about the issues and opportunities.

It is increased knowledge and understanding among policy makers and aid agencies that is more needed. The best way to achieve this is to provide resources to Disabled Peoples Organisations so they can:

- educate and inform their respective communities,
- advocate to their respective governments, and
- educate donors about what is appropriate in their respective contexts.

Also, AusAID should support increasing understanding (through awareness raising and skills training) among its own staff, contractors and others about disability issues, preferably building on the expertise amongst Australian NGOs. This should be a pre-requisite for Australian aid officials and agencies before they engage with people in developing countries about disability issues.

Question 11 - What types of enquiry will be most helpful in improving our understanding of disability and development and therefore improve the evidence base?

The most appropriate means for learning about this complex and challenging area of work is through participatory, joint research and openness to learning across the board. Enquiry should not be based on a single paradigm or model, but an acknowledgement of diversity and a commitment to learning at multiple levels. Aid officials involved in program management for example, have vastly different learning needs from those involved in policy development or detailed evaluation. People and organisations learn in many different ways and research can be undertaken at many different levels. It will not be possible to reduce disability issues to a simple checklist or a single set of recommendations. As with many other development issues, a diversity of views, experiences, levels of understanding and research paradigms apply. As a donor, Australia has the opportunity to promote shared learning across and within sectors, to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities themselves in research activities and to disseminate findings that are relevant to the full variety of development practitioners and organisations.

Question 12 - What are priority areas and issues we need to know more about and why?

Biwako Millennium Framework includes seven priorities for the region and we would like to restate them here:

- Self-help organisations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations
- Women with disabilities
- Early detection, early intervention and education
- Training and employment, including self-employment
- Access to built environments and public transport
- Access to information and communications, including information, communication and assistive technologies
- Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes

This is framework that most governments in Asia-Pacific have signed and is one that is familiar to Disabled People's Organisations.

There are detailed strategies under each priority that should be included in Australia's Strategy.

Of critical importance to the Australian Government's bilateral approach to working with Asian and Pacific countries, is that governments have signed the Biwako Millennium Framework. While many actions require significant funds, the majority require the goodwill of government and non government organisations to make changes that are cost neutral, but that do require a Disabled Peoples Organisation with the resources to:

- advocate for changes, and
- participate in both consultative and decision making processes.

As an example of this in practice, in 2004 Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA) undertook an intensive campaign on the Biwako Millennium Framework which included training of FDPA Board, staff and members and preparation of written material for members, government officials and community members. Members of FDPA Board and staff wrote to all government departments and met with at least five departments to discuss the Framework and how each department could develop strategies and actions. At the time FDPA prepared a comprehensive list of actions that were cost-neutral, which we have included in this submission to illustrate how with goodwill, significant actions can occur². Government Officials at the time utilised this information in their internal discussions regarding implementation of the Framework in Fiji.

While the actions of Government departments were proposed as being cost neutral, the process of informing and engaging with them, however, did require funds for:

- preparation of written material
- training
- administration costs associated with identifying the appropriate government official to approach, (e.g. administration assistant wage, telephone calls, postage, stationary)
- transport.

This approach reinforces the rights based approach principles stated earlier. That is:

- there must be an appropriate group held accountable for enjoyment of rights by all (usually government),
- rights must be extended to all equally,
- people must be empowered to actually enjoy their rights,
- rights must be backed by a legal framework,
- processes promoting rights must be sustained and sustainable, and

² See Appendix One



- development and implementation of such programs must use a genuinely participative approach, i.e. people with disabilities in the affected communities should be involved in the creation of such policies and programs.

Question 13 - How can AusAID most effectively help increase knowledge and understanding on disability within countries?

It is imperative that AusAID must resource the Disabled Peoples Organisations to undertake this education and awareness within their own countries. They are the ones with knowledge of how to increase knowledge and understanding within their own culture. Of course this process cannot be undertaken quickly, and as with many other development processes, results cannot be achieved in one or two years. As with other behaviour change processes, it takes half a generation to see real results. For example, we could consider the difficulty in achieving outcomes in behaviour change to reduce HIV infection rates, despite much higher funding levels. However, with sustainability and capacity development lessons learned to date, this is the most effective way to proceed.

Sustainable capacity building for small NGOs, such as the Disabled Peoples Organisations referred to here, must be slow and long-term. Too large amounts of money too soon can set organisations up for failure and result in damage to the advancement of people with disabilities. Ideally Disabled Peoples Organisations would be supported to develop strategic plans, if they do not have them already, and then AusAID could financially support some or all of their priorities over a reasonable time frame. This may have to include funding basic infrastructure to enable the organisation to simply operate and govern itself.

Question 14 - What are some of the changes that we want to see from a comprehensive Disability Strategy?

We would like to see the following significant changes over time:

- significant reduction in poverty for people with disabilities and their families
- better success with delivering Millennium Development Goals – so that the 10 to 20% of people excluded from development may have a chance of participation
- achievement of Biwako Millennium Framework strategies and actions
- Disabled Peoples Organisations provided with the resources to enable them to lead the process of change in their own countries
- improved understanding within Australian Government and NGOs of current issues for people with disabilities within each country in the region and appropriate strategies to support their own efforts to achieve equity of access and opportunity to participate in development
- efforts by all aid practitioners to make their programs inclusive for people with disabilities
- efforts by all aid practitioners to achieve genuine outcomes for at least some people with disabilities

Question 15 - How can we best measure these changes respecting the different contexts and cultures where the Strategy will be implemented?

As with many other development issues, it is unrealistic to expect to be able to clearly measure broad changes with simple tools or approaches. Changes in attitudes, service delivery, policies, quality of programs, self-esteem, organisational performance and capacity cannot simply be added up to produce any meaningful piece of data. Each activity will be negotiated to have a different set of objectives at

different levels, so understanding the progress and benefits (results/impact) of each activity will need to be based on the particular context and specified objectives and processes.

Australia should build on lessons learned to date in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) development activities, including the work currently being undertaken for AusAID in relation to M&E for community development activities (with Office of Development Effectiveness). Overall, AusAID needs to be realistic about what is expected to be achieved and the timeframe involved. As noted earlier, AusAID should commit itself to learning over time about what works well and why (action research).

The idea that Australia could claim to bring about direct and specific changes for a countable number of individual people with disabilities is not consistent with contemporary understanding of the complexity of development processes and evaluation.

Question 16 - How can we best ensure that people with disabilities are involved in the measurement process?

As noted above, the best way is to ensure that the overarching approach for Australia's work in the area is the rights based approach.

Secondly, the key way to ensure inclusion is to resource and support Disabled Peoples Organisations to participate in monitoring and evaluation processes and research activities. This might include training, support for meetings of people with disabilities so they can discuss changes over time, workshops, mentors, encouraging links with in-country and other expertise and leadership training/coaching.

Question 17 - What will a successful comprehensive Disability Strategy achieve and how will we know?

The answers to this question are included in answer to question 14

Conclusion

The comments and suggestions included in APIDS' submission are based on extensive experience of its office bearers. We have a breadth of disability and development expertise which has informed our responses to the questions raised. We have witnessed what works well in Asia and Pacific Island countries in relation to disability and development and hope that Australia's official aid program will be able to build on lessons learned and make a meaningful contribution in this area. An ongoing openness to learning through AusAID's own experience (i.e. "monitoring to improve" rather than too much emphasis on "monitoring to prove") will be particularly important given that there is little track record within the organisation in this area.

APIDS once again commends AusAID for developing its initial paper in relation to disability in the Australian aid program. We particularly commend AusAID's extensive Australian and regional consultation process with interested and experienced individuals and organisations. We look forward to seeing the final strategy incorporating ideas and suggestions generated by these consultations.

Appendix One - BIWAKO MILLENIUM FRAMEWORK

GOVERNMENT TARGETS AND ACTIONS – NO ADDITIONAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION NECESSARY³

A. SELF HELP ORGANISATIONS

Target 2. Governments and civil society organizations should, by 2005, fully include organizations of persons with disabilities in their decision-making processes involving planning and programme implementation which directly and indirectly affects their lives.

Action required to achieve targets

1. Governments should implement measures under the direction of the national coordination committee on disability to increase the level of consultations between self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and diverse sectoral ministries, as well as with civil society and the private sector. These measures should include training of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, on how to participate effectively in the various decision-making processes. Governments should establish guidelines for the conduct of consultations and the process should be periodically reviewed and evaluated by representatives of self-help organizations of persons with diverse disabilities.
2. Governments should establish a policy review panel within the national coordination committee on disability consisting of representatives of persons with diverse disabilities. The panel should review all policies and their implementation which directly or indirectly affect persons with disabilities.
3. Governments should take action to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in all areas of public life, including government, at all levels from national to local, as well as the legislature and judicial bodies. This should be promoted by means of affirmative action and anti-discrimination legislation.

B. WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Target 3 Governments should, by 2005, ensure anti-discrimination measures, where appropriate, which safeguard the rights of women with disabilities.

Action required to achieve targets

1. Governments should implement measures to uphold the rights of women with disabilities and to protect them from discrimination. In particular, measures should be implemented to ensure equal access to health services, education, training and employment, and protection from sexual and other forms of abuse and violence.
2. Governments, NGOs and self-help organizations should implement programmes to raise the public's awareness of the situation of women with disabilities and to promote positive attitudes, role models and opportunities for their development.
3. Governments may facilitate the establishment of a mechanism at the regional, national and subnational levels to disseminate relevant gender-related information among women with disabilities. The information should include, but not be limited to, international documents and information on national legislation.

³ From Fiji Disabled Peoples Association – document produced in 2004 for systemic advocacy campaign with government regarding the Biwako Millennium Framework

7. Governments, NGOs, self-help organizations and donors should provide leadership training for women with disabilities to raise their awareness of gender issues and to increase their capacity to participate in policy and decision-making processes at all levels of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and in advocacy and consultative roles with Government and in civil society.

8. All agencies, including Governments, NGOs, self-help organizations, donors and civil society must promote and uphold at all times the rights of women with disabilities to choice and self-determination.

C. EARLY DETECTION, EARLY INTERVENTION AND EDUCATION

Target 6 Children and youth with disabilities will be an integral part of the population targeted by the millennium development goal of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls will complete a full course of primary schooling.

Target 7 At least 75 per cent of children and youth with disabilities of school age will, by 2010, be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Target 9 Governments should ensure detection of childhood disabilities at a very early age.

Action required to achieve targets

1. Governments should enact legislation, with enforcement mechanisms, to mandate education for all children, including children with disabilities, to meet the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action and the millennium development goal of primary education for all children by 2015. Children with disabilities need to be explicitly included in all national plans for education, including national plans on education for all of the Dakar Framework for Action.

2. Ministries of Education should formulate educational policy and planning in consultation with families and organizations of persons with disabilities and develop programmes of education which enable children with disabilities to attend their local primary schools. Policy implementation needs to prepare the school system for inclusive education, where appropriate, with the clear understanding that all children have the right to attend school and that it is the responsibility of the school to accommodate differences in learners.

6. Five year targets should be set for the enrolment of children with disabilities in early intervention, pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary (post-school) education. Progress towards meeting these targets should be closely monitored with a view to achieving the goal of 75 per cent of children with disabilities in school by 2012.

9. Governments, including Ministries of Education, should work in partnership with NGOs at the national and local level to conduct public awareness campaigns to inform families of children with disabilities, schools and local communities, of the right of children and youth with disabilities to participate in education at all levels, in urban and rural areas, and with particular emphasis on the inclusion of girls with disabilities where there is a gender imbalance in school attendance.

10. The following measures should be taken, where appropriate, by Governments in the region to improve the quality of education in all schools, for all children, including children with disabilities, in special and inclusive educational contexts: (a) conduct education and training for raising the awareness of public officials, including educational and school administrators and teachers, to promote positive attitudes to the education of children with disabilities, increase sensitivity to the rights of children with disabilities to be educated in local schools and on practical strategies for including children and youth with disabilities in regular schools; (b) provide

comprehensive pre- and in-service teacher training for all teachers, with methodology and techniques for teaching children with diverse abilities, the development of flexible curriculum, teaching and assessment strategies; (c) encourage suitable candidates with disabilities to enter the teaching profession; (d) establish procedures for child screening, identification and placement, child-centred and individualized teaching strategies and full systems of learning and teaching support, including resource centres and specialist teachers, in rural and urban areas; (e) ensure the availability of appropriate and accessible teaching materials, equipment and devices, unencumbered by copyright restriction; (f) ensure flexible and adaptable curriculum, appropriate to the abilities of individual children and relevant in the local context; (g) ensure assessment and monitoring procedures are appropriate for the diverse needs of learners.

11. Governments should implement a progressive programme towards achieving barrier-free and accessible schools and accessible school transport by 2012.

12. Governments should encourage programmes of research at tertiary institutions to develop further effective methodologies for teaching children and youth with diverse abilities.

14. Regional cooperation needs to be strengthened to facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices and to support the development of inclusive education initiatives.

D. TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Target 10 At least 30 per cent of the signatories (member States) will ratify the International Labour Organization Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (159), 1983, by 2012.

Target 11 By 2012, at least 30 per cent of all vocational training programmes in signatory countries will be inclusive of persons with disabilities and provide appropriate support and job placement or business development services for them.

Action required to achieve targets

1. Governments should examine, ratify and implement the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983.
2. Governments should have policies, a written plan, a coordinating body and some mechanism to evaluate the success of including persons with disabilities in training, employment, self-employment and poverty alleviation programmes. These activities should include consultations with organizations of and for persons with disabilities as well as employers' and workers' organizations.
3. Governments should develop and implement employer incentives and strategies to move persons with disabilities into open employment and recognize that government, as a major employer in most countries, should be a model employer with regard to the hiring, retention and advancement of workers with disabilities.
4. Governments should examine and/or enact anti-discrimination legislation, where appropriate, that protects the rights of workers with disabilities to equal treatment and opportunity in the workplace and in the marketplace. Governments should encourage and promote employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector and should provide a mechanism for the protection of rights of those persons with disabilities affected by layoffs and downsizing exercises.
7. Governments, NGOs and disabled persons' organizations should collaborate more with employers, trade unions and other social partners to develop partnerships,

policies, mutual understanding and more effective vocational training and employment services that benefit persons with disabilities working in formal, informal or self-employment settings.

8. Governments, in collaboration with employers' organizations, workers' organizations, organizations of and for persons with disabilities and other social partners should review current policies, practices and outcomes related to the vocational training of persons with disabilities to identify gaps and needs and develop a plan to meet these needs in the light of workplace changes related to globalization, ICT and the needs of persons with disabilities living in remote and rural communities.

10. Recognizing the lack of formal job opportunities in many countries, Governments, international agencies, donors, NGOs and others in civil society must ensure that persons with disabilities and organizations of and for persons with disabilities have equitable access and are included in programmes related to business development, entrepreneurship and credit distribution.

11. Regional organizations, including those of persons with disabilities, in collaboration with national governments and international agencies, should develop mechanisms for the collection and dissemination of information related to good practices in all aspects of training and employment, especially those that reflect regional and cultural needs.

E. Access to built environments and public transport

Target 13 Governments should adopt and enforce accessibility standards for planning of public facilities, infrastructure and transport, including those in rural/agricultural contexts.

Action required to achieve targets

1. Governments, in collaboration with disabled persons' organizations, civil society groups such as professional architecture and engineering associations and others in the corporate sector, should support the establishment of national and/or regional mechanisms to exchange information on means to realize accessible environments, with display, library and research facilities, and information centres and should network with research and/or educational architectural and engineering establishments.

2. Ensure that professional education and academic courses in architecture, planning and landscape and building and engineering contain inclusive design principles; "teaching the teachers" courses in effective teaching of practical accessible design are established for all design schools in the region, including travelling workshops which involve the active participation of persons with disabilities; and support continuing education professional development courses on best practices in inclusive design techniques for experienced practitioners, including those professionals who work closely with the end-users, such as community-based rehabilitation personnel.

3. Encourage innovative techniques, such as through design competitions, architectural and other awards and various other forms of support, to identify particular applications that enhance accessibility and apply local knowledge and materials. Local materials to make built environments accessible, e.g., tactile blocks and non-slip floor tiles, should be developed and made available. Networks to disseminate innovative techniques should be developed.

4. Support the establishment of appraisal mechanisms on how codes and standards have been developed, applied and enforced and how they have increased accessibility in various countries. Feedback and case studies on areas (rather than

on a single new or upgraded building) are important, with publicity and dissemination of the findings, and show how improvements could be made.

5. Ensure that the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities be included in all rural/agricultural development programmes, including but not limited to access and use of sanitation facilities and water supply through a process of consultation that includes disabled user-groups.

F. Access to information and communications, including information, communication and assistive technologies

Target 16 By 2005, persons with disabilities should have at least the same rate of access to the Internet and related services as the rest of citizens in a country of the region.

Target 18 Governments should adopt, by 2005, ICT accessibility guidelines for persons with disabilities in their national ICT policies and specifically include persons with disabilities as their target beneficiary group with appropriate measures.

Action required to achieve targets

1. Governments should promulgate and enforce laws, policies and programmes to monitor and protect the right of persons with disabilities to information and communication; for instance, legislation providing copyright exemptions to organizations which make information content accessible to persons with disabilities, under certain conditions.

2. Governments, in collaboration with other concerned agencies and civil society organizations, should:

ii). Conduct and encourage awareness-raising training for ICT policy makers, regulatory agencies, representatives as well as technical personnel of private ICT companies to raise understanding of disability issues, including disabled persons' ICT accessibility needs, their capability and aspiration to be productive members of society.

iv). Provide various forms of incentives, including exemption of duties for ICT devices used by persons with disabilities and subsidize the cost of assistive technology equipment to ensure that they are affordable for persons with disabilities in need.

v). Support the creation and strengthening of networks, including cooperatives, of consumers with disabilities at the national, regional and international levels in order to increase the bargaining and buying power for ICT products and services, which are generally expensive to buy individually.

vi). Take all necessary steps to ensure, in the development of measures and standards relating to ICT accessibility, that organizations of persons with disabilities are involved in all stages of the process.

vii) Adopt and support ICT development based on international standards which are universal/open/non-proprietary to ensure the long-term commitment to ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities among all sectors, with special attention to standards that have accessibility components and features with a proven record of effectiveness. Examples of these are the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium and the Digital Accessible Information System Consortium.

viii) Require that local language applications and content use national/international standard character encoding and modelling, such as the Unified Modeling Language, and encourage dialogue on accessibility requirements of character encoding and modelling.

ix) Support participation of civil society organizations representing and reflecting the requirements of persons with disabilities in discussions on regional and international standards towards a goal of increased harmonization of international standards supporting the requirements of persons with disabilities. Where such international standards are lacking, Governments should support alternative initiatives to address those needs.

G. Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes

Target 21 Governments should immediately include, as a major target group, persons with disabilities in their national poverty alleviation programmes in order to achieve the millennium development goal target to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Action required to achieve targets

3. Government should include disability dimensions and poverty mapping and disability into the collection and analysis of millennium development goal baseline data on income poverty, education, health, etc., so as to ensure baseline data for poor persons with disabilities.

4. Government should mainstream disability issues into pro-poor development strategies through:

Participatory evaluation of existing social and economic policies through more effective methodologies, including the use of citizen's report card method;

Comprehensive development policies targeting persons with disabilities and families with disabled persons.

6. Governments should encourage the building of strategic alliances among and advocating the importance of disability issues to policy makers. Organizations of persons with disabilities and community development organizations, with assistance from the United Nations system, with a view to incorporating disability issues into development policies

8. Governments should design and adopt a national strategy on prevention of causes of disabilities and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities.

9. The national strategy should acknowledge the role of all three approaches, institutional, outreach and community-based, in the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Community-based approaches, in particular, should be emphasized to achieve maximum coverage and outreach of services as well as to maximize their cost-effectiveness.

11. Governments should support the formation of self-help groups of persons with disabilities in rural and urban poor areas and their federations, with a view to developing their capacity in mutual support, advocacy and participation in the decision-making process.

A. Subregional cooperation and collaboration

Strategy 11 Governments, in cooperation with relevant NGOs, such as the Asian and Pacific Disability Forum, and self-help organizations of persons with disabilities in each subregion of Asia and the Pacific, should establish, by 2004, subregional mechanisms to support governments to achieve targets and strategies contained in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.



Strategy 12 Governments in each subregion should collaborate with relevant NGOs in establishing focal points within appropriate subregional organizations with a view to coordinating subregional activities on disability.

B. Regional collaboration

1. Collaboration with the Asian and Pacific Development Center on Disability

Strategy 13 Governments, the United Nations system, civil society organizations and the private sector should collaborate, support and take advantage of the training and communication capability of the Center in the field of disability in the region. Capacity-building of persons with disabilities in the Pacific should be also clearly addressed by the Center.

2. Networking among centres of excellence in focused areas

Strategy 14 Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector should establish a network of centres of excellence in focused areas to maximize cooperation and collaboration.

Strategy 15 ESCAP and other United Nations agencies should assist in the establishment of a network of centres of excellence in focused areas through the identification and promotion of such centres.

Strategy 16 Governments of the region should enter into a suitable agreement on trade, technology transfer and human resource development for fast and efficient sharing of resources. Governments should also promote regional cooperation, share information and document good practices on the achievements of the Biwako Millennium Framework targets.

Appendix Two – Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support Ltd. Directors

Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support Ltd. is a not for profit company with a current membership of 76 Individual members, 2 Organisation Associate members and 1 Individual Associate member

APIDS is has a governance Board of five Directors, all of whom have contributed to this report. Short biographies of each Director follow:

Daniel Stubbs (Chair)

Daniel consults on social policy and organisation development issues in the Pacific. He works for development agencies, regional and international bodies on human rights issues (often relating to people with disabilities) and civil society organisation issues such as governance and management.

Daniel lives in Fiji. Until moving to the Pacific, Daniel was the Executive Director of a high profile Australian social justice organisation (ACT Council of Social Service). Daniel's history in the disability sector and his own disability (vision impairment) has seen him develop a strong commitment to the experiences and challenges faced by people living with disadvantage. He has been successful in promoting responses to these issues which are developed, owned and implemented by the affected community.

Daniel has experience in both the community and government sectors where he has undertaken research, developed/analysed social policy, implemented social change and community development. He has also worked voluntarily with many small and large organisations on social justice and organisation development issues. Daniel has an Economics Degree (university of Melbourne), a Graduate Diploma in Development Economics (ANU) and completed a Law Degree (Macquarie University) in June 2008.

Deborah Rhodes (Vice- President)

Deborah has been visiting countries in the Pacific region for 20 years, working on a wide variety of aid projects. This period included 7 years as an AusAID officer, working mainly with Pacific regional organisations and small island countries as well as 7 years at Australian Volunteers International, where she was Director for Pacific and Africa programs for a period. In 1999, Deborah joined a managing contractor and was Project Director for the Pacific Children's Program. This Program supported local Government and community efforts to promote the protection of children in Vanuatu, Samoa and Fiji.

Deborah now works independently, assisting Government and community based organisations to develop and manage overseas aid activities. She designs new activities, reviews existing activities and trains aid workers in topics ranging from cross-cultural communications to project monitoring frameworks. She has a particular interest in the concept of "capacity development" and likes to work with people involved in efforts to support Pacific organisations and networks.

Deborah and her husband Ernie worked with Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA) and its affiliates to deliver 4 one-week training courses for members and office bearers in January 2003 and January 2004.

Deborah has a Master in International Development which included research on the consequences of using the rights based approach. The study focussed on the work of FDPA and its affiliates, and was wonderfully supported by them from 2003 to 2005.

Maryanne Diamond (Director)

Maryanne has been employed by Vision Australia as Manager of International Development since 2007. A major focus of this role is establishing a range of programs for blind and vision impaired people in the Pacific region.

From 2004 – 2007 Maryanne was the CEO of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), the peak organization of Australia's disability consumer organisations.

Maryanne spent four years as Executive Officer with Blind Citizens Australia prior to moving to establish AFDO during 2004.

From 2000-2004 Maryanne was the chair of the World Blind Union Women's Committee and a member of the Asia Pacific board. During this period Maryanne developed a major resource for women. Currently she holds the position of First Vice President of the World Blind Union.

William (Bill) Jolley (Treasurer)

Bill works as a Senior Policy Analyst with the Australian Communications and Media Authority

He is Chair of the Board of Seeing Eye Dogs Australia and is Australia's representative on the International Council on English Braille. Bill's involvement with Blind Citizens Australia goes back to its founding in 1975, and he was President for seven years and Executive Officer for six years until June 2000.

Bill has been involved in capacity building and training projects in Fiji (with UBP), Vietnam, Kenya and Zimbabwe. He recently carried out evaluations of capacity-building and material support projects for the Asian Blind Union on behalf of the funding partners from Norway and Denmark.

Robyn James (Secretary)

Robyn James currently works as a Senior Project Worker with the Women's Centre for Health Matters in the ACT. Her main focus is on health and wellbeing issues for women with disabilities and for women living with a mental illness.

She trained as a secondary teacher, but only taught in secondary schools for two years. Robyn has worked in the disability sector since 1970, starting as a volunteer on camps with the Yooralla Society of Victoria; Robyn then had paid work with Yooralla, the Spastic Society of Victoria, Australian Quadriplegic Association, teaching in courses for people working with people with disabilities in TAFE colleges and Disability Services Queensland.

Robyn has had two volunteer placements with Australian Volunteers International. In 1992/93 she was a Community Development Worker with Kindegaden Long Ples in Madang, Papua New Guinea, and this began a love affair with the Pacific.

From 2003-2005 Robyn was Advocacy Officer with Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA). She maintains her volunteer commitment to FDPA and in 2006 conducted a four week advanced advocacy course for six women with disabilities in Suva.