Concept Note

“Indigenous People with Disabilities – Access to Training and Employment”

A Side event co-hosted by the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Fourteenth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

23 April 2015, 13.15 - 14.30
Conference Room 12, UN Headquarters complex, New York

Background

Indigenous peoples with disabilities have a universal right to decent work and livelihoods, as recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007). The need to address proactively the right to work of indigenous peoples with disabilities has recently been highlighted in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, with UN Member States expressing their commitment to promote and protect “the rights of indigenous persons with disabilities and to continuing to improve their social and economic conditions, including by developing targeted measures for the aforementioned action plans, strategies or measures, in collaboration with indigenous persons with disabilities”. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues estimates that the number of indigenous persons with disabilities in the world today could be as high as 54 million (2013).

As a follow-up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and in response to the call by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples for greater attention to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights, the ILO has commissioned an initial discussion paper entitled “Indigenous People with Disabilities – Access to Training and Employment”, which makes a first attempt at exploring the situation of indigenous persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on the world of work. Though far being from exhaustive, the paper provides an overview of available literature and data and addresses both opportunities and key challenges through the analysis of seven country-based case studies. It finds that indigenous persons with disabilities worldwide are more likely than non-indigenous persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples without disabilities to face barriers to employment, training, adequate accommodation, education and health services; often resulting in poverty traps and cycles of marginalization. It also suggests that indigenous peoples with disabilities are less likely to participate and to benefit from employment and preparation to work programmes than non-indigenous persons with disabilities. The preliminary conclusions of the paper point to a need to explore the basic notions underlying the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples with a view to reaching common understandings and approaches, and the need for greater participation of indigenous peoples with disabilities. They also identify knowledge gaps, areas that require actions and potential pathways for the progressive realisation of the right to work and adequate livelihoods.
Objective of the side event

The objective of the side event is to take the debate on the rights of indigenous peoples with disabilities one step further by allowing for a stakeholder debate on access of indigenous peoples with disabilities to decent work. Benefiting from the above-mentioned discussion paper, the event provides space for a dialogue and feedback from UNPFII participants on the paper’s initial findings. It is expected that the side event will assist in identifying ways forward to promote common approaches for promoting the rights of indigenous peoples with disabilities in general and their greater access to training, decent work and employment as well as livelihoods.

Format

The side event will take the format of an inter-active. By way of introduction, the author of the discussion paper, Ms. Minerva Rivas Velarde will present main issues arising from the paper and the feedback received through round of virtual consultation from indigenous peoples’ representatives and experts. This will be followed-up by comments from 3 key discussants:

- Setareki S. Macanawai, Chairperson, Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network
- Mr Mike Fordham, Assistant Secretary, Remote Attendance Strategies Branch, Government of Australia.
- Ms. Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Rights

Each panellist will be given 10 minutes speaking time.

Ms Jane Stewart, ILO Special Representative to the United Nations and Director of the ILO Office in New York will moderate the event.

Participants

The side event targets participants of the UNPFII, including indigenous peoples, government delegates, UN agency staff, and civil society organizations.

Interpretation

Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish, as well as sign language interpretation.