

**CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND ITS OPTIONAL PROTOCOL**

UN SECRETARIAT

**JOINT WORK PROGRAMME
BETWEEN**

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA) AND
THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)**

9 November 2007

INTRODUCTION

In April 2007, the Secretary-General approved the designation of responsibilities in relation to the servicing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Convention), assigning the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as the department with responsibility for providing substantive and technical servicing to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) as the department responsible for servicing the Conference of States parties.

The present joint work plan is proposed as a means of implementing this decision with a view to promoting good working relationships between DESA and OHCHR and providing the most efficient and effective support for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

The joint work plan has been developed, bearing in mind the relevant strengths of each Department.

DESA's work on disability falls within the Division for Social Policy and Development. Its current programme of work, includes: (a) servicing of meetings of the General Assembly, the Commission on Social Development; as well as meetings of the Conference of States parties to the Convention; (b) advocacy and capacity-building initiatives, monitoring and reporting on the mandates related to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, as well as the Convention; (c) management of the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability and its grants; (d) communications and cooperation with Member States, non-governmental organizations, other United Nations system entities and other partners on disability issues; (e) supporting the work of the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development; and (f) planning and communication around the International Day of Disabled Persons.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the United Nations official with principal responsibility for UN human rights activities under the direction of the Secretary-General. The High Commissioner has a broad mandate that includes the coordination of human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the UN system and the rationalization, adaption, strengthening and streamlining of the UN human rights machinery with a view to improving its efficiency and effectiveness (A/RES/48/141). The General Assembly established OHCHR to assist the High Commissioner in fulfilment of her mandate, which includes providing support to intergovernmental and expert mechanisms in the field of human rights, including treaty bodies, and the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the UN system.

Currently, the Advisor on Human Rights and Disability is the focal point for OHCHR work on the Convention. The Advisor seeks to mainstream human rights and disability both within the UN human rights mechanisms and with other organizations through: promoting advocacy on the rights of persons with disabilities through the High Commissioner; engaging at the country level through UN human rights field presences; establishing partnerships with civil society organizations and intergovernmental agencies to promote disability as a human rights issue; and, mainstreaming human rights and disabilities through human rights

mechanisms, particularly special procedures and existing treaty bodies. When the Convention and Optional Protocol come into force, the Treaties and Council Branch of OHCHR will provide technical and substantive support to the Committee in relation to its mandate under the Convention and the Optional Protocol (reporting, communications and inquiries).

DESA and OHCHR have complementary roles and strengths which the current work plan seeks to optimize for the maximum benefit of promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, thematically, while both departments have overlapping expertise, OHCHR is principally responsible for human rights, and DESA for economic and social development; geographically, OHCHR Headquarters is based in Geneva and has contact with UN agencies there, while DESA is based in New York and has access to agencies and departments based there; OHCHR has field presences (OHCHR offices, human rights advisors and human rights components of peacekeeping missions) in 31 countries and nine regional offices, while DESA has traditionally had strong links with the Regional Commissions.

The present work plan does not seek to restrict the activities of either department, but rather to harness these roles and strengths towards coordinated action in relation to the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

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Secretariat support

DESA shall have primary responsibility for servicing the Conference of States parties and OHCHR shall have primary responsibility for servicing the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To the extent that the Conference of States parties shall elect the members of the Committee, OHCHR shall organize and support the election process in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs. In that regard, OHCHR will prepare draft provisional rules of procedure for that agenda item of the Conference of States parties.

Title

DESA and OHCHR staff members working on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities comprise the *"UN Secretariat on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities"*.

Sharing information

The respective units working on issues relating to disability and the Committee in DESA and OHCHR will share their work plans on an annual basis.

Relevant information concerning the Committee, as well as its output (concluding observations, general comments, decisions on communications, information relating to inquiries etc) will be provided to DESA by OHCHR regularly.

The secretariat of the Conference of States parties will transmit on a regular basis relevant information from the Conference of States parties (conclusions of sessions, invitations to intersessional meetings, informal consultations etc.) to OHCHR.

Sharing of expertise

OHCHR will undertake to send a staff member at an appropriate level to attend meetings of the Conference of States parties. For intersessional meetings and informal consultations, the OHCHR New York Office, taking into account workload on staff, will represent OHCHR.

When either DESA or OHCHR hold an expert meeting, the respective departments undertake to provide a staff member with relevant expertise to attend meetings as appropriate.

Avoiding duplication

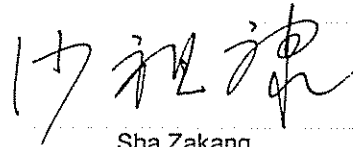
DESA and OHCHR will coordinate on activities with a view to avoiding duplication. Where appropriate, one staff member from either department can present the views of the other department in meetings, etc. with a view also of ensuring a consistent UN secretariat position on the Convention. However, it will not be considered duplication where the nature of the activity requires representation of both departments (for example, inter-agency meetings).

Inter-agency coordination

Inter-agency coordination and coordination with civil society organizations are important aspects of the Convention. DESA has a mandate from the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) to coordinate inter-agency work on the Convention. OHCHR will assist DESA in this task, including through collaborating and coordinating with agencies and organizations based in Geneva (eg. holding informal briefing sessions with Geneva-based organizations).

Revision of the joint work plan

The joint work plan will be revised two years after signature.



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Under-Secretary-General
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Louise Arbour
United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights

Date:

Date: