



International  
Labour  
Organization



DECENT WORK FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

# REPORTING ON DISABILITY

GUIDELINES FOR THE MEDIA

# **Reporting on Disability**

*Guidelines for the media*

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**“...a reality in which people with disabilities are valued for their abilities and are seen as agents of productivity, innovation and competitiveness and as an integral part of the world of work is absolutely possible.”**

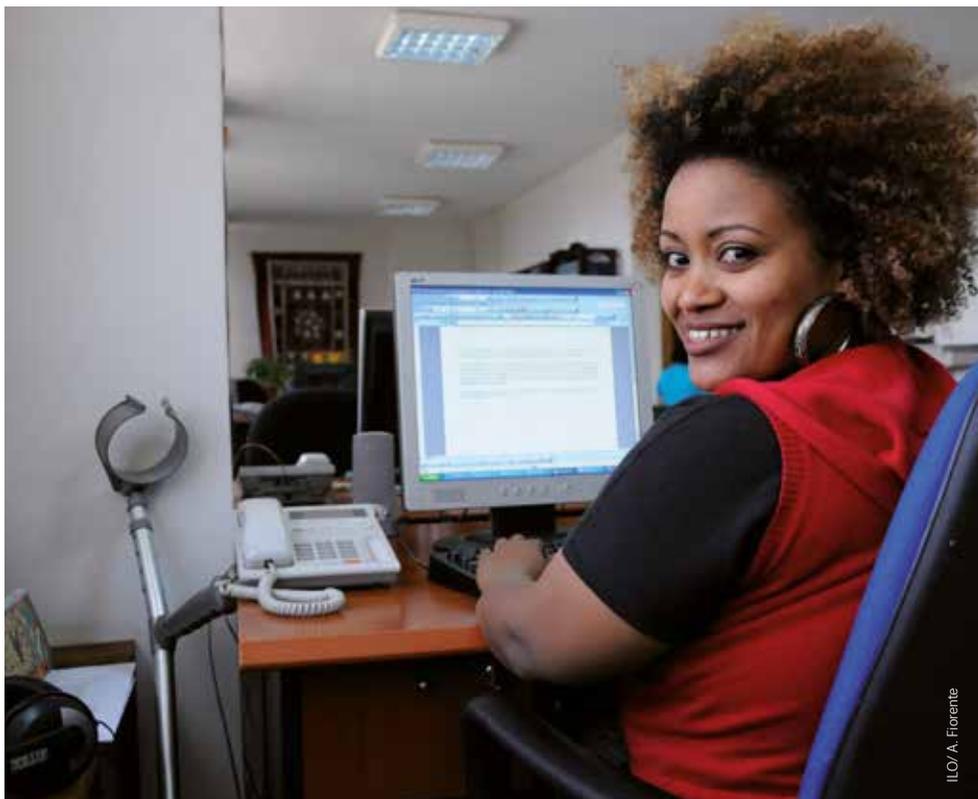
**Guy Ryder, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO), October 2014**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The media - *television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, social media and other forms* - play an important role in influencing public opinion and attitudes. The choice of words, images and messages can determine perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. It can also define what does or does not matter to individuals and the world around them.

How women and men with disabilities are portrayed and the frequency with which they appear in the media has an enormous impact on how they are regarded in society. While there are some disability-specific media programmes, such as television documentaries, disabled people rarely appear as part of mainstream programmes. When they do appear, they are often stigmatized or stereotyped, and may appear as either objects of pity or super heroic accomplishment and endurance. Including them in regular programmes on television and radio in addition to other types of media helps provide fair and balanced representation and break down barriers to acceptance and create better understanding about disabled persons.

Portraying women and men with disabilities with dignity and respect in the media can help promote more inclusive and tolerant societies. *Why is this important?* First, because people with disabilities make up approximately 1 billion, or 15 per cent, of the global population (WHO, WB 2011). Second, as a group, they are often subject to discrimination or exclusion from basic services such as health, education, training and work opportunities. As a result, people with disabilities experience poorer health, lower educational achievements, and have fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. Third, in many countries, disabled persons often lack access to information about policies, laws and improvements in programmes and services that directly affect them. This knowledge gap perpetuates their exclusion from mainstream social, economic and political life.



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Promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities requires the recognition of all people as full members of society and the respect of all their rights. Inclusion also involves ensuring the participation of people with disabilities in all basic services available to the general population and the removal of barriers – *physical, attitudinal, legal, regulatory, policy, lack of information in accessible formats* – that prevent them from fully participating in society. What is more, promoting equality of opportunities and access to services and information for people with disabilities is also critical to strategies for reducing poverty, a shared objective of the international community.

These *Guidelines* are intended to provide practical advice to the media on how to promote positive, inclusive images of women and men with disabilities and stimulate a climate of non-discrimination and equal opportunity – in all levels of the economy and society – for disabled persons. It is intended for people working as editors, journalists, broadcasters, producers, programme makers and presenters. It is also relevant to people working as web editors, and content managers of social and interactive media platforms. It reflects a commitment by the ILO and the Government of Ireland, through its programme on development assistance,<sup>1</sup> to promote inclusion and decent and productive work for people with disabilities globally.

<sup>1</sup> Irish Aid is the Government of Ireland's programme of assistance to developing countries.



ILO/P. Brown



These Guidelines are intended for all people working as editors, journalists, broadcasters, producers, programme makers and presenters who want to increase and improve the portrayal of people with disabilities in the media. It is also relevant to people working as web editors, content managers of social media platforms, and on interactive multimedia products.



**Breaking the link between disability and poverty: Including people with disabilities in development activities**

There is a close link between disability and poverty, with each contributing to the other. Poor people are more at risk of acquiring a disability because of lack of access to good nutrition, health care and sanitation as well as safe living and working conditions; and, people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty due to discrimination and barriers to participation in all spheres of society.

Inclusion in all development activities is critical to breaking this vicious cycle of poverty and disability. While much has been accomplished in the 15 years since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set out to address extreme poverty in all its dimensions, it did not focus enough on reaching the very poorest and most excluded people. In the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals it is critical that the voices of people with disabilities be heard and that action to tackle disability issues be taken.

## DISABILITY: FACTS

The term disability covers a wide range of different physical, psycho-social, sensory or intellectual impairments which may or may not affect a person's ability to carry out their day to day activities, including their jobs.

Women and men with disabilities work in all sectors of the economy and in all types of roles. Many have demonstrated that with the right opportunities and adjustment, where required, to a job or the work environment, they can make a valuable contribution to the world of work.

### Facts about people with disabilities

- One billion of the world's population, or 15 per cent, live with a disability.
- Disabled people are at a higher risk of poverty in every country, whether measured in traditional economic indicators relative to GDP or, more broadly, in non-monetary aspects of living standards such as education, health and living conditions.
- Disabled women are at greater risk of poverty than men with disabilities (Mitra et al. 2011). Their poverty is linked to their very limited opportunities for education and skills development. Approximately 785 million women and men with disabilities are of working age, but the majority do not work. When they do work, they earn less than people without disabilities but further gender disparities exist. Women with disabilities earn less than men with disabilities.
- According to an ILO pilot study of ten low- and middle-income developing countries, excluding people with disabilities from the labour force results in estimated GDP losses ranging from 3 and 7 per cent (Buckup 2009).
- People with disabilities are frequently excluded from education, vocational training and employment opportunities.
- Fifty-one per cent of young boys with disabilities completed primary school, compared with 61 per cent of young boys without disabilities, based on World Health Organization (WHO) surveys in more than fifty countries. In the same survey, girls with disabilities reported 42 per cent primary school completion compared with 53 per cent of girls without disabilities (WHO, WB 2011).
- Disability affects not only the person with a disability, but also their families. Many family members who provide primary care to another family member with a disability have often left work due to their caring responsibilities. What is more, carers and the families of people with disabilities usually experience a higher level of financial hardship than the general population (Inclusion International 2007).



ILO/A Maasho



*Many terms and phrases have been used to describe disabled people, including “differently abled”, “physically challenged”, “handicapped”, “people with disabilities”. Internationally, the most widely acceptable terms are “people with disabilities” and “disabled people”. This Guide uses both forms interchangeably. (See also ‘Terminology’ for use of respectful language when referring to people with disabilities.)*



Disabled people have demonstrated that with the right opportunities and adjustment, where required, to a job or the work environment, they can make a valuable contribution in the workplace.

## MYTHS and FACTS

**MYTH:** There aren't many people with disabilities, so it's not really an issue.

**FACT:** People with disabilities are present in all societies. Many are hidden or excluded from society, either in their homes or in institutions because of social stigma. There may be barriers – physical, attitudinal, legal, regulatory, policy, lack of information in accessible formats – that limit their opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. Furthermore, a disability may not be visible. Some people who have a disability may not even think of themselves as disabled.

**MYTH:** Disability is a health issue.

**FACT:** Health is important for everyone – whether disabled or not. But health is not the only, or in some cases, most important issue. For many people with disabilities, participation in work, education, politics, among other spheres of life, is equally important. Focusing only on the impairment or on the disabled person as someone to be 'cured' is called the '**medical model**' of disability. This approach often overlooks the abilities of the disabled person. By contrast, the '**social model**' sees the barriers to participation arising from the way a society is built and organized, and attitudes and mistaken assumptions about disabled persons, in combination with the individual's impairment. Over the past decades, there has been a dramatic shift in how disability is perceived and persons with disabilities have started to be viewed as rights holders. This '**human rights-based**' approach recognizes disability as an important dimension of humankind and affirms that all people, regardless of their impairment, have certain inalienable rights, i.e., civil and political as well as was economic, social and cultural rights, which include labour rights.

**MYTH:** Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thereby making them an employment risk.

**FACT:** Employers of disabled workers consistently report that, as a group, people with disabilities perform on par or better than their non-disabled peers on measures such as productivity, safety and attendance. In addition, people with disabilities are more likely to stay on the job. The costs of job turnover, such as lost productivity and expenses related to recruitment and training, are well known to most employers ([www.businessanddisability.org](http://www.businessanddisability.org)).

**MYTH:** Accessibility only benefits people with disabilities.

**FACT:** Good accessibility benefits everyone. Accessibility is strongly linked to the design of products, devices, services or environments and takes into consideration everyone's needs – whether or not they have a disability – and encompasses features such as colour, audio signal like those found at pedestrian crossings, tonal contrast, surfaces, hearing enhancement systems (such as 'loop systems'), presentation of information, and signage for finding one's way, among others. ([www.disabilityaction.org](http://www.disabilityaction.org)).

**MYTH:** Considerable expense is necessary to make workplace adjustments for workers with disabilities.

**FACT:** Making reasonable adjustments in the workplace refers to measures or actions taken by employers to help disabled people work or to take part in training on the same basis as non-disabled individuals. Most workers with disabilities require no special adjustments and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Job Accommodation Network in the United States have shown that 15 per cent of accommodation measures cost nothing, 51 per cent cost between \$1 and \$500, 12 per cent cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22 per cent cost more than \$1,000 ([www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov)).

There are an estimated 1 billion women and men with disabilities worldwide. Their friends and family add another 1.9 billion. Together they control over \$9 trillion in annual disposable income globally.

Source: Emerging Giant – Big is Not Enough. The Global Economics of Disability, March 1, 2012 (<http://tinyurl.com/lo89wea>).

## MYTHS and FACTS



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## STORY IDEAS FOR DISABILITY

Journalists can help shape a better understanding about disabled persons and in particular the overwhelming barriers they face with respect to health, education, employment and work, and access to the physical environment. People with disabilities can and want to contribute actively and participate in their community and society. Their full participation depends on the removal of these barriers.

A step in this direction begins with challenging the myths that people with disabilities are incapable and helpless. This requires replacing images that depict disabled persons as sad, passive and dependent with those showing them with dignity and pride, as capable and independent individuals who can contribute towards changes in all spheres of life.

The issues and topics below are intended to provide ideas for stories on disability. They are also instrumental in the successful promotion of the rights of disabled persons and their full inclusion in society where they can achieve financial and economic independence.

### LAWS AND POLICIES

Journalists can play an important role in promoting improvements in national policies and programmes and making information about vital services as it concerns disability available as widely as possible. In doing so, journalists help raise the visibility of a segment of the population that is largely ignored, while increasing awareness among disabled persons about services and opportunities. In addition, awareness of relevant laws and policies on disability, including key international Conventions and standards, provides a foundation for journalists to more effectively advocate for the protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

**STOP AND CONSIDER:** Which laws and policies in your country help to promote opportunities for people with disabilities? How are these laws being enforced, or what strategies are in place to support their implementation? How aware of these laws are employers, trade unions, businesses, or representatives of civil society? These are some areas that you as a journalist may wish to explore in your reporting.

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND DEEP-ROOTED BELIEFS**

Stigma and discrimination are among the main barriers that keep a majority of disabled women, men and children living in poverty, dependence and social exclusion. A human rights-based approach to disability regards limitations imposed on persons with disabilities by the social and the physical environments as violations of their basic human rights. However, these rights are often violated due to ignorance and lack of information.

In some societies, viewing disability as a “curse” is not uncommon. Such deep-rooted beliefs, ignorance and fear influence the low expectations of people with disabilities and their families about their achievement, limiting their skills attainment and independence. The people that are skilled and able to perform certain types of jobs still face the same scepticism from potential employers. These factors contribute to people with disabilities living below the poverty level.

The media has the power to dispel these deep-rooted beliefs and myths surrounding disability and disabled persons. They can also raise awareness among both persons with disabilities and the rest of the public about the rights of people with disabilities to work and employment.

**STOP AND CONSIDER:** How often are stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities addressed in mainstream reporting? Do you include disabled persons in your stories? Showing people with disabilities living in society, participating in every facet of life – at home, at work, shopping, relaxing with friends at a coffee bar, or simply being part of the population can help break down barriers and promote inclusion. How often do you showcase successful individuals with disabilities at work, as providers of services or as sources of information on various topics of concern to society?

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Good accessibility benefits everyone. Yet, without being able to access facilities and services found in the community – *building, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, medical facilities and workplaces* – persons with disabilities will never be fully included. Accessibility also extends to information and communication and includes such things as audio signals found at pedestrian crossings, presentation of information (e.g. Braille), signage for finding one’s way, among others.

**STOP AND CONSIDER:** Is there existing legislation in your country to encourage or help promote independent living and a more accessible environment? Stories offering examples of barriers present in the physical environment or good practice on accessibility are a key to promoting societies that include everyone.

## **ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Equal access to education, skills training and the workplace is a key factor in promoting the economic empowerment of people with disabilities and improving their living standards. It is also a fundamental principle of cohesive societies. Achieving broad access to mainstream education and training and in using training to secure better opportunities for employment requires breaking down barriers that exclude people with disabilities.

**STOP AND CONSIDER:** What opportunities exist in your community for people with disabilities to take part in skills training alongside non-disabled people? Are there good examples of businesses or employers who have hired disabled workers to create an inclusive workplace? Or, consider a story in which an individual with a disability lacks access to basic services, taking into account such factors as their frustration and disappointment, and what happens to them as they grow older. Or, think about a feature story on a disabled jobseeker and how they go about finding work.



ILO/H. Nguyen

## WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities face many obstacles in their struggle for equality. Although men and women are subject to discrimination because of their impairments, women are at a further disadvantage because of the combined discrimination based on sex and disability. They face significantly more difficulties - in both public and private spheres - in attaining access to adequate housing, health, education, vocational training and employment. They also experience inequality in hiring, promotion rates and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, access to training and retraining, credit and other productive resources, and rarely participate in economic decision-making (O'Riley, A. 2007).

**STOP AND CONSIDER:** Are there examples of women with disabilities in your community who serve as role models for other women and girls like them? Consider stories that show disabled women claiming their identities and standing up for their rights to work, to basic services (health, education) and fair treatment. Look for opportunities to showcase these women at work or in their community and allow them to talk about a range of topics - "double discrimination" based on sex and disability; what work means to them and their families; how they use the income generated from work, among other issues.



ILO/Hung Truong Dinh



ILO/A. Florente

**Yetnebersh Nigussie**, in the above photo, is the Executive Director of the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development (ECDD) in Addis Ababa. Active in more than 20 volunteer groups dedicated to issues ranging from persons with disabilities to girls' education to youth, she also chairs the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind Women's Wing. "There is a lot of discrimination against people with disabilities", she says. "Assisting others to independently support themselves is the way forward. We should capitalize on people's ability rather than capitalize on their disability and hand them charity".



## One Plus One Beijing

Nearly 85 million women and men in China have a disability ([www.cdppf.org.cn](http://www.cdppf.org.cn)). In Beijing, the 'One Plus One' Cultural Development Centre is a media operation run entirely by disabled journalists. Its radio programme provides people with disabilities with information on a range of topics including legal rights, new assistive technology and on how to improve life skills. Their radio shows now reach most parts of China.

One Plus One also works as an advocate for and monitor of disability rights and has submitted one of two mainland shadow reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on China in 2012.

Source: One Plus One Beijing (<http://tinyurl.com/ptwjpc8>).



### The United Kingdom's Cultural Diversity Network

The Cultural Diversity Network was founded in 2000 as a joint coalition of all major broadcast organizations in the United Kingdom to change the face of television and work towards fair representation of Britain's ethnic population on screen and behind the camera.

By 2011 the Cultural Diversity Network and the Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN) formally merged to form the Creative Diversity Network (CDN) with a remit extending to other aspects of diversity including disability, sexuality, gender and age.

Among CDN's current members is the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). In 2014, the BBC announced a new disability strategy to address the representation of disabled people on and off the screen. Under the plan, measures to be introduced include: quadrupling the on-screen representation of disabled people by 2017; a pan-BBC Disability Executive to champion disabled talent and projects; developing the BBC's existing schemes to recruit and retain disabled staff; and, opening up even more opportunities for disabled people to work for the BBC.

Source: Creative Diversity Network (<http://tinyurl.com/pnfofjt>).

## TIPS ON PROMOTING THE POSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

It is very important that both journalists and communications professionals connect disability issues with human dignity and rights. Here are some tips for promoting the positive portrayal of persons with disabilities:

**Support the human rights-based approach.** As noted previously, there has been a dramatic shift toward a human rights approach to persons with disabilities. This approach is linked to the social model in that it recognizes that a transformation within society is needed to ensure equality and justice for all. Human rights are the fundamental principles through which every individual can gain justice and equality. Ultimately, the human rights-based approach aims to empower disabled persons, and to ensure their active participation in social, economic, political and cultural life. Changes are needed in society to ensure this, starting by changing perceptions.

**Focus on the person, not the impairment.** In describing a person with a disability, focus on the individual and not on their particular functional or physical limitations. For example, say *people with disabilities* instead of *the disabled*; *person of short stature* instead of *dwarf*. Given editorial pressure to save space or accommodate design layouts, it is not always possible to put people first. However, always strive to keep your portrayal positive and accurate: for example, disabled person, wheelchair user, deaf girl, blind person. (See also 'Terminology' for use of respectful language when referring to people with disabilities.)

**Emphasize ability, not the disability (unless it is critical to the story).** For example, *Mr. Jones uses a wheelchair, walks with crutches* instead of *Mr. Jones is wheelchair-bound, is differently-abled*. Avoid emotional words such as "unfortunate", "pitiful". Avoid sad music or melodramatic introductions when reporting on disability. Never refer to individuals with disabilities as *the disabled*.

**Show persons with disabilities as active in society.** Portraying people with disabilities as active members of society and not as passive and dependent helps to break down barriers and opens up opportunities.

**Allow people with disabilities to speak for themselves.** Experience shows that when a disabled person speaks with confidence and authority about a particular situation, non-disabled audiences are more likely to believe that people with disabilities are knowledgeable (ILO and Rehabilitation International 1994).

**Don't overemphasize disabled 'heroes'.** Even though the public may admire 'superheroes', portraying people with disabilities as superstars raises unrealistic expectations that all people with disabilities should achieve this level.



## REAL LIVES

Women and men with an intellectual disability have the same wants and aspirations as non-disabled persons. Read what they have to say about what work means to them.



ILO/R. Kapur

### Benyam Fikru

“What does work mean to me? I graduated in weaving at the Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disabilities (ENAIID) Vocational Training Centre. At this time, I worked and produced cultural cloth. Work made me independent, like other people. I feel so confident myself that I would be able to work and live my life like any other man”.



ILO/Minchin

### Jacqueline Minchin

Jacqueline works part-time as a clerical assistant at Penglais secondary school in Aberystwyth, Wales. Work is extremely important to Jacqueline. It gives her self-esteem, a sense of doing a worthwhile job and having a role in society. Her job also provides an opportunity to socialize, and gives a structure to her day as well as independence from the family.

Source: ILO: People with Intellectual Disabilities – Opening Pathways to Training and Employment in the African Region, Lusaka, Zambia, 9-11 March 2010.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

What can the media do to support reporting on disability and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of society? Here are some recommendations:

- Raise awareness of the challenges facing people with disabilities and issues surrounding disability, and factors that contribute to the exclusion and stigmatization of people with disabilities.
- Bring discussion of disability into the public arena to challenge the idea of it as a taboo subject.
- Feature examples of people with disabilities as providers of expertise, services, assistance and as contributors of financial support to their families and communities.
- Promote the message that people with disabilities are present in every community across the globe. They have the same range of emotions, interests, talents, skills and behaviour as the rest of the population and should be portrayed as having the same complexity of personality and experience as other people of similar age and situation.



In Ethiopia, more and more media outlets are taking on the issue of disability. Programmes such as “Dimtsachin” (Our Voice), a one-hour weekly show transmitted on radio Fana FM 98.1 in Addis Ababa, are among those leading the way. Run by Gedle, a young journalist with a visual impairment, the programme aims to raise awareness about disability and to promote interactive discussions on the theme of inclusive development.

# TERMINOLOGY

Both words and images used to describe a person or situation can have a positive or negative effect. Avoid categorizing a person based on their disability. Refer to the person and not the disability. The following guidelines are suggested:

AVOID PHRASES LIKE	USE PHRASES LIKE
Afflicted by multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, etc.	▶ Person who has cerebral palsy, etc. ▶ Person with cerebral palsy
Attack, spells, fits	▶ Seizure
Birth defects, deformity	▶ Person born with a disability ▶ Person with a disability from birth
The blind, the visually impaired	▶ Person who is blind ▶ Person with a visual impairment
Confined to a wheelchair, Wheelchair-bound	▶ Person who uses a wheelchair ▶ A wheelchair user
Crazy, insane, mad, demented, psychotic, lunatic, schizophrenic, deviant	▶ Person with a mental health disability ▶ Person who has schizophrenia, etc.
Cripple/crippled	▶ Person with a physical disability ▶ Person with a mobility impairment ▶ Person who walks with crutches ▶ Person who uses a walker
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	▶ Person who is deaf ▶ Person who is hearing impaired
Differently-abled	▶ Person with a disability
Disabled community	▶ Disability community
(the) Disabled	▶ Person with a disability ▶ People with disabilities ▶ A woman with a disability ▶ A man with a disability
Dwarf, midget	▶ A person of short stature
Handicapped seating, parking, washrooms	▶ Accessible seating, parking, washrooms
Invalid	▶ Person with a disability
Mentally retarded, idiot, imbecile, slow	▶ Person with an intellectual disability ▶ Persons with learning disabilities
Mongoloid, mongolism	▶ Person with Down Syndrome
Normal	▶ Person without a disability ▶ Non-disabled person
Spastic	▶ Person who has muscle spasms
Suffers from, stricken with Cripple	▶ Person with a disability ▶ Person who has cerebral palsy, etc. (Disability is not synonymous with suffering)

Source: Excerpted from *Suggested language for people with disabilities: Together We Rock!*

# INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS ON DISABILITY

Economic empowerment is widely recognized as a key factor for enhancing the autonomy of persons with disabilities and their full participation in society. Among the key human rights instruments and international standards that promote the economic empowerment of people with disabilities through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies are:

## ILO Standards

Promoting access of persons with disabilities to vocational rehabilitation, skills development and employment as a means of improving their standard of living is an underlying aim of ILO standards relating to persons with disabilities.

The primary ILO standard is the **ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 168)**. It calls for action at the national level for the development of vocational rehabilitation and employment services for disabled persons. Article 8 calls for measures to promote the establishment and development of vocational rehabilitation and employment services for disabled persons in rural areas and remote communities. The accompanying Recommendation (No. 168) emphasizes the importance of fullest possible community participation in the planning and organization of such services.

As a practical tool to help give effect to the instruments on disability, the ILO adopted the **ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace, 2002**. The Code reflects the significant changes that have taken place in the understanding of disability, and in legislation, policies and services concerning people with disabilities since 1983. The Code is primarily geared to employers. Though not a binding document, it was unanimously adopted at a tripartite meeting of experts.



The ILO is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in addressing work-related issues.

There are also a range of ILO standards and declarations of relevance on non-discrimination, social security and others that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities so that they can be economically empowered to improve their own livelihoods and contribute to the development of their communities and broader societies:

- **ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)**  
Around the world, the existence of discrimination in employment and access to different occupations prevents too many men and women, including disabled persons, from participating in the labour market and reaching their full potential and needs to be addressed in national policies. Convention No. 111 on discrimination in employment and occupation is one of the fundamental Conventions of the ILO.
- **Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)**  
Provides guidance to member States in establishing and maintaining nationally defined social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security systems. Some of the principles set out in the Recommendation are of particular relevance for persons with disabilities, including the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs, as well as respect for the rights and dignity of people covered by the social security guarantees (ILO 2012a, 2012b).
- **ILO Human Resource Development Recommendation, 2004 (No 195)**  
Aims to assist member States to develop the knowledge and skills of their workforce to improve competitiveness and productivity, while at the same time promoting social inclusion and decent work. The Recommendation also addresses key skills concerns faced by low income countries, such as the migration of skilled workers or “brain drain” and the need for innovative approaches to funding training.
- **ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No 193)**  
Encourages cooperatives, as enterprises and organizations inspired by solidarity, to respond to their members’ needs and the needs of society, including disadvantaged groups. Cooperatives’ success in meeting the needs of women and men with disabilities rests on the cooperative values and principles that guide their operations: non-discrimination, equality, equity and solidarity, and an emphasis on education, training, and concern for community.
- **ILO Job Creation in Medium and Small Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No 189)**  
Offers a vision of a vibrant, job-creating, poverty-fighting small enterprise sector where a majority of women and men throughout the world earn their living. Small and medium-sized enterprises also help create an environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.

- **The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008**  
Underscores the importance of creating a sustainable institutional and economic environment that enables individuals to develop and update the capacities and skills they need to enable them to be productively occupied for their personal fulfilment and the common well-being. Other parts of the Declaration call for the extension of social security to all, including measures to provide basic income to all in need of such protection. Gender equality and non-discrimination is also central to the Declaration.



**NORMLEX** is the ILO’s information system which brings together information on International Labour Standards such as ratification information as well as national labour and social security laws, visit: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:0::NO::>

## UN Human Rights Instruments concerning people with disabilities

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), 2006 and its protocol

The UN CRPD is an international human rights instrument intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. States Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.

#### Article 1 on Purpose

“To promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”.

#### Article 8 on Awareness-raising

Requires ratifying member States to combat stereotypes and prejudices and promote awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

#### Article 27 on Work and employment

“States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.”

#### Article 28 on Adequate standard of living and social protection

Recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

## The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

Specifies the steps required for the full realization of the rights of everyone to social security, including social insurance, and to an adequate standard of living. In addition, Article 6 recognizes the right of everyone to work; Article 7 recognizes the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work; and Article 8 calls for States Parties to ensure the right to everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of their choice.

## The Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (UN HRC 2012)

Highlights the particular vulnerability of persons with disabilities to extreme poverty. They emphasize the importance of the progressive development of comprehensive national social security systems to ensure universal access to social security for all and the enjoyment of at least the minimum essential levels of economic, social and cultural rights, in line with the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

## The Resolution on Work and Employment of Persons with Disabilities<sup>2</sup>

Calls upon States Parties to adopt and implement appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to work on an equal basis with others, including by establishing and maintaining access to social protection programmes, including those created pursuant to ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), that support persons with disabilities in seeking, transitioning to and maintaining work and that recognize the additional costs that people with disabilities face in their access to the open labour market.

## USEFUL REFERENCES AND LINKS

For over a decade the ILO has partnered with the Government of Ireland's programme of development assistance, Irish Aid, and other stakeholders to promote decent work and a better life for people with disabilities. Through effective legislation and its implementation, and advocating effective approaches to skills development, employment services and job opportunities that include person with disabilities alongside non-disabled people, the partnership promotes economic empowerment as a way out of poverty and inequality.

## The Partnership Programme's main stakeholder groups are:

- Government	- Non-governmental organizations, including those for and of disabled persons
- Representatives of workers' organizations	- Community groups
- Representatives of employers' organizations	- Media
- International agencies	

## Links

International Labour Organization (ILO)	<a href="http://www.ilo.org">http://www.ilo.org</a>
ILO Programme on Disability and Work	<a href="http://www.ilo.org/disability">http://www.ilo.org/disability</a>
ILO Global Business and Disability Network	<a href="http://www.businessanddisability.org">http://www.businessanddisability.org</a>
United Nations Enable	<a href="http://www.un.org/disabilities/">www.un.org/disabilities/</a>
United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx</a>
United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities	<a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/SRDisabilities/Pages/SRDisabilitiesIndex.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/SRDisabilities/Pages/SRDisabilitiesIndex.aspx</a>

<sup>2</sup> The Resolution on Work and Employment of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 22nd session in March 2013: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/LTD/G13/118/86/PDF/G1311886.pdf?OpenElement>

## RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS



### Promoting the right of persons with disabilities in the Global Development Agenda, 2015.

(In English, French and Spanish. Available at <http://labordoc.ilo.org/record/462523?In=en>)



### Achieving equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities through legislation: Guidelines, 2014.

(In English, French and Spanish. Available at <http://labordoc.ilo.org/record/461989?In=en>)



### Managing disability in the workplace: ILO code of practice, 2002.

(In English, French and Spanish. Also in Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Estonian, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Japanese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Mongolian, Nepalese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian, and Ukrainian. Available at: <http://labordoc.ilo.org/record/349703?In=en>)



### Business as unusual: Making workplaces inclusive of people with disabilities, 2014.

(In English and Spanish. Available at: <http://labordoc.ilo.org/record/462113?In=en>)



### Count us in! How to make sure that women with disabilities can participate effectively in mainstream women's entrepreneurship development activities, 2008.

(In English. Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_106558/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_106558/lang--en/index.htm))



To order the above publications contact: [ged@ilo.org](mailto:ged@ilo.org)

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DECENT WORK FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

# REPORTING ON DISABILITY

GUIDELINES FOR THE MEDIA



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