

**New Directions toward Decent Work for  
People with Disabilities:  
ILO Perspectives on Employment and  
Skills Development**

A Background Paper



by  
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## I. Introduction

Despite international and regional standards and proclamations, and national policies and programmes, the challenge of fully integrating people with disabilities into the economic mainstream has not been met---not in Korea, Australia, the United States or any country in the world. Globally, people with disabilities remain disproportionately undereducated, untrained, unemployed, underemployed and poor. Disabled women, youth with disabilities and disabled persons who reside in remote and rural communities are particularly disadvantaged.

This paper is in response to a request from the Korean Employment Promotional Agency for the Disabled (KEPAD) and will serve as a background paper for the presentation, *Toward Decent Work for People with Disabilities: ILO Perspectives on Employment and Skills Development*. The presentation is part of the two-day KEPAD International Symposium on Disability Employment, *Creation of a New Employment Strategy*. The theme of the event is *Participation and Opportunity -- Who's Responsibility?* The ILO acknowledges and applauds the Government of Korea for holding this important event and is honoured to be included.

The Republic of Korea has ratified ILO Convention 159 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983, upon which many of the principles in this paper are based. Over the past several decades, Korea had made remarkable progress developing and implementing welfare, vocational rehabilitation and employment promotion legislation. It has a quota system, positive incentives for employers, university-level training programmes for professionals and a variety of institutes, services centers and administrative bodies to advance the employability of workers with disabilities. Yet, Korea faces the same challenges encountered by countries across the globe. According to one KEPAD official, “even the government and large enterprises are quite reluctant to employ disabled workers. And...as the modern labour market becomes more competitive, the gulf between poverty and wealth becomes deeper...We need improvement and innovation in our disability employment policy with a change of perspectives from charity to participation.”<sup>1</sup>

Korea's new strategy must be grounded in a rights-based approach---on the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity, with the full participation of disabled persons, the social partners and organizations of and for disabled persons. The new strategy should be developed in consultation with all stakeholders and with a belief that though social dialogue and collective action the future can be positively influenced. While we look to the future to resolve the current challenges, we must learn from the lessons of the past and the good practices of the present with due consideration of current trends. To further this process, this paper examines:

- The ILO's Decent Work Agenda as it relates to people with disabilities, including specific international and regional standards that advance it
- Selected trends affecting the workplace and people with disabilities---Are they threats or opportunities?

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<sup>1</sup> “Invitation to KEPAD Symposium” an email from Eona Kim, Director, Executive Committee, KEPAD, February 27, 2004.

- The current situation with regard to employment options and the status of skills development for people with disabilities
- Future strategic directions with regard to policy, practices, participation, partnerships and promotion.

## II. The ILO Decent Work Agenda and People with Disabilities

The primary goal of the ILO is to promote equal opportunities for women and men, including those with disabilities, to obtain decent work. The ILO defines decent work as productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. People with disabilities, regardless of whether they live in Kyoto, Kansas or Korea want and need the same things as everyone else---a home, good health, and a full life, including the chance for decent work and the resulting financial, social and psychological benefits.

Certain conditions must exist for individuals, disabled or not, to obtain decent work. First, workers need basic life, literacy and generic work **skills**, as well as specific technical skills. Add business development skills to the list for the self-employed or entrepreneurs. Second, the economy must create good **jobs** and self-employment opportunities. Third, a vocational guidance/**employment services** system should have a process for guiding and matching people to the right training and job opportunities. Fourth, the **infrastructure** should include services conducive to employment, like transportation, effective communication systems, etc. Fifth, to ensure job retention and security, the workplace should promote appropriate health and safety measures, access to lifelong learning opportunities and other **enlightened workplace practices**.

*What barriers do people with disabilities face in accessing decent work?*

Even this simple description of the path to decent work is fraught with barriers for people with disabilities. And, these barriers are particularly challenging for women with disabilities who are compromised by gender and disability. The barriers include:

- Negative attitudes and discrimination arising from ignorance, myths, stereotypes, fear, and invisibility
- Unequal access to education and training programs
- Lack of equitable inclusion in poverty alleviation, employment services, credit and business development schemes
- Inaccessible buildings, communication systems and transportation---to work, people with disabilities must be able to get to the job and be able to communicate with those at the workplace. Even home workers must have communication channels and ways to get goods and services to the marketplace.
- Overprotective families and low self-esteem among people with disabilities
- Lack of access to assistive devices, technology, support services and information. While many tout the Internet and the information highway for creating a level playing field for disabled people, many disabled people

fail to have access not only because of the digital divide but also do to online environments that do not accommodate their needs.

- Lack of policy support including legislation, enforcement of legislation and comprehensive implementation efforts with regard to employment and training. In many countries supportive legislation exists but the mechanisms for implementation and enforcement are weak.

#### *How great is the challenge?*

- Globally there is an estimated 600 million people with disabilities
- More than half reside in Asia and the Pacific
- Of the estimated 370 million disabled people in Asia and the Pacific, an estimated 238 million of them are of working age
- In the Asia and Pacific only 5 to 10 percent of children with disabilities are estimated to have access to a primary education
- Globally the unemployment rate of disabled persons can be double that of the general population and often as high as 87 percent
- In developing countries most disabled people (an estimated 80 percent) reside in rural communities where their access to services, resources, and employment opportunities are most limited

Not only are people with disabilities excluded, they are often invisible. Statistics and demographic reports by governments and international agencies fail to “see” disabled people.<sup>2</sup> We therefore lack knowledge about the extent of their needs and barriers. We do know that poverty and disability are linked in a vicious cycle. Poverty causes disability and disability causes poverty. Perhaps as much as 20 percent of the world’s poor is composed of individuals with disabilities and the impact is felt beyond the individual---it reaches out to families, communities, the nation and the world at large. One World Bank commissioned paper estimates that exclusion of disabled people in the mainstream of society results in an estimated loss to the global gross domestic product of between US\$1.37 trillion to US\$1.94 trillion.<sup>3</sup>

#### *What is being done? Promoting full participation*

The solution to this complex problem can be simply and positively stated--- **promote full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of society starting at their early stages of life.** International initiatives to promote and protect the full participation and civil rights of people with disabilities started to emerge as early as 1955 with the **ILO Recommendation 99** (see box). Others include the 1971 **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons** and the 1975 **Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons**. The **World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons** (1982) was the practical rendering of the previous declarations. In 1983, the same year that the ILO’s Governing Body adopted Convention 159 related to vocational rehabilitation, the United Nations launched the

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<sup>2</sup> Currently the World Bank is funding a consortium of organizations called the “Washington Group” which is exploring ways to develop consistent, reliable disability statistics. See World Bank Web site, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) for more information.

<sup>3</sup> Metts, Robert L., *Disability Issues, Trends and Recommendations for the World Bank*, Social Protection Discussion Paper, No. 0007, World Bank, February, 2000. Available in pdf format on the World Bank Web site, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).

**United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons** (1983 to 1992). The Decade brought worldwide attention, if not conclusive action, to the issues of disability. The Asia Pacific Region, recognizing that more work needed to be done, took the unprecedented action of calling for a regional Decade (1992 to 2002), which introduced specific targets of action. In 1994, the **United Nations Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities** called for states to recognize that people with disabilities had the same rights and obligations as others, including the right to productive and gainful employment. In 2002, governments in the Asia and Pacific region extended the Asia and Pacific Decade, 1992 to 2002 for another Decade, 2003 to 2012 and the African region is at the beginning of its decade of activities.

As this paper is being written (August 2004), a committee is meeting again at UN Headquarters to draft the **UN Convention on the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities**. This latest development culminates a host of international initiatives to further the rights of disabled persons, including the right to work. For a comprehensive review of international and ILO initiatives related to disability and employment, see *The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities*.<sup>4</sup>

#### **International Initiatives concerning Disabled Persons, 1955 - 2002**

ILO Recommendation concerning Vocational Rehabilitation 1955  
 UN Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons 1971  
 UN Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons 1975  
 UN International Year of Disabled Persons 1981  
 The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons 1982  
 UN Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992  
 ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) 1983, (No. 159) and Recommendation 168.  
 Council of Europe Coherent Policy for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, 1992  
 UN Standard Rules 1993

While ILO standards and recommendations deal mainly with employment and training, both ILO recommendations on vocational rehabilitation recognize the need for education and full community access if people with disabilities are to participate fully in skills development and employment (see box.) Skills development and employment are not possible unless certain barriers to education and full social participation are removed. Without access to the full range of community services and experiences, people with disabilities will not have the qualifications or be able to confront barriers to inclusion in training and the workplace. For example, if they lack access to basic education, how can they participate in formal vocational training? If the transportation systems are inaccessible and workplaces lack accessibility features, how can they enter the workplace or participate in work activities?

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<sup>4</sup>O'Reilly, Arthur, *The Right to Decent Work of People with Disabilities*, ILO, Geneva, 2003.

**ILO Recommendations---Provisions related to education and barrier removal**

**Recommendation 99 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled, 1955**

Part IX---Special Provisions for Disabled Children and Young Persons states that

*“Educational programmes should take into account the special problems of disabled children and young persons and their need of opportunities, equal to those of non-disabled children and young persons, to received education and vocational preparation best suited to their age, abilities, aptitudes and interests...The education, vocational guidance training and placement of disabled children and young persons should be developed within the general framework of such services to non-disabled children and young persons, and should be conducted whenever possible and desirable, under the same conditions as, and in company with, non-disabled children and young persons.”*

**Recommendation 168 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)**

Part II---Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Opportunities calls for measures to widen vocational opportunities for disabled persons that include

*...elimination, by states if necessary, of physical, communication and architectural barriers and obstacles affecting transport and access to and free movement in premises for the training and employment of disabled persons; appropriate standards should be taken into account for new public buildings and facilities; whenever possible and appropriate, facilitation of adequate means of transportation to and from the places of rehabilitation and work according to the needs of disabled persons...*

From an employment perspective, we cannot wait until the age that people with disabilities enter the workforce and expect them to make the transition from school to employment. Education, training and guidance must begin at an early age. And, while employers have social and sometimes legal obligations to accommodate workers with disabilities, they should not have to shoulder unnecessary hardships if governments fail to remove barriers or provide the services required to qualify people with disabilities for employment. Government strategies and interventions for people with disabilities who become disabled during their developmental years should include early identification, intervention, inclusive education and opportunities for full community participation. Of course, for workers who become injured or disabled later in life, systems also must be in place to accommodate their needs and assist them return to work, if possible. Regardless of the age of onset or nature of disability, all disabled persons have a right to access to all aspects of community life---education and training facilities, transportation, leisure, social and spiritual facilities, the marketplace, and the workplace.

*What is being done? Promoting equal opportunity and equal treatment in training and employment*

With regard to skills development and employment specifically, the ILO was an early player in recognizing the disparity people with disabilities face in accessing training and employment. As early as 1944 in a recommendation concerning



employment services, which included vocational training and vocational guidance,<sup>5</sup> the ILO proposed that persons with disabilities should, whenever possible, be trained with other persons, under the same conditions and with the same pay, and that training should continue to the point where the disabled person is able to enter employment in the trade or occupation for which he or she has been trained. The principle of equal treatment was embodied in this early text. **ILO Recommendation 99 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled, 1955** a stand-alone recommendation was before its time in calling for mainstreaming of people with disabilities in training and employment programmes. It recommends that countries develop vocational rehabilitation services that address the needs of **all** disabled persons and for services that promote their equal opportunity. The recommendation says that vocational rehabilitation services should be part of a continuous and coordinated process of rehabilitation that includes vocational guidance, training and selective placement and follow-up for the disabled person as well as policy statements and implementing activities and interventions. It suggests specific strategies for promoting the principle of equal opportunity that included using existing services, engaging social partners, and creating job opportunities.

Even though the terms mainstreaming or integration were not part of the language of vocational rehabilitation at that time, Part III of the recommendation--- Principles and Methods of Vocational Guidance, Vocational Training and Placement of Disabled Persons, clearly foreshadowed these concepts.

*Whenever possible, disabled persons should receive training with and under the same conditions as non-disabled persons...special services should be set up or developed for training disabled persons who, particularly by reason of the nature of the severity of their disability, cannot be trained in company with non-disabled persons.*

This concept of equal opportunity and use of existing services are part of the foundation of the ILO approach, which was further articulated in **ILO Convention 159 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons, 1983**, which is a binding international treaty..<sup>6</sup> Regular reporting is required and the ILO Committee of Experts monitors its implementation. Along with its accompanying **Recommendation 168, C 159** clearly claims the rights of disabled persons to equal opportunity and treatment in the workplace and to the vocational rehabilitation and employment promotion services that will help them achieve suitable and open employment.

With regard to vocational rehabilitation services, Convention 159 calls for both policy and action measures on part of governments that ratify the Convention. According to its provisions, ratifying countries should develop, in collaboration with workers, employers, and disabled persons and their representatives, a national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment. The policy should address specific equity issues and be based on the principles of equal opportunity and equal treatment aimed at mainstreaming people with disabilities. Further, the policy should promote opportunities in the open labour market for people with disabilities. An action plan to

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<sup>5</sup> Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation No. 71, 1944

<sup>6</sup> The Convention has been ratified by 75 States to date, with 16 new ratifications since 1999 – a reflection of the level of priority that governments around the world attach to disability issues.

implement the policy, including introducing measures such as vocational guidance, vocational training, placement, employment and other related services, should be introduced, periodically reviewed and evaluated to determine impact. Additionally, the Convention calls for the provision and training of competent personnel.

Equity issues are central to the ILO approach. Equal opportunity and treatment between disabled workers and workers in general means that disabled workers should have access to the same employment and income earning possibilities and opportunities as the mainstream population. Equal treatment implies a legal, human right and is likened to the prohibition against discrimination. Mainstreaming refers to the integration of disabled persons, whenever possible, into the existing training and employment services.

At the same time, Convention 159 allows and calls for the promotion of special measures to assist persons with disabilities and specifically states that such special measure should not be deemed discriminatory against other workers. Such measures might include special services and programs like supported employment and/or policies such as quotas, levies and affirmative action.

The adopted policy and services must include all categories of disabled people. In other words, people with intellectual impairments or mental illness, or any particular disability should not be excluded. Similarly, women and men should receive equal opportunity and treatment. Finally, the policy must address people with disabilities in rural and remote communities.

The accompanying recommendation offers some specific examples with regard to methods of reducing barriers to employment and creating job opportunities. Government-supported vocational rehabilitation services, must provide the full range of training and vocational services to address all forms of training needs, delivered in mainstream settings whenever possible. As noted, barriers such as physical, communication, and transportation must be removed and assistive devices and aids must be provided and/or their import facilitated through tax breaks.

Recommendation 168 also calls for specific measures to increase employment opportunities that build on those offered in R.99, such as:

- providing incentives to employers to hire disabled persons
- making reasonable accommodation to the workplace, job design, tools machinery and work organization
- government support for the establishment of various types of sheltered employment
- encouragement of self-employment and small scale industries and cooperatives by and for disabled persons and, if appropriate, open to workers generally
- government support for the establishment and development of small-scale industry, co-operative and other types of production workshops by and for disabled persons (and, if appropriate, open to workers generally)
- provision of part-time employment and other job arrangements.

Several other ILO Conventions have relevance to issues of disability. **C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958** and **C142 Human Resources Development Convention, 1975** have the most direct ramifications. Convention 111, one of the ILO core Conventions calls for Members to “declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote...equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, with a view to eliminating any discrimination in respect thereof.” While the Convention does not specifically mention disabled persons in its list of protected groups, the ILO’s Governing Body is exploring the option of specifically mentioning disabled persons in this regard. Like C 159 it affirms the use of special measures (often interpreted as affirmative action) are allowed for disabled persons and it specifies that such measures should not be considered as discriminatory against workers at large.

C142, dealing with skills training, calls for ratifying Members “to develop comprehensive and co-ordinated policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training, closely linked with employment, in particular through public employment services.” Such policies and programmes must encourage “all persons, on an equal basis and without discrimination whatsoever, to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in accordance with their own aspirations, account being taken of the needs of society.” Further, C142 calls for assurance “that comprehensive information and the broadest possible guidance are available to all children, young persons and adults, including appropriate programmes **for all handicapped and disabled persons.**”

Collectively, these conventions form the basis of the ILO principles regarding vocational rehabilitation and more specifically training and employment of people with disabilities. These principles are as follows:

- The right to decent work
- Non-discrimination
- Equal of opportunity and equal treatment
- Mainstreaming and use of existing services
- Freedom of choice
- Use of special measures and support services
- Removal of barriers
- Tripartite consultation
- Participation of disabled persons, community and NGOs in policy development and review

Certainly, the world has changed a great deal since the adoption of C159 and some of the other standards that form the basis of the ILO principles. Yet, these principles remain relevant, even with sweeping developments in the world economy and the workplace related to globalization and technological advances. However, as the next section of this paper will demonstrate, while new strategies within this framework are called for, the principles offer guidance. More recent ILO standards, initiatives and perspectives that advance these principles, such as the **ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace**, directed mainly at employers and **ILO Recommendation 195 Concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning** are described within the context of these trends and developments.

### III. Designing a New Strategy: What are the trends? Are they threats or opportunities?

Employment of people with disabilities must be considered with the context of macro socioeconomic, philosophical and political developments that influence labour markets in general---developments such as free trade and globalization---as well as those that seem to have more a more direct relationship on disability. Of the many trends and ways of characterizing them, this paper will reflect on three that are having a significant impact on people with disabilities:<sup>7</sup>

- Shifting from charity to civil rights---disability as a human rights issue
- Moving from isolation to globalization---changing workplaces and the emphasis on ICT
- Increasing private sector responsibility/awareness---more interest in hiring workers with disabilities

Trend analysis is part of a common practice in strategic planning that involves conducting a situation or SWOT analysis---that is taking an inventory of internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities. Actions are then planned accordingly---threats are hopefully minimized or otherwise accounted for and opportunities are advanced or seized.

#### *Trend 1: Shifting from charity to civil rights---disability as a human rights issue*

Throughout the world there has been a general trend to hold governments and social partners accountable for basic human and labour rights---of which the ILO has been an international leader. With regard to disability a significant philosophical and perceptual shift began to emerge several decades ago.

Originally disability was perceived as a moral issue matter. In reaction, family and charitable institutions provided care. Laws, when they did exist, were designed to alleviate destitution and provide basic services usually in segregated and often stigmatized situations. The shift to disability as a medical problem resulted in a belief that people with disabilities experience handicaps related to their impairment. Laws emerged to provide services to assist them to live as “normally” as possible. Legislation established various welfare interventions and/or medical and rehabilitation services in segregated setting to try a “fix” the disabled person or compensate them for their handicaps. Employment quotas come from this philosophical orientation suggesting that people with disabilities have lower ability to produce and that they cannot be employed on merit. The more modern view sees disabilities as a social construct. The disadvantage caused by disability is a matter of social restrictions, not due to the inherent nature of disability. With the social view, the policy approaches

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<sup>7</sup> Also of significance but not addressed in this paper are trends related to increasing accountability with regard to use of funds and impact analysis for services; devolution of power from central government administration and decision making to local autonomy; and the recognition of the informal economy and its role in overall job creation and access. These three trends, depending on the country can also have significant impact on the policy and programmes for disabled persons.

emphasize human rights, integration, inclusion and anti-discrimination. According to this perspective, society and the environment causes the disadvantage that limits disabled people.<sup>8</sup> To illustrate the shift in thinking, consider a person with a mobility impairment confronted with stairs. According to the medical model, he or she is prevented from negotiating the stairs because of a physical handicap. According to the social model he or she is disadvantaged because of the stairs; the environment and an architectural adjustment needs to be made. The social model places the cause for the disadvantage with society and makes it incumbent on society to take action to change the environment. This shift is critical since it removes the burden of accommodation from the disabled person to the society.

As these philosophical shifts evolved, many industrialized countries began to recognize the staggering costs of **exclusion**---costs related to maintaining a welfare approach, income supports, workers' compensation programmes that did not include return-to-work provisions, separate training facilities and workplaces, and related subsidies. The economic argument for mainstreaming and integration supported the human rights platform.

In this region, the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for Action towards an **Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society** for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, which implements the second Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003 to 2012, puts the social philosophy at the forefront of the disability movement as indicated by the title of the framework as well as its targets and actions. Prior to the BMF, the Asia Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002 was instrumental in keeping the spotlight on disability. Many countries adopted legislation, established disability coordinating committees and took other actions to further full participation. Actions were organized around twelve targets areas; employment and training was one of them. The specific employment and training targets included:

- Establishing a collaborative body to ensure vocational training relevancy
- Integrating of people with disabilities into mainstream training
- Developing and strengthening of curricula and support services to ensure participation in pre-vocational and vocational training
- Designing production centers and services for those with the most extensive disabilities
- Establishing national placement targets and an employment promotion policy to support them
- Implementing a mechanism to identify new employment opportunities in the formal and informal sectors
- Stipulating gender-equitable job placement targets for joint action by appropriate ministries
- Ensuring equitable participation in poverty alleviation, income generation and self-employment schemes

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<sup>8</sup> Murray, B., "Decent Work for People with Disabilities: International Perspectives," in ILO, *Proceedings of the ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*, 14-16 January 2003, Bangkok, Thailand.

- Introducing a national self-employment scheme for low income persons with disabilities
- Providing appropriate training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

While progress on these challenging targets has been sporadic, there is indication of some significant examples and achievements in several countries.<sup>9</sup> However, calls for training targets, a collaborative body to study the relevancy of vocational training and others still warrant attention.

The BMF targets are more strategic, easier to measure and designed to address some of the critical issues impeding the advancement of people with disabilities in employment and training. They are as follows:

- At least 30 percent of signatories (member states) will ratify Convention 159 by 2012.
- By 2012, at least 30 percent 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.
- By 2010, all countries will have reliable data to measure the employment and self-employment rates of people with disabilities in their countries.

A series of actions are also part of the BMF and may provide additional guidance in its effort to create new employment strategies based on participation and increased opportunity. The actions call on Government to, among other things:

- Develop a plan, a coordinating body and a mechanism to evaluate the success of including people with disabilities in training, employment, self-employment and poverty alleviation programmes---developing such structures should include consultations with organizations of and for persons with disabilities as well as employers' and workers' organizations
- Develop employer incentives for hiring
- Act as a model employer with regard to the hiring, retention and advancement of workers with disabilities
- Enact anti-discrimination legislation
- Promote employment of people with disabilities in the private sector
- Provide protection of the rights of people with disabilities affected by layoffs and downsizing
- Increase the availability of trained and competent staff in training and employment programmes and actively recruit people with disabilities as staff
- Provide needed support services to allow participation in mainstream vocational training and employment
- Allocate funds to remove barriers to inclusion

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<sup>9</sup> See Perry, Debra A., Ed. *Moving Forward: Toward Decent Work for People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific---Examples of Good Practice in Vocational Training and Employment*, ILO, Bangkok, 2003 and UNESCAP, *Pathfinders*, Bangkok, 2003.

- Collaborate more effectively with trade unions and employers' organizations to develop partnerships, policies and programmes
- Review current policies on vocational training and identify gaps in light of workplace changes related to globalization, ICT and the needs of people with disabilities living in remote and rural communities
- Advocate for more funds to address the needs of those with more extensive disabilities to provide services in inclusive settings, whenever possible by using strategies such as transitional and production workshops and community-based and supported employment.
- Promote equal access to programmes related to business development, entrepreneurship and credit

These targets and actions are in line with ILO principles and are supportive of advancing them. Along with actions by nations and other regions, the BMF proves that most governments take seriously the social model of disability and disability as a human rights issue. National laws implementing a rights perspective are on the increase. To assist all stakeholders in implementing rights-based employment legislation and policy development, the ILO will soon publish guidelines called *Promoting Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation*.

#### *Human Rights: Threat or Opportunity?*

There is no doubt that the emphasis on global human rights, for whatever obstacles remain in its path, is an opportunity for people with disabilities in their quest for full participation in their communities and the economic mainstream. This opportunity presents challenges for governments and all stakeholders, however. For the State---its duties are clearly represented in the preface to *Promoting Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation*:

*Corresponding to the rights of individuals, States have the duties to protect, respect and fulfill human rights. This reappraisal is prompting major shifts in international and national law. It is now widely accepted that the human rights of persons with disabilities must be protected and promoted through general, as well as specifically designed laws, policies and programmes. National governments can make this possible through their legislation.<sup>10</sup>*

Rights usually do not come automatically. All stakeholders have a responsibility to participate in developing and evaluating legislation and policy. Disabled persons organizations, advocates and trade unions have particular roles to play in promoting fair treatment in recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention of people with disabilities in the workplace. Employers have a responsibility to consult on these issues and implement human rights and fair standards in the workplace. Political will and resources---both financial and human---are needed to fully take advantage of the trend toward civil rights for people with disabilities.

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<sup>10</sup> ILO, *Promoting Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation: Guidelines, Final Draft*, Geneva, September 19, 2004, p. 4.

*Trend 2: Moving from isolation to globalization---changing workplaces, training needs and the emphasis on ICT*

The training and employment of people with disabilities must be considered with the global and regional macro context and more specifically the social, economic and political realities of each country. Today, increasingly these country-level realities are influenced by the global economy, which has resulted in the following outcomes:

- the rise of the knowledge economy
- increased reliance on information and communication technologies (ICT)
- increased competition in the market place and the labour force
- greater demands for skill flexibility among workers who must master hard (technical) and “soft” (people) skills, like communication, team building, problem solving, adaptability, etc.
- increased need for alignment between skills development training and the needs of the workplace
- rapid responsiveness by governments, training providers and business to adapt to changing labour market needs
- more precarious, non-standard employment

Globally, many countries are addressing the training challenges resulting from globalization through a reform of national training policies and structures, with tripartite governance and decentralization. Certification and standards are becoming increasingly important with more demand-focused systems, greater provision of training by private providers and more pre-employment and work based training.

The complexity of the economic impact of globalization and the information economy was the subject of the ILO’s World Employment Report: 2001, *Life at Work in the Information Economy*. While the report was guardedly optimistic that the information economy would be a jobs economy, it concluded that the “changes in how the economy functions will transform the world of work. The creation and loss of jobs, the content and quality of work, the location of work, the nature of the employment contract, the skills required and how they can be obtained, the organization of work...all are affected by the emerging era of digital globalization.”<sup>11</sup> The digital divide is a real issue with only 6 per cent of the world’s population having ever logged on to the Internet . Since people with disabilities are more likely to be poor and less educated---both characteristics that increase the likelihood of falling outside the privileged 6 per cent---their access to the Net apart from issues related to disability accessibility, may be limited.

Globalization and technology raise many questions for people with disabilities. Will people with disabilities be able to access the training needed to function in the knowledge economy? Which types of disabled persons can best handle the change in work organization on the job? And what about the more precarious work situation caused by outsourcing, flexible workforces and diverse work structures, such as self-employment? How will disabled persons cope and compete?

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<sup>11</sup> ILO, World Employment Report, 2001: *Life at Work in the Information Economy*, Geneva, 2001, page 3.

Many of these issues were addressed from a regional perspective, at the ILO's Thirteenth Regional Meeting, held in Bangkok in August 2001. (The regional meeting of all ILO Constituents is held every four years; the next one is scheduled for 2005.) The proceedings recognized the continuing impact of the Asian financial crisis and concerns about the economy regionally---with globalization as a major theme. Delegates noted that vulnerable groups were more adversely affected during the crisis and stressed the importance of employment generation as the central element in the Decent Work Agenda and as the principal means to reduce poverty. They also recognized the need for training as a means to enhance productivity and therefore competitiveness as well as a vehicle for employment access among vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities.<sup>12</sup>

People with disabilities are a heterogeneous group. For some, the effects of the new workplace can be beneficial and pose a level playing field---for others the effects are and will be negative. For disabled persons, it is often the organization of society and work that results in disadvantages. The new demands for more flexible workplaces and multiskilling could pose barriers for people with learning, intellectual and some psychiatric disabilities. On the other hand, with training, others, especially people with physical disabilities, could excel in online workplaces, as could those with sensory disabilities if online environments are accessible and assistive devices made easy to acquire. Regardless of the nature of the disability, appropriate and effective skills development is critical to participating in a globalized workplace.

The conclusions of the 2000 International Labour Conference (the 88<sup>th</sup> Session)<sup>13</sup>, which lead to the eventual adoption of ILO Recommendation 195 Concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, emphasized the importance of skills development as a means to combat many of the threats posed by globalization.

*Education and training of high quality are major instruments to improve overall socio-economic conditions and to prevent and **combat social exclusion** and discrimination, particularly in employment. In order to be effective they must cover everyone, including disadvantaged groups. Therefore they must carefully target women and **persons with disabilities**...In addressing the needs of these groups, particularly of young people, access to a combination of formal, off-the-job and workplace learning should be systematically offered and developed as it provides for effective learning outcomes and increases the changes for entering the labour market.*

#### *Globalization: Threat or Opportunity?*

In summary, the impact of globalization can be both a threat and an opportunity for people with disabilities. Much will depend on the reaction of competent authorities to address the nature of the impact. A focus on skill development, technology training, encouraging policies for online accessibility and making assistive software and hardware readily available will make a difference.

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<sup>12</sup> Report and Conclusions of the ILO Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting, held 28-31 August 2001, Bangkok, Thailand.

<sup>13</sup> The Report and Conclusions of the 88<sup>th</sup> Session of the ILO can be found on the ILO web site [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org).

Opportunities to be seized include new job opportunities as well as movements toward making workplaces more “family-friendly” and flexible such as teleworking, job-sharing, part-time employment and flexi-hours, all of which could be referred to as “natural job accommodations” for people with disabilities. Use of contingent or temporary workforces, generally a negative outgrowth of new workplaces, may benefit people with certain medically or psychiatrically based disabilities.

*TREND 3: Increasing private sector responsibility/awareness---more hiring of workers with disabilities*

As a tripartite organization, the ILO has always recognized the value of social dialogue and actively engaged employers as partners with government and trade unions in promoting social justice and decent work. With the weakening of traditional social institutions, the switch to market economy forces, globalization and other trends, the private, for-profit sector is wielding greater influence in the world. And with this influence comes increased responsibility to exercise its role as a good corporate citizen and community member. At the same time, several influences are resulting in greater awareness among employers about the benefits of hiring workers with disabilities and with this awareness, greater interest in hiring. Although unemployment and underemployment is very real among people with disabilities, more employers are hiring and showing a willingness to make accommodations to hire more.

What is driving employers? There are several factors, among them are:

- Government legislation and policies
- Employment services/job placement personnel
- Corporate or business leader commitment
- Social responsibility
- Codes of conduct and framework agreements
- Other employers or employers organizations
- The business case

Government legislation and policies have certainly had an influence on employers and brought attention to the issue of hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. These measures include:

- Quota schemes
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Contract compliance
- Job retention laws
- Persuasion and positive employment measures

Governments can apply a broad range of policy options to promote employment in the formal workplace. Those based on obligation include quotas, which require that a workplace include a certain percentage of disabled workers and quota/levies, which then require a company pay a fine if it fails to meet the quota. The

fine is typically used to establish a specific fund to further the training and employment of disabled persons. Non-discrimination policies ban discrimination against disabled people in the workplace and usually require that employers make reasonable adjustments (accommodations). Return-to-work laws require that employers retain workers injured on the job or who become otherwise disabled while in their employ, depending on specific provisions. Vocational training and rehabilitation provisions may be part of such laws and employers may be required to play a role in developing rehabilitation plans. Contract compliance initiatives require that contractors who receive government grants take affirmative action to hire workers with disabilities. Positive measures based on incentives, persuasion and partnership are used to encourage hiring as part of policy frameworks. These measures include tax incentives, active job matching services, financial subsidies for wages and on-the-job training, technical assistance for employers, awards, awareness training and Codes of Practice.

**The ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace** offers employers specific guidance about integrating and retaining disabled workers. The Code was adopted by a group of experts in October 2001 and is a non-binding set of rules and procedures on the topic disability management. Basically, the Code recognizes the trends that are influencing the employment situation of disabled persons and advances the ILO principles in accord with the modern work environment. The Code reflects many of the changes that have taken place since Convention 159 was adopted in 1983---changes related to the perception of disability, legislative approaches and services such as job analysis, reasonable accommodation and supported employment. While Convention 159 is aimed primarily at governments, the Code targets employers of all sizes and types---including those in public and private sectors and the large, medium or small, regardless of industry. It also targets employers' organizations, which have a significant role to play in influencing their members, and competent authorities and trade unions, which can facilitate implementation of the Code at the enterprise level.

The Code calls for employers to develop a policy for disability management that is based on the concepts of equal opportunity and treatment and that includes the principle of non-discrimination in recruitment, human resource development, compensation, promotion and return-to-work. It encourages the use of reasonable accommodation, work adjustments and other measures to achieve the integration and retention of disabled workers. The Code specifically calls upon employers to make work-based training programmes accessible to employees with disabilities and to consider disability issues in selecting external training service providers.

The Code also offers specific guidance with regard to the retention of workers injured on the job or who become disabled due to other causes. Employers should facilitate early intervention and referral to services, implement measures for a gradual return to work, provide alternate work assignments if a return to the former job is not possible and provide support and make adjustments as needed. It acknowledges the responsibility of enterprises to work with other partners in taking active measures to address the issue of employment and disabled persons. It also calls upon governments, disabled people's organizations and trade unions to take active measure to facilitate implement of the Code in the workplace.

The Code encourages employers to work with agencies and organizations of and for disabled persons, including those that match job seekers with disabilities to jobs. Active employment policies in the form of employment services and job development specialists who work for such agencies have had a strong influence in increasing employer awareness and in the hiring of workers with disabilities. Many case studies, including from among businesses that have become major employers of workers with disabilities, often trace their first encounter with disabled workers to a visit from a job placement specialist. Employment services personnel and the technical assistance they offer to employers and ongoing support to disabled workers are critical services. Such assistance can result in job retention, repeat hires and employers who have come to realize the business case for hiring disabled workers.

Many companies have independently made it a practice to hire disabled workers, sometimes from the perspective of charity or corporate responsibility. Based on experience, they learned that people with disabilities make excellent employees and kept hiring. Companies like IBM have been leaders in hiring and advancing workers with disabilities based on deep-seated values related to diversity, non-discrimination, fairness and equal opportunity. Many smaller or less well-known companies are owned or lead by an individual who makes a personal commitment to hire disabled workers.<sup>14</sup> Such enlightened leaders are rewarded in their decisions to give people with disabilities a chance.

Fair labour practices and non-discrimination are imbedded in some industry-developed codes of conduct and in framework agreements entered into between corporations and trade unions. Such codes and agreements often specifically prohibit discrimination based on disability and are increasing employer awareness about disability and employment. With globalization, what happens in Bangladesh is quickly evident to customers in Canada. Corporate social responsibility and good public relations are important to the bottom line. Customers, stockholders and the local authorities where companies operate are demanding that companies act as responsible corporate citizens. Business is realizing that strong communities and an educated and diverse workforce are benefits worthy of their investment. Certification programmes, such as those related to social responsibility (SA8000), the United Nations Global Compact and the ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace further encourage companies to do the right thing.

In some cases employers are influencing each other to hire disabled workers, through word of mouth, by sharing experiences and via more formal structures like employers' federations, Chambers of Commerce and even business associations dedicated exclusively to disability. The Employers' Forum on Disability in the United Kingdom<sup>15</sup> is an employer-funded and employer-managed group that identifies itself as the voice of employers on disability issues in that country. More than 375 members, representing 20 per cent of the UK workforce participate in the Forum, which provides technical assistance to employer and other stakeholders. It joins in partnership with NGOs to facilitate the hiring and retention of disabled workers, including those with significant and substantial disabilities. Recognizing that people with disabilities and their families are customers too, the Forum advises its members on disability etiquette and marketing approaches to tap this customer base. In Sri

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<sup>14</sup> See the case of CEI Plastics in Perry, D. *Moving Forward*, p. 204.

<sup>15</sup> See Web site, [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk).

Lanka, the Employers Network on Disability is a special activity of the Employers Federation of Ceylon.<sup>16</sup> The Network conducts awareness activities with employers, partners with NGOs to help people with disabilities move into the workplace, sponsors job fairs and other promotional activities and serves as a link between employers and government and NGOs that are involved in the training and employment of disabled persons. Many other examples of employer organizations or volunteer groups such as Business Advisory Councils have had significant impact on hiring and increasing awareness about the contributions people can make to the workplace and the role that business can play to increasing the employability of disabled persons.

Finally, many employers are hiring workers with disabilities because of the business case, which states that hiring worker with disabilities has a positive impact on the bottom line. Articulated in the ILO booklet *Unlocking Potential* and ILO videos *AbilityAsia*, *AbilityThailand* and *AbilityCaribbean* the business case purports that workers with disabilities make good employees---in fact some studies show that disabled workers have higher retention rates and comparable or better performance levels with regard to safety, attendance and job tasks than their nondisabled peers. Hiring and retaining workers with disabilities adds to teamwork and improved morale. Managing diversity is a factor in efficiency, productivity and overall success. Having a diverse workforce inclusive of disabled persons increases the likelihood of tapping into the disability market by increasing the company's ability to design products and services according to needs of this market segment.

*Increased private sector responsibility/awareness---more hiring of disabled workers: Opportunity or Threat?*

This is definitely an opportunity for people with disabilities and the practitioners who work with them, but it is not one without its challenges and costs. Service providers that address the training and employment of people with disabilities must learn to serve a new customer---business. And they must learn a new language and set of skills to address employer needs. Policy makers must include employers in policy making and implementation activities. Policy makers and service providers must deliver high-level skills to ensure that workers with all types of disabilities, and especially those with substantial disabilities, gain access to jobs and that employers have the technical assistance they need to support them. Return-to-work and job retention programmes must demonstrate the value to returning injured workers to the jobs. Trade unionists can help to by removing barriers, providing supports to disabled colleagues on the job, representing their interests and encouraging co-workers to assist with their integration. All stakeholders must learn to promote the business case while at the same time enforcing the law.

#### **IV. Current employment options and skills development opportunities**

Many of these trends have had a positive influence on the availability of diverse employment and skills development options for people with disabilities, which are described in this section. Historically, in developed countries people with disabilities had two major work options---open employment and sheltered work.

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<sup>16</sup> See Web site, [www.empfed.lk](http://www.empfed.lk).

Usually, the least disabled and least disadvantaged were likely to train or work in mainstream and integrated settings. Today, people with disabilities can be found in all types of jobs although their numbers and incomes are disproportionately low and vary from country to country. Experience and examples from around the globe tell us that people with disabilities can learn a wide variety of skills and perform in many types of jobs, although their chance of accessing the skills development opportunities that will increase employability remains of major concern.

*Where are people with disabilities working? What can we learn from the current situation?*

People with disabilities work in the following settings:

- Open or formal sector employment
- Subsidized and supported employment
- Self-employment, include income-generating activities
- Sheltered workshops and employment
- Businesses and cooperatives owned or operated by/for people with disabilities

*Formal sector employment*

People with disabilities are in jobs from janitor to programmer to CEO depending on their interests, abilities, skills, work capacity and access to the services that qualify them for jobs. Experience proves that people with disabilities are productive and can contribute to the workplace. Consider these examples. In Katmandu, a local restaurant chain of eight restaurants hires Deaf workers in one of its outlets. Customers point to their orders on the menu, and if they have questions, the manager is called to explain. The waiter then resumes his or her duties. This restaurant has the highest profit margin among the chain of eight. Blind operators provide directory assistance services at PCCW in Hong Kong using the latest technological advances. Marriott Corporation has addressed many of its human resource needs hiring working with intellectual, learning and a variety of disabilities in its hospitality properties. IBM hires the best and the brightest for its high-tech and service oriented business---and many of its employees are individuals who are Deaf, blind, and physically or otherwise disabled.

Employment promotion policies based on obligation, non-discrimination, persuasion and positive promotion were noted in the previous section. However, there is no doubt that discrimination in employment exists, sometimes even as a result of discriminatory legislation which remains on the books of many countries. Major awareness and technical assistance campaigns toward employers stimulate hiring and more are needed. In some cases, employers also need technical assistance to interpret and implement the very laws designed to promote hiring. In Japan, the Japanese Association for the Employment of Disabled Persons operates resource centers and provides direct technical assistance programmes for employers as does the United States Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers. Both are designed to help with legal interpretations of their respective employment promotion laws but, more importantly, to assist with providing job supports such as making reasonable accommodation, providing assistive devices and implementing supported wages,

supported employment and other measures---which are particularly important to address the needs of those with substantial disabilities. Reasonable accommodations and adaptations, when needed---and they usually are not required to hire most disabled persons----are usually low cost.

In many countries, it is among the small and medium-sized employers who are most likely to hire disabled workers and interventions to assist and encourage them must not be overlooked. And measures such as job try-outs, internships and on-the-job training programmes provide low-risk entry points for people with disabilities to enter the workplace.

Some people with disabilities may be hesitant to take on formal sector jobs because of disincentives resulting from a loss of subsidized health care or income supplements that will result. In some cases, the compensation package of a job may not compensate for the loss of benefits. Even when it does, people with disabilities may prefer the security of the entitlement programme, fearing that job loss will leave them without any income, security or medical benefits. Government policies need to address the issue of disincentives according to national entitlement structures. Many countries have or are beginning to address this issue, which is critically important to addressing the skyrocketing costs of entitlement programmes as well as the needs of people with disabilities for income security, medical benefits and employment.

#### *Subsidized and Supported employment*

Subsidized employment is both a type of employment and an incentive to encourage employers to hire. Many countries provide subsidized wages for time-limited and even indefinite periods and/or provide partial or complete wage subsidies. For example, Australia provides a full wage subsidy for up to 13 weeks. A few countries, such as Belgium, Denmark and France provide permanent subsidies.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes supported wages are combined with supported employment options.

The ILO uses the definition of supported employment accepted by the World Association of Supported Employment: *Supported Employment can be categorized as paid work in integrated settings with ongoing support for individuals with disabilities in the open labour market.* Paid work for individuals means the same payment for the same work as for workers without disabilities.

Throughout the world, supported employment may take on different meanings---for example, it may be used to characterize any integrated work with supports whether it is open, subsidized or sheltered. At any rate, supported employment usually refers to work that an individual typically could not do or learn without the benefit of supports. The “place and train” versus “train and place” philosophy often underlies the model as well. However, sometimes individuals with disabilities may undergo significant prevocational or other types of graduated work experience prior to supported employment in open settings. Four models are typically recognized: Individual placement, enclaves, mobile work crews and small business arrangements.

Started in the United States as an alternative to traditional and often center based programmes, supported employment is now defined and regulated by law and policy as paid work (at least minimum wage), in integrated settings with ongoing supports. Most supported employment in the United States uses a model of individual job placement with a job coach or other supports. Beneficiaries are primarily persons with intellectually disabilities and to a lesser extent those with mental illness, although the model is proven useful for those with other severe disabilities.

Norway began providing supported employment in 1996 and provides job coach assistance for up to three years. Denmark provides considerable personal assistance of up to 20 hours per week in a full time job for an indefinite time. Germany recently established the right to supported employment for up to three years and Japan expanded its job coaching services when it revised its employment promotion law in 2003. While supported employment is increasing in popularity as in international approach, many OECD countries still lack formal programmes, including Poland, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland. For developing countries, at least in the Asia and Pacific region, supported employment is more likely to be a programme approach (when it does exist) rather than a mandated policy.

#### *Self-employment and income generating activities*

For many countries the informal sector of the economy is where most new jobs will be created. The policy environment for small and medium enterprise development is being restructured, along with the development of a host of business development services to encourage self-employment. While informal sector employment fall outside regular labour and social protection schemes, for many people with disabilities, it can be a viable option, and for some the only option. People with disabilities are self-employed because of factors such as:

- discrimination in the formal sector
- lack of skills to compete in the mainstream
- residence in rural areas where agriculture, handicrafts and trading pursuits are the norm
- barriers faced in getting to work and working in traditional work settings
- family obligations---women (and men) find the flexibility they need to care for children
- redundancy or career change
- new opportunities presented by work reorganization, technology and globalization
- choice---many people prefer to work for themselves because of the autonomy, opportunity or self-expression self-employment may offer
- lack of choice---for some it may be the only option

While self-employment and income generation activities are the norm in developing countries where the formal sector is limited, even developed countries are beginning to take another look at self-employment as one solution to address the significant unemployment among people with disabilities.

In the United States, people with a work disability are more likely to be self-employed (12.2 per cent) than people without disabilities (7.8 per cent). Yet, until

about a decade ago, with the exception of the Business Enterprise Program (BET) for the blind, formal state-operated vocational rehabilitation agencies discouraged self-employment. Now however, many state agencies are designing programmes and approaches to upgrade policies and staff capacities to assist its clientele to start their own businesses.

The BET resulted from the Randolph-Sheppard Act, passed in 1936, which provided priority rights for people who are blind to operate vending operations in federal buildings. Many states and municipalities have since adopted similar initiatives, which led to the development of the Business Enterprise Program. Operators are considered self-employed but training and other benefits are provided. Another set-aside programme is operated in Thailand, which sets aside a percentage of certain lottery sales operator licenses, a fairly lucrative business, for people with disabilities. Thailand and many other countries also offer loans, especially from rehabilitation funds created from quota levies and other sources, so that disabled persons can start their own business. However, like open employment, or perhaps more than open employment, starting a business and succeeding requires considerable supports.

The success of self-employment as a work option can be significantly increased by:

- Business development services (BDS) such as those provided by the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business programme or by many governments throughout the world. Vocational training programmes should integrate BDS into its core curriculum.
- Access to credit---either through mainstream programmes or special programmes that recognize the fact that people with disabilities may lack necessary collateral or need special supports
- Encouraging family businesses, group businesses and cooperatives especially for people who have severe disabilities. The Saori programme in Japan assists families with severely disabled members start weaving businesses and provides marketing supports as do several NGO programmes featured in *Moving Forward*. The Thai Government assists graduates of its training programmes with loans and organizes those who lack the confidence to start a business independently to form "occupational groups." Once such group started a hairdressing business, for example.
- Business associations and cooperative arrangements. In Cambodia the Artisan's Association of Cambodia is helping handicraft producers improve their designs for an international market and it has plans to market members' goods collectively under one brand name and through the Internet. The recently organized Vietnam Association of Businesses for Individuals with Disabilities will lobby for government tax and customs breaks for small business operators or those hiring disabled persons as well as provide other marketing and BDS services.
- Policy supports such as tax breaks, exemption from customs fees, access to licenses, etc.
- Business incubators for people with disabilities
- Mentoring or special follow-along supports to assist entrepreneurs when businesses run into expected problems

- Marketing assistance in the form of retail outlets, special trade shows and linkage to fair trade groups (such services exist in many countries in the world)

This is not an exhaustive list. Starting a business, be it a micro-enterprise or a major business venture, requires sound business skills and an entrepreneurial spirit. Advanced countries can learn a great deal from the experiences of developing countries, which by necessity have had to explore self-employment as an option and develop necessary supports to make it a success for people with disabilities. Market access and demand is one of the key starting points and pre-requisites. Many countries, for example in this region, China, India, Thailand, Viet Nam and many others actively promote self-employment for people with disabilities.

### *Sheltered Employment*

Both ILO R 169 and the standard rules recognize that open employment is not possible for some people with disabilities and that sheltered workshops can be an alternative. R 169 calls for government support to establish various types of workshops. Neither instrument offers a definition of what constitutes a sheltered workshop or sheltered employment and many definitions, approaches and types exist. In a recent ILO publication, the following definition was used:

*Sheltered employment is extended employment provided under special and often protected conditions (for examples in sheltered workshops) for people with disabilities who are considered unable to manage a job in competitive or open working conditions.*<sup>18</sup>

In the ILO-commissioned working paper, *The Right to Decent Work for People with Disabilities*,<sup>19</sup> the author offers several meanings. According to one classification system, sheltered workshops must offer some form of production activity, pay some wages (often tied to productivity and in some countries designed to ensure that sheltered employees do not lose social insurance benefits) and may engage in training or rehabilitation services. Services provide may include vocational assessment, vocational training and other vocational rehabilitation services. Today, many offer supported employment, job placement and other services geared to transition people to the open labour market. Yet, in most countries, sheltered workshops are outside the protection of employment legislation and minimum wage laws.

Traditionally the work in most sheltered workshops is subcontracted from private business or government and involves relatively simple work tasks. In some cases, workshops manufacture their own products. Workshops are often operated by NGOs and charitable organizations with the benefit of government and perhaps donor subsidies.

While various meanings and types of sheltered workshops exist depending on country, culture and region of the world---so do attitudes about their value. The

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<sup>18</sup> Perry, p. 235.

<sup>19</sup> O'Reilly, pgs. 40-41

philosophy of sheltered employment as a viable option is a subject of debate in many countries and in the disability movement. The following table summarized some of the key arguments.

<b>PRO</b>	<b>CON</b>
Provides work for people unable to find employment in the open sector	Work is often unchallenging and may not correspond to open labour market needs
Provides income and work experience	Wages may not compensate for work performed or be sufficient for living expenses <sup>20</sup>
Provides stimulation, an opportunity to socialize and an alternative to staying at home	People with disabilities are segregated from the community, lack freedom of association or control over their work lives
Provides training, vocational rehabilitation and other services; work itself has rehabilitative value	Facilities may not be up to standard and divert resources from the development of other, more suitable and empowering programmes
Provide a base for transitioning to open employment	Most people do not transition from the workshop to open employment

While transitioning people with disabilities into the open market is often a stated policy of many governments with regard to sheltered employment, several studies show that only 1 to 5 per cent of sheltered employees actually make the transition to open employment.<sup>21</sup> Norway seems to be an exception.<sup>22</sup>

As a result of the debate and the rising emphasis on human rights and empowerment, many donors and advocates are demanding that sheltered workshops become more businesslike, provide higher level work with greater relevance to mainstream job opportunities, consider cost-effectiveness of their activities, employ standard business practices, use appropriate technologies, and provide more community-oriented work. These trends have been evident for some time and many sheltered workshops have made significant shifts in how they operate.<sup>23</sup>

With regard to promoting integration and community involvement, the following methods are used:

- Enclaves: Working within factories of companies, usually with one supervisor on discrete tasks, such as operating a packaging unit, maintaining the facility
- Community-based contracts: Such as outdoor maintenance, car-washing, etc. where disabled workers can mingle and work within the community rather than in segregated workshops
- Businesses with community interface: Operating a restaurant, kiosk or store

<sup>20</sup> In many countries sheltered employees maintain state provided income subsidies.

<sup>21</sup> Several sources for this statement are cited in O'Reilly, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> OECD, *Transforming Disability into Ability: Policies to Promote Work and Income Security for Disabled People*, 2003, p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion about these changes in OECD countries, see OECD, pgs. 114-115.

- Reverse integration: Hiring nondisabled people to work in a sheltered or segregated setting

The trend toward community integration is a strong one among many workshop operators, such as New Life Psychiatric Institute, a multi-service agency for people with mental illness in Hong Kong. While New Life maintains a more traditional center-based sheltered workshop, it is part of a series of sheltered work options that includes various community-based jobs with graduated responsibilities to transitional and supported employment. The employment centers operated by the Kanagawa Regional Council of the Japanese Electrical, Electronic and Information Union in Japan operates a sophisticated programme of gradually increasing job responsibilities, community integration and wages as people with disabilities that culminates in supported employment with a job coach before the consumer make the full transition to open employment.<sup>24</sup> Some of the job coaches in this system are retired trade union members.

Providing marketing help to sheltered workshops is a strategy can pay off. To help sheltered workshops and other organizations provide better and more lucrative employment for people with disabilities, the Government of Hong Kong SAR started the Marketing Consultancy Office (MCO). Staffed by skilled marketing professionals, it initiated a major marketing campaign to secure contracts. It pools the workforce of Hong Kong's 55 sheltered workshops to secure large contracts that no single workshop could manage. In some countries, governments have passed laws giving preference or priority to sheltered workshops for certain contracts. Thailand is now amending its quota law and plans to incorporate the French system of allowing private business to award contracts to organizations of disabled persons or disabled entrepreneurs in lieu of typical quote requirements.

New Zealand has just taken a different policy approach to address the sometimes low wages and other criticisms of sheltered workshops. New Zealand recently passed legislation that repeals blanket wage-reduction exemptions and gives people with disabilities the same minimum wage and employment rights as everyone else.<sup>25</sup> Sheltered workshops can still provide specialized work environments and expect professional government support. However, workshops will be required to offer people regular employment contracts and wages. Those that cannot will transfer to becoming community integration agencies that help disabled persons participate more fully in their communities.

#### *Businesses Operated by/for People with Disabilities*

The sheltered workshops that may emerge as a result of the New Zealand legislation may be similar to many that have evolved from the sheltered workshop paradigm in response to natural business demands and a desire to provide real work and livable wages to people with disabilities. These types of workshops tend to have the following characteristics:

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<sup>24</sup> Perry, ed. 2003. For New Life, see p. 45 and for Worth Trust, p. 54.

<sup>25</sup> For more information about the Repeal of the Disabled Persons Employment Protection Act, visit the following Web sites: [www.odi.govt.nz](http://www.odi.govt.nz), [www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz) and for a copy of the law, [www.justice.govt.nz](http://www.justice.govt.nz).

- Are primarily designed for people with disabilities
- Are businesses and operate like a business
- Use state of art equipment and technology
- Compete in the open marketplace
- Focus on providing work rather than rehabilitation services, although they may provide supportive environments
- Pay minimum wage or better
- Offer benefits
- Allow for freedom of association or may be unionized
- Often operate with financial subsidies

One example of such a specialized workplace is Worth Trust, operating in southern India. It evolved from a traditional center-based programme to a state-of-the-art, high-tech production center that offers real work and real wages. Its workers produce plastic molded products using modern, computerized equipment and machined automotive parts engineered to customer specifications. Worth operates in the global economy using business standards. It offers benefits and its factory workers are represented by either worker groups or unions. Worth operates its own training programmes, which are state certified and it offers on-the-job training and placement services. Korea's Eden House also falls within this category of business, having emerged from the sheltered employment, rehabilitation center paradigm. It also became a viable business that provides real work, good pay and benefits, in a supportive work environment by producing environmentally friendly trash bags and other products.

There seems to be a growing trend to establish businesses that are operated by or for people with disabilities. NGOs are looking to start what are called social enterprises in Europe, and are based on the social economy. Other disabled persons and their organizations are forming cooperatives or associations to foster employment or starting businesses.

According to the European Information Center for the Social Economy (ARIES), the Social Economy is “based on the values of economic social activities with social goals, sustainable development, equal opportunities, inclusion of disadvantaged people and civil society.” The European Commission identifies enterprises in the social economy as “those entities that do not belong to the public sector, are run and managed in a democratic way, whose members have equal rights, and that adhere to a special regime of property and distribution of profits whereby any surplus is reinvested in the growth of the entirety and the improvement of service offered to its members and society at large.”<sup>26</sup> How this term would be compared to the not-for-profit sector and forms of cooperatives in various countries is a matter for policy analysis. The point here is that social enterprises or disability enterprises<sup>27</sup> and similar businesses operated by and for disabled persons seems to be a growing trend that warrants further study and consideration.

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<sup>26</sup> Both quotes are from O'Reilly, page 44.

<sup>27</sup> See paper presented by Joseph Kwok at the International Conference on Sheltered Workplaces for People with Disabilities, organized by Eden Social Welfare Foundation, 28-31 May, Taipei, 2003.

In the Asian and Pacific region, interest in social or disability enterprises is a reaction to the economic downturn the region faced during the late 1990s, globalization and increased job competition, as well as the emphasis on real work and away from sheltered employment. Some examples from this region include the following:

- The 7-11 convenience stores operated by the Rehabilitation Alliance of Hong Kong in partnership with the franchising corporation receive no government support. Seventy per cent of its workforce is employees with disabilities at two stores, which for two years have been among the ten best performing stores among over 300 in the franchise chain. A third store is planned.
- The Joom Noon factory in Cambodia produces top of the line silk accessories. Started by Veterans' International to provide employment for landmine survivors, the factory markets its good internationally in the boutique and high-end accessories market and on the Internet. The factory now employs nondisabled employees as well and will soon be launched as a stand-alone enterprise, with co-ownership now going to a marketing company.
- The Digital Divide, also in Cambodia, is an NGO that describes its operation as a self-sustaining cooperative that reinvests all its profits back into the business to provide fair salaries, training and healthcare for its workers. It transforms documents into html and digitalized formats that can be searched, indexed and reformatted or used on Web sites. It is a business that has taken full advantage of globalization and teleworking, with some of its major clients, including Harvard and other well-known universities, located throughout the world.
- I-Collaboration is a new business started by a severely disabled person in Japan. It hires disabled and nondisabled persons, provides job accommodations and assistive devices for physically disabled persons and the blind and job coaches and other supports for those with other disabilities. I-Collaboration is a technology-based business with a wide range of clients who use its services, which include Web design, computer training, data entry, database development, local area networks, and internet advertising. Two of its branches also operate Internet cafes.

Specific policies in some nations have given rise to some unique forms of work that fall under this category of employment. Third Sector companies (social enterprises) operate in Japan although their provision is not part of the Japanese Law for the Employment and Promotion of People with Disabilities. Such companies are joint ventures between public and private sectors to establish workplaces and opportunities for disabled persons. Third Sector companies are eligible for certain subsidies if they meet conditions laid out by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

The employment promotion law, which is the basis of the Japanese quota system, allows Japanese companies to form special subsidiary companies organized for people with disabilities, which must meet certain criteria. Employees of these companies can be counted under the quota obligation. One of the conditions of the subsidiary company is that it must have skilled human resources to develop the

vocational ability of its employees, maintain a relationship with the parent company and employ a certain number of disabled workers (at least five) who represent at least 20 per cent of the total employees. Subsidiary companies are designed to meet accessibility and support needs of its employees.

In China, special welfare enterprises linked to the central economy were state or cooperatively owned factories that enjoyed extensive tax relief and significant supports from the China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF). They had been a major source of employment for people with disabilities under the central economy but with the transitioning to a market economy, these enterprises are facing the perils of competition, globalization and re-evaluation by the government. Many are still cooperatively owned, although some have switched to private ownership and new forms are being explored. Many such enterprises are highly integrated with disabled and nondisabled employees working side by side. CDPF is committed to maintaining this form of employment and reforms are under study. While many people are looking to social enterprises as an alternative employment option for people with disabilities, China's welfare enterprises, with number in the thousands, could offer a model. Welfare enterprises are part of the three-pronged approach in China that also includes formal employment under the quota system and self-employment.

As many countries are experiencing higher unemployment among youth and people with disabilities, entities such as social or disability enterprises should be actively explored.

*What is the status of skills development and training for people with disabilities? How can this inform a new strategic approach?*

Regardless of the type of structure in which disabled persons work---they must have skills to move toward decent work, whether that means having more meaningful work in a sheltered setting, transiting to supported or open employment, maintaining or changing jobs, returning to work after injury or advancing in a career path. Vocational skills training has been part of social welfare, vocational rehabilitation and employment services in many countries and international instruments related to the rights of people with disabilities support the right of people with disabilities to vocational training, as do most national laws and policies. However, a collective, international knowledge base about how people with disabilities are trained and what works best is lacking. For this reason, the ILO Global Disability Programme in Geneva is planning a research and advocacy activity on the current practice of skills development for persons with disabilities. Besides producing the global state-of-the-art analysis, the project will publish guidelines to further good practice.

In 2002, the ILO regional Disability Programme commissioned 14 country papers on the status of vocational training and employment of people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific region and disseminated findings of these at a regional conference in 2003 in Bangkok.<sup>28</sup> This initiative yielded some light on the situation in our region in terms of good practices, trends and examples but the lack of data,

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<sup>28</sup> See the AbilityAsia web site as [www.ilo.org/abilityasia](http://www.ilo.org/abilityasia) for the country studies and proceedings of the national conference, *Proceedings of the ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*, 14-16 January 2003, Bangkok, Thailand.

tracer studies and comparability between country programmes made conclusive and quantifiable results impossible to discern. Nevertheless, the 14-country studies did yield some interesting findings that may have relevance to Korea in creating a new strategy.

New directions in vocational training include a policy emphasis on mainstreaming, more choice of options, greater market relevance, especially with regard to offering computer and technology training, inclusion of business development training in some curricula, partnering with employers to provide training, use of on-the-job training modalities, apprenticeships and internships, (“place and train” models), use of job coaches, collaboration with recognized training institutions or certification programmes, incorporating a range of support measures and including training as part of the package of active labour market measures for people with disabilities. These trends are hardly universal but are encouraging developments.

Mainstream training venues for people with disabilities include:

- Secondary schools
- Technical schools and colleges
- Vocational training centers
- Adult education centers
- Formal apprenticeships
- Work-based and on-the job training
- Informal/non-formal settings (e.g., family, self-taught, other informal)
- Training for self-employment
- Mobile classrooms
- Distance learning
  
- Special secondary schools
- Rehabilitation and welfare facilities and institutions (some with dormitories)
- Special vocational training centers/schools
- Special classes in mainstream vocational training programmes
- Sheltered workshops and other work centers
- Community-based centers or village settings (e.g., through special programmes such as community-based rehabilitation)
- Employer provided, work-based and on-the-job training, sometimes using supports such a job coaches or special training groups of disabled persons
- Mobile training units
- Independent living or DPO offices
- Peer and family training

National legislation and policies in most countries call for the right of people with disabilities to vocational training, and in most cases to mainstream vocational training. In spite of the fact that 11 of the 13 countries that provided clear data in the aforementioned regional study had clear policy directions with regard to inclusion but very few reported measures to encourage the participation of people with disabilities in mainstream training programs. Nor did many even collect data to determine the participation rates of people with disabilities in mainstream training programmes.

Only five kept regular and significant data at a national level on participation rates. And while the participation rates are not encouraging, these companies should be applauded for keeping track. (See box below.)

Participation rates of disabled persons in mainstream training programmes

Country	Data
Australia	2.5% of people with disabilities participate in formal vocational training as compared to 11% of the general population
Hong Kong, SAR	100 people with disabilities or 0.08% of all students in mainstream classes operated by Vocational Training Council have disabilities
Thailand	0.14% of participants in Department of Skills Development courses have disabilities
Korea	.02% of students in 18 technical colleges have disabilities
India	Although India has a 3 percent set-aside quota in its Craftsman and Apprenticeship Training Schemes, most of the slots are unfilled

Note: Most of the data was collected in 2002 and therefore reflects data from an earlier date. For exact citations for the data, consult the [www.ilo.org/abilityasia](http://www.ilo.org/abilityasia) for the specific country studies.

Reasons for the lack of mainstreaming include:

- Lack of access to education which makes qualifying for skills development programmes unlikely
- Geographic barriers (most disabled people live in rural areas in many countries and training centers are in urban areas; even for those who live in urban areas, transport can be a problem)
- Cost
- Lack of confidence, psychosocial factors, family protectiveness
- Discrimination on the part of schools and program operators
- Limited or no support services
- Lack of instructors trained in methods of teaching people with certain types of disabilities

When integration does occur, it is usually people with disabilities who have less significant disabilities that do not require special service or accommodations.

Some government and NGO initiatives to foster integration include the following offering free or reduced tuition, quotas (India mainly), provision of technology aids for those entering mainstream training (Hong Kong SAR), and special supports once in training. In the United States special disability counselors assist people with disabilities get the supports they need to succeed in formal and informal vocational training programmes. Community colleges, the site of much of the formal programmes, have special counselors to provide or coordinate needed services.

The situation in Australia warrants some consideration in light of mainstreaming and the focus of the Symposium on participation and responsibility. Australia's Bridging Pathways programme is a five-year national strategy and accompanying framework to influence mainstreaming and increase opportunities for

people with disabilities in vocational education and training. The Australian Disability Training Advisory Council oversees the implementation of the plan, which is designed to get information to people with disabilities about accessing training, to train staff to receive and support them and to get public and private sectors working together. The ADTAC board reports to the Australia National Training Authority and the ADTAC is jointly chaired by an ANTA Board member and a person with a disability. It has representatives from all key stakeholders, including people with disabilities. This structure models a principle of participation and partnership that not only includes people with disabilities but ensure they are in a position of power in the structure.

Nationally, the programme involves:

- developing a training package for inclusion of disabled students and participants
- establishing Regional Disability Coordination Officers programs to provide greater service coordination for students with disabilities
- engage in research to explore methods of purchasing training and enhancing access to training opportunities for people with disabilities
- engage in systems change activities, raise awareness among key stakeholders and establish partnerships.

On the state and territory levels there is greater collaboration among employment and disability sectors, significant systems changes, etc. The impact on the local school level is evident in the Adelaide Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Deaf students, for example, are encouraged to visit a Disability Liaison Officer to discuss their needs. Services include:

- Interpreter services
- Literacy and numeracy groups
- Counseling
- Individualized services

Additionally, the effort includes training staff and the community. Two certificates course in Auslan Interpreting are offered and workshops are available for community members.

The Green Certificate Program in China started including people with disabilities as the result of two local ordinances that covered most of the counties in Heilongjiang Province. The Green Certificate Program brings the latest in agricultural research and skills to farmers and rural workers for a small cost. Training courses are flexible and cover a variety of topics depending on local need, including: planing techniques, animal husbandry and veterinary skills, rural energy, agricultural products raising, etc. People with disabilities were encouraged to participate, offered reduced or no cost training, provided with one-on-one guidance and other supports. CDPF staff provided support to trainers and trainees. As a result, the participation of people with disabilities increased tenfold, with more than 80,000 receiving training and increasing their incomes.

All governments in the ILO regional study have some type of policy and programme in place to provide special vocational training for people with disabilities. Programmes vary greatly from less developed in Cambodia (which relies primarily on NGOs to deliver services) to Japan's comprehensive system that includes:

- a mainstream program of technical high schools, specialized training colleges, miscellaneous schools, and polytechnic institutes and colleges, as well as grants to establish prefectural level courses according to needs or for on the job training, lifelong career development, etc. Finally distance learning is provided through to employees of the employers association.
- agencies and other working with disabled persons refer disabled persons to mainstream training programs but no figures are kept to determine the participation rates of people with disabilities in these programs.
- special high schools provide vocational training
- comprehensive rehabilitation centers and social service facilities which provide assessment, work adjustment, sheltered work and vocational training (19 public and private)
- large vocational rehabilitation centers and 47 local centers in each of the country's prefectures (JAED operated)
- human resource develop centers for the disabled (National, JAED, prefecture, NGO and city operated)
- distant learning project for people who are severely disabled.

Employer participation and involvement in training, whether mainstream or segregated is another positive development. Training must be responsive to labour market needs. The more people with disabilities are trained in high skills jobs that meet the needs of a large numbers of employers, the more likely they are to find decent work opportunities. At the same time, training in business development skills should not be overlooked for those individuals who wish to start their own or to participate in a family business, or for whom income generating activities is dictated by local job opportunities.

Creative options, including high and low tech ones, should not be overlooked. In Cambodia, the ILO is using successful micro-entrepreneurs to train people with disabilities to replicate their business as the market allows. As the disabled person develops his or her skills and business, he or she may train others. This model has resulted in low cost training that lifts disabled people out of poverty through training that may last from one day to 6 months in skills such as pig-raising, basket weaving or stone carving---jobs that meet rural or tourist economy needs. High tech solutions such as IBM's training of recently injured workers in Australia and for the blind in India<sup>29</sup> are just two of many examples of training programmes which are finding good results in training people with disabilities in high-demand technology skills.

While case studies exist and national examples are useful, more systematic information and research about what works in training people with disabilities and how to best mainstream them into existing skills development programmes are needed. When it comes to mainstreaming, it is clear that it is a policy, which in many countries have not implemented. Mainstreaming must include careful consideration

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<sup>29</sup> Perry, pgs. 16-20.

and planning to address the support needs of disabled trainees without undue interference to the overall system. In some countries, former segregated centers are considering taking on the role as resource center for personnel in mainstream settings to provide services related to Braille technology, engineering of assistive devices and staff development.

From what is known about skills training and disabled persons, as a group, people with disabilities are not getting the training they need to succeed on the job or in their own businesses---especially woman and those in rural communities. As noted in the section on trends, skills development is critical to advancing in the new workplace and toward bridging the income gap. C 159 calls for a regular review and evaluation of policies and their implementation---including of training programmes and policies. The BMF suggests a collaborative body to assess the impact of vocational training programmes as well. Such a national review would be a strategic starting point for determining future directions for skills development for people with disabilities. And hopefully, the corresponding global review planned by the ILO will contribute to such national efforts.

## **V. New Directions**

This paper has reviewed the ILO standards related to employment and skills development of people with disabilities, selected trends that will influence Korea's initiative to develop a new strategy and current options for employment and training. The standards, trends and current practices suggest specific directions for the future. In strategic planning, the term key results area (KRA) is often used as a way to direct attention to priority areas for change. The following "5 Ps" are useful in summarizing this paper and may prove useful as KRAs: Policy, practices, participation, partnerships, and promotion.

### *Policy*

Government has the primary responsibility for making policy decisions and implementing policies for all citizens, including for those with disabilities. According to ILO and international standards, this responsibility should be exercised in consultation with key stakeholders and social partners. Social partners such as employers' organizations, trade unions and disabled peoples organizations also have a responsibility to develop policy statements related to employment and training of disabled workers<sup>30</sup> And, according to the ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace, all employers including public and private should develop a disability management policy.

With regard to government policies many questions must be analyzed prior to defining new directions and strategies. Do current policies work? Do they work for all disabled persons or only those with certain types of disabilities? Do employment promotion policies reach the goal of promoting employment among all employers, or only some? Is the quota system achieving the desired goal? Is the necessary information available to make such assessments? Is legislation and policy reform

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<sup>30</sup> For example, to see the policy statement adopted by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry visit their Web site at [www.acci.asn.au/text\\_files/issues\\_papers/Employ\\_Educ/ee28.pdf](http://www.acci.asn.au/text_files/issues_papers/Employ_Educ/ee28.pdf).

needed? Or is better implementation the choice? Are other than policy measures needed to reach goals?

Depending on the answers to these and other questions, the ILO standards, current trends and international practice suggest many directions for policy review and development. The following is a partial list:

- Strengthen/add non-discrimination and rights measures
- Address disability through the life stages---early intervention, education, full participation and lifelong learning
- Provide a range of employment promotion measures
- Evaluate sheltered employment policies with regard to work tasks, wages, integration and transitioning to open employment
- Provide incentives and resources to access new work opportunities and structures related to ICT, social enterprises, supported employment, self-employment, etc.
- Ensure that structures are effective in monitoring policy and its implementation and open to and inclusive of all social partners and stakeholders

### *Practices*

Practices are often the result of policies and refer to the host of employment, training, vocational rehabilitation, return-to-work, business development and other services that will increase employment and return-to-work rates of people with disabilities. Practices should be evaluated with the participation of all constituents and use client satisfaction as well as outcome measures. Systems for service delivery also need to be assessed. This paper did not address the important issue of the service delivery system, however many countries are moving to “one-stop shop” approaches to making accessing services easier for consumers.

Some of the main directions for improving practices include:

- Fostering mainstreaming in skills development, employment services, self-employment initiatives and poverty alleviation programmes
- Providing a range of support services so that people with disabilities can succeed in mainstream settings
- Offering community based options
- Providing training in a variety of hard and soft skills that correspond to measured and verified workplace needs
- Improving the systems for administering services and informing disabled persons about what is available
- Developing technical services for social partners, especially employers

### *Participation*

With regard to policy, participation deals with who should be at the table when policies are formulated, strategies devised, and evaluations conducted. A common

structure for participation is some type of policy-making board or disability coordinating committee that may be located in a prime minister's office or the ministry responsible for disabled people. (Often more than one ministry shares such responsibilities.) Clearly the ILO approach calls for the participation of all stakeholders---employers, workers and especially people with disabilities as well as their representative organizations, family members and service providers. Communities at large have a vested interest and their voices should be heard as well.

In assessing participation issues, many questions arise. What are the current structures? Are they inclusive? Who participates? Are they representative of all stakeholders and all types of disabled persons? What do the other stakeholders and social partners suggest for improving structures for participation? How do structures need to change to become more participatory?

Participation goes beyond the policy level to include participation in awareness campaigns, on management boards and committees and in local administrative structures---within any body that make decisions about the lives of people with disabilities.

With regard to fostering participation, the following actions are recommended:

- Develop inclusive, participatory structures for policy development, planning and evaluation and mandate them in official documents and decision making procedures
- Use participatory research and evaluation measures, client satisfaction surveys and other methods
- Strengthen disabled persons' organizations and other social partners through education and organizational development, if needed, so that they can participate effectively
- Ensure that participatory structures go beyond central government levels and move into provinces and communities
- Use alternative formats for communication to reach all people with disabilities and reach out to specific disability groups and end users of services

### *Partnerships*

Partnerships go further participation. Partnerships are relationships based mutual or complementary goals and involve close cooperation with specified joint rights and responsibilities. Partnerships and similar strategic alliances are ways for parties to reach mutual goals through shared effort and responsibilities. In creating new employment strategies, partnerships like those illustrated in this paper (e.g., Employers Network on Disability) can yield significant results.

The following directions are suggested for consideration:

- Create and encourage the development of partnerships between and among the private sector and employers, trade unions, disabled persons organizations, nongovernmental and others

- Use government resources to offer grants that encourage creative alliances to address issues related to the employment and training of people with disabilities

### *Promotion*

Promotion refers to both advocacy and communication---getting the message across and taking action to promote a perspective. Governments and other stakeholders need to plan effective advocacy and promotional campaigns, and should do so toward multiple audiences and in consultation with each other.

The focus of such efforts might include the following:

- Promoting the human rights approaches
- Encouraging participation and partnerships
- Developing positive attitudes about the abilities of people with disabilities and promoting the business case for hiring
- Providing high profile awards to constituents who make a difference in furthering human rights, employment and training opportunities of/for people with disabilities

Like the participants of the KEPAD Symposium, the ILO staff has spent a great deal of time reviewing global policies and practices related to the skills development and employment of people with disabilities. Through its three means of action, knowledge development, advocacy and technical cooperation, the ILO works with constituents to implement ILO standards and principles in the face of new challenges and opportunities. This paper is an attempt to assist the participants of the KEPAD Symposium toward that end. Hopefully, this paper provided some intended background for deliberating on the theme *Participation and Opportunity---Who's Responsibility?*