



# People with Intellectual Disabilities: Achieving Full Participation in Training and Employment

## Lusaka Declaration

We, the participants at the sub-regional conference on **People with Intellectual Disabilities – Opening Pathways to Training and Employment**, Lusaka, 9–11 March 2010, involving representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations and civil society groups from six countries of East and Southern Africa and the United Kingdom, expressing the need to bring about meaningful improvement in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and their families, who are inordinately affected by poverty and social and economic exclusion, **hereby adopt the following Declaration -**

### We recognize:

That a fundamental shift has taken place at international policy level with the adoption and entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), signalling a move away from practices that segregate people with disabilities to an approach that seeks to promote their inclusion in all sectors of society in respect of human rights;

That many African countries have ratified the CRPD, and ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983 (No. 159) although there is as yet little evidence of their practical application on the continent;

That, whilst people with intellectual disabilities are entitled to gain from the provisions of the CRPD as well as people with other types of disability, they are frequently not well placed to benefit from this changed emphasis on full inclusion because they are often deprived of the opportunity to attend school or to acquire relevant vocational skills, leaving them at a disadvantage when it comes to seeking jobs;

That people with intellectual disabilities are frequently excluded from educational, vocational training and employment opportunities by widespread stereotypes, mistaken assumptions and negative attitudes that focus on their disabilities rather than their abilities;

That the voices of people with intellectual disabilities are frequently unheard in policy decisions or in decisions about themselves and their own future;

That parents' groups and non-governmental organizations have played and continue to play a central role in providing for and drawing attention to the rights and requirements of people with intellectual disabilities;

That competing demands on scarce government and donor resources have led to minimal allocation of funding for services to people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

### We affirm:

That people with intellectual disabilities who have access to jobs suited to their interests, skills and abilities make valued contributions to the workforce and the broader society;

That the capacity of people with intellectual disabilities to contribute to society is enhanced through the development of self-advocacy and specific support measures that empower the individual, so that they have increased control of their own lives and that their voices are heard by legislators, policy shapers and makers, programme and service providers;

That the capacity of parents' organizations to advocate for training and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities needs to be strengthened;

That the current allocation of resources by governments to appropriate training and supports to people with intellectual disabilities needs to be increased;

That the collaboration and support of employers and employers' organizations are central to achieving progress in promoting opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to take part in the workforce;

That the active involvement of trade unions and civil society groups will contribute to progress in achieving the goal of full participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the workforce, in their communities and society.

### We consider:

That the main aim for the immediate future is to improve the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities and their families through training and employment strategies which will in turn benefit their communities and society as a whole;

That improvement will be achieved through evidence-based measures that focus upon the potential and needs of the individual;

That creative and innovative approaches to training and employment-related services should be introduced, taking account of the individuals' preferences, entitlements and circumstances;

That supported employment pilot projects in countries of Africa have indicated the potential of this approach for Africa;

That a comprehensive, community-based approach to service provision, reflecting the ILO/WHO/UNESCO Joint Position on

Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), is in line with the provisions of the UN CRPD;

That appropriate strategies to reach this aim should be expressed in a national action plan to be adopted by respective governments, focusing on promoting training and employment as well as other opportunities for persons with disabilities, with an explicit focus on people with intellectual disabilities;

That emphasis should be placed on promoting access to mainstream education at every level and on access to life-long learning, to work experience opportunities from an early stage, to skills development in a variety of forms, including on-job training through supported employment;

That the development of self-advocacy among people with intellectual disabilities is central to raising awareness, overcoming stereotypes and identifying resource requirements;

That, for the foreseeable future, parents will continue to play a central role in advocating the full participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, in their communities and society;

That explicit attention is required to the training and employment-related requirements of women and girls with intellectual disabilities;

That international collaboration is necessary and will be of great benefit in moving the agenda forward.

### We undertake:

To explore the linkages with existing international networks on supported employment;

To develop linkages between civil society groups and service providers in other countries of the region;

To support the development of self-advocacy amongst people with intellectual disabilities;

To collaborate with the media to promote positive images of people with intellectual disabilities;

To sensitize employers to business case of employing people with intellectual disabilities and to build the capacity for support workers to provide the necessary job-coaching and other support services;

To provide further supports to employers as they move to providing opportunities for on-job training and supported employment;

To champion the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in training, employment and other walks of life through sensitization campaigns and by making a commitment to people with intellectual disabilities as citizens with control over their own life.

### Recommend:

#### That governments:

- Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and ILO Convention No. 159, and implement these at national level, paying explicit attention to the requirements of persons with intellectual disabilities as well as other disability groups, including in the framework of the ILO/WHO/UNESCO CBR model;
- Establish mechanisms to monitor and enforce the implementation of the CRPD;
- Sensitize government officials and the broader community, including families, on the rights of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, and the issues faced in accessing these rights;
- Ensure early identification of intellectual disability, including through providing additional training for health and other relevant professionals and by enabling parents to access information and support;
- Establish a comprehensive system of data collection on persons with intellectual disabilities;
- Develop a clear social model of service provision relating to the health, education, training, employment and career development of people with intellectual disabilities, as well as people with other types of disability, ensuring that those involved in implementing it are adequately trained;
- Work closely with key stakeholders to implement existing policies;
- Allocate resources to develop and sustain innovative approaches to training and employment-related programmes and services for people with intellectual disabilities, including supported employment;

- Make provisions for reasonable accommodation in training and in the workplace to facilitate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in general and persons with intellectual disabilities in particular;
- Provide for employer incentives to promote the employment of people with intellectual disabilities;
- Encourage national and regional networking and collaboration, in particular on supported employment, to ensure that relevant expertise is shared and good practice is disseminated;
- Pilot test innovative models, including in the informal economy, accessing international funding where possible;
- Play a leading role in employing people with intellectual disabilities.

#### That employers and their organizations should:

- Raise awareness of the working capacity of persons with intellectual disabilities including through having people specialized in dealing with persons with intellectual disability in the workplace;
- Be involved in the formation of a company human resources policy manual which includes provision for people with intellectual disabilities;
- Adopt Corporate Social Responsibility policies that include a commitment by employers to promoting training and employment opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- Form a consultative forum with workers' organizations and relevant civil society organizations regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities.

#### That trade unions should:

- Sensitize their members on the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and issues involved in accessing these rights;
- Develop a policy on how to protect the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the workplace;
- Form a consultative forum with employer organizations and relevant civil society organizations regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities;
- Develop a data base on persons with intellectual disabilities in employment, including success stories of employees with intellectual disabilities;
- Use collective bargaining agreements to promote the rights of workers with intellectual disabilities.

#### That non-governmental organizations and parent's groups in the disability field should:

- Continue as service providers, adjusting their approach in line with the provisions of the UN CRPD, including the increased emphasis on inclusion and the need to sensitize and advise personnel in mainstream institutions;
- Advocate training and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, drawing on national and international research findings to provide the evidence-base for their efforts;
- Create awareness of the capacity, abilities and potential of people with intellectual disabilities in training and employment, by highlighting success cases;
- Build networks, coalitions and alliances in civil society to increase cohesion and coordination of efforts to promote inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in training and employment.

#### That international organizations and networks should:

- Advocate equal opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities through policy development, laws, and evidence-based implementation measures;
- Support capacity building through training programmes for government officials, employers' and workers' organizations, non-governmental organizations and organizations of parents, as well as providing financial and logistical support at national level;
- Foster networking opportunities, including information-sharing through the organization of study visits and regional conferences;
- Ensure that disability issues are taken into account in all their programmes and activities.

**Will you join us in making this Declaration a reality?**