

Our Rights – issue 5 Special Edition International Day 'Dignity and Justice for all'

This newsletter is a special edition looking ahead to celebrations and events of the International Day of Disabled People on the 3rd December. The UN has designated the day to focus on 'Dignity and Justice for All'

We would love to hear how you spend that day. To contact us with comments or your stories email the DAA team at: **mysay4daa@live.co.uk**

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!

To follow the links use control plus click, or paste into your browser. A text-only version is attached. The newsletter and back-issues can be downloaded from our website (under construction) at

<http://betadaa.org.uk/>

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News

International News

An ally in the White House

Disabled People were explicitly included in the acceptance speech of the new President elect. Barack Obama stated that America is a place where all things are possible.

"It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled -- Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of individuals or a collection of Red States and Blue States: we are, and always will be, the United States of America".

Read Obama's acceptance speech at:
http://www.barackobama.com/2008/11/04/remarks_of_presidentelect_barack_obama.php

A video link to You Tube is <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=FrXkBuWNx88>

Obama's Disability Plan

An equal opportunity to fulfil the American dream is to be realized with the Obama Plan on disability. Disabled people should be empowered to take full advantage of their talents and become independent and fully included members of society. In addition to becoming a signatory to - and having the Senate ratify - the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the four point plan aims to realize disabled people's full rights.

Obama's four point plan:

First, provide Americans with disabilities with the educational opportunities they need to succeed.

Second, end discrimination and promote equal opportunity.

Third, increase the employment rate of workers with disabilities.

And fourth, support independent, community-based living for Americans with disabilities.

Read the full details at

<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/disabilities/>

African Decade of Persons with Disabilities extended to 2019

The African Union declared the first decade of the new millennium (1999-2009) as the African Decade for Persons with Disabilities. Ministers have now agreed the Windhoek Declaration on Social Development and have extended the focus on disability to 2019.

"The new Social Development Policy adopted by the Ministers in Windhoek Namibia has detailed coverage of disability work. We encourage organisations to get a copy

of this policy and apply its contents in your programming processes." says Kudakwashe A.K. Dube

With this declaration, the African Union adopted a Continental Plan of Action (CPOA) with twelve objectives that African States were to implement over the period.

The twelve objectives cover a wide range of themes that are of critical importance to improvement in the lives of persons with disabilities in Africa.

These themes include ideas and strategies to:

1. Formulate and implement national policies, programmes and legislation to promote the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities.
2. Promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the process of economic and social development
3. Promote the self-representation of people with disabilities in all public decision-making structures.
4. To enhance support services for disabled persons.
5. Promote special measures for children, youth, women and elderly persons with disabilities.
6. Ensure and improve access to rehabilitation, education, training, employment, sports, the cultural and physical environment.
7. To promote and protect disability rights as human rights.
8. To support the development of and strengthen Disabled Persons' Organizations.
9. Mobilize resources.

Disabled People organize following Pakistan Earthquake

Since a magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck Pakistan's mountainous Ziarat region on 29 October 2008, several hundred aftershocks have been felt, frightening people in villages and towns in the area. Many people still prefer to stay outside in the cold, despite temperatures near freezing. They are frightened about further tremors.

The earthquake in Balochistan affects children and disabled people the worst. Most of the dead are children and many disabled people are left behind in very poor conditions in remote villages, because it is difficult for them to access to the relief camps. 40 000 people are homeless.

Pakistan Disabled Peoples Organization (DPI Pakistan and Focal Organization of CDPF) conducted an observation visit.

They have produced a report with many photographs (details below). The Network of disabled people and member organizations Balochistan Disability Forum (BDF) in Karachi is now organizing relief and set up a camp in Karachi.

"According to Government of Pakistan about 35,600 people have been affected by the quake, among which 3,375 have been displaced and over 350 lives claimed by this quake. It took us to reach in the area by car about 15 hours from my hometown.

We met with local leaders of Balochistan Disability Forum (BDF) and after a meeting we, Riaz, Ali Ahmed (local PWD leaders), and Imtiaz Malik (Sanghar NGO leader assisted me) left to remote area.

Riaz interpreted for me in local language and Imtiaz supported handling my wheelchair and took photos.

It was difficult to assess right and detailed situation, as local infrastructure became weak, making it difficult to reach the various villages. We observed that most relief workers have so far been able to reach only those villages that are located close to main roads while many remote areas remain inaccessible. We saw NGOs small quantity of relief tents on the side of the road. Same time observed major activity by religious and political organizations in

the area for relief work.” reports Ghulam Nabi Nizamani (DPI & CDPF Pakistan).

Read a news story about the earthquake from Medecines sans Frontiere MSF at http://www.msf.org.uk/articledetail.aspx?fId=frightened_population_in_pakistan_20081107&gclid=CPebh92X8pYCFRyS1QodkTfbXg

UN CONVENTION

Hungary: Disability Organizations Unite in Hungary Demand Action on the Convention

Thirteen NGOs (Nongovernmental Organisations representing disability interests) got together to push for disabled people’s rights. They sent a public letter in October to the Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány urging his government to comply with obligations under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by establishing a Disability Ombudsman.

In June 2007 Hungary became the first European country to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a human rights treaty which came into force in May 2008. A requirement for countries which have ratified the Convention is to establish a body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

In its letter, the 13 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) suggest that the government creates the post of Disability Ombudsman to monitor the Convention's implementation in Hungary. Until such a time when a Disability Ombudsman exists, the NGOs urge the government to make the necessary legislative changes to allow the general Ombudsman to be entrusted with this task. The NGOs also ask the government to allocate specific funding for the Ombudsman to carry out an expanded mandate.

“Nothing about us without us!” is the motto of the disability movement. A key Convention requirement is for governments to give civil society the opportunity to participate in public policy-making regarding disability issues. The coalition of NGOs asks the government to ensure the effective involvement of civil society organisations - and disabled people's organisations in particular - in all aspects of the Convention's implementation.

For more information, go to
<http://www.mdac.info/en/node/158>

First Committee of Experts on Disability Rights Convention Elected

The first Conference of States Parties on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) elected the new Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This Committee will be in charge of monitoring the implementation of the CRPD, keeping an eye on governments and the actions they take to ensure disabled people can enjoy all their rights.

Seven men and five women work in this Committee. Of the twelve chosen people, nine are disabled.

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities members are:

Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri (Bangladesh) (4-year term)
Amna Ali Al Suweidi (Qatar) (4-year term)
György Könczei (Hungary) (2-year term)
Ana Peláez Narváez (Spain) (4-year term)
Cveto Uršič (Slovenia) (2-year term)
Jia Yang (China) (4-year term)
Mohamed Al-Tarawneh (Jordan) (4-year term)
Ron McCallum (Australia) (2-year term)
Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes (Chile) (4-year term)
Germán Xavier Torres Correa (Ecuador) (2-year term)

Lotfi Ben Lallohom (Tunisia) (2-year term)
Edah Wangechi Maina (Kenya) (2-year term)

“We congratulate the members of the Committee for their election and look forward to very close interaction with the Committee. We encourage all Committee members to support Rules of Procedure for the new Committee that will ensure meaningful participation from representative organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) in all stages of their work. The Committee should consider the IDA CRPD Forum not only as the network that represents the key stakeholders of the CRPD, but also as a source of expertise.” says William Rowland, Chair of the International Disability Alliance CRPD Forum.

The Committee will hold its first one-week meeting in Geneva in February 2009.

For more information on the IDA CRPD Forum, please visit the website:

<http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/forum.html>

or send an email to: idacrpforum@yahoo.com.

The IDA CRPD Forum is the network of international and regional organisations of persons with disabilities, which has been established to promote the swift and proper ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol.

3rd December International Day Events

DAA's brief history to the United Nation International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Around 10 per cent of the world's population, or 650 million people, live with various impairments and are disabled by barriers in society. The Convention on the Rights of Disabled People promotes and protects the human rights of disabled people in civil, cultural, economic, political, and social life. However, all over the world, disabled people (persons with disabilities) continue to face barriers to their full and equally valued participation in society. As a result, disabled people are often forced to live at the margins of society.

Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities – more than 400 million people – live in poor countries and there is a strong link between disability and poverty.

Disabled people are routinely denied basic rights.

DAA has been campaigning since 1992 for the rights of disabled people. We were the initial promoters of the International Day of Disabled People on December 3 after it was announced by the UN General Assembly in 1992.

We produced resource kits on what to do and provided DPOs around the world with marketing materials.

Campaigning focuses on events organised by disabled people, which promote our independence, equality of opportunity and full participation.

Each year the International Day has a particular theme to focus attention to disability equality and rights issues. This year "**Dignity and justice for all**" is the theme.

Dignity and justice for all persons are established universal principles. To make this a reality for disabled people, governments need to take positive action to enable rather than further disabled people with impairments. The events to mark the International Day aim to draw attention, celebrate, promote and strengthen our campaigns.

Previous themes and observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities - 3 December:

2007: "Decent work for persons with disabilities"
2006: "E-Accessibility"
2005: "Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Action in Development"
2004: "Nothing about Us without Us"
2003: "A voice of our own"
2002: "Independent Living and Sustainable Livelihoods"
2001: "Full participation and equality: The call for new approaches to assess progress and evaluate outcome"
2000: "Making information technologies work for all"
1999: "Accessibility for all for the new Millennium"
1998: "Arts, Culture and Independent Living"
Further details at the UN Enable website at
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=111>

Below are just some of the events taking place this year on December 3rd. There are many, many more planned throughout the world.

**Contact your local disabled people's organisation to see what they are doing and join in.
THIS IS OUR DAY!**

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Glasgow's Disability Alliance hosts this Showcase Event to mark United Nation's International Day for Disabled People. The theme this year is "Dignity and Justice For All: Partnership Matters".

This event will be of interest to the 125,000 disabled people and their allies in Glasgow, who want to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of disabled people.

The Showcase Event will also launch the Report **“Dignity & Justice for All: Partnership Matters”** which draws on the varied experiences of our members and of our partner organisations in relation to working with disabled people. The Report- and the event- seek to raise awareness of the importance of partnership working in promoting accessible learning, support and independent living which empowers disabled people to have control over their own lives and futures.

The key speaker is Dr Richard Light. Richard has been involved in the disability movement for almost 20 years. He has worked as a researcher, trainer and consultant and is a frequent contributor to conferences, seminars, governmental meetings and media reports into issues as diverse as bioethics, employment policies and capacity building. The foundation upon which all such work was based was – and remains – human rights.

“Unwrapping Our Rights”

Disability Wales looks at the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, 3rd December at Siambr Hywel, Ty Hywel (Old Assembly Building), Cardiff Bay.

To focus on our rights, the 3rd of December International Day of Disabled People theme this year is ‘dignity and justice for all of us’. This is significantly important as on the 3rd May the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People came into force as a legally binding instrument. The Convention sets out the obligations of UN Members to promote and protect disabled peoples rights.

This year sees also the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Disability Wales is a partner involved in shaping an event **‘Pride & Justice: making our rights a reality’**, which will be held in the morning of the 3rd December at The Senedd and Ty Hywel (Old Assembly building).

With a specific focus on the UN Convention, guest speakers including Dr Brian Gibbons, Minister for Social Justice & Local Government. This event aims to actively engage disabled people, Assembly Members and Government Officials in the proceedings.

“We would like to invite you to join us in finding out what the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People means in reality – what rights do disabled people have under this Convention, how will the principles be embedded within policy and practice and how will the Welsh Assembly respond.” Kelly Stuart

Please contact Kelly Stuart on 029 20887325 or Kelly.stuart@disabilitywales.org for further details.

Shape gets poetic this December

Shape is a UK-wide arts and disability organisation that celebrates International Day with inspirational poems.

Come to: Shape, Deane House Studios, 27 Greenwood Place, London NW5 1LB

The winter exhibition of poems runs for three months. International Day Events on Wednesday 3 December 2008

6.30pm Welcome

7pm Poetry Reading

7.30 – 9pm Networking and refreshments

Please contact Ben Fredericks on 020 7424 7363 (voice)

or email ben@shapearts.org.uk by 19 November 2008

Shape is the UK's leading arts development organisation working to ensure deaf and disabled people access the arts. We champion high-quality art for all audiences

And not to be missed....

An Evening with comedian Laurence Clark

3rd December 2008

7.30pm at the Cartmel Centre, Euston Road Morecombe.

Blues and Jazz music by Ruth and friends.

FREE event, but please book with Judith Stephenson

e-mail: judithstephenson@fsmail.net
or call; One Voice 01524 382800

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