

# Government Implementation of the Standard Rules As Seen By Member Organizations of World Blind Union - WBU

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Dansk Blindesamfund, Denmark  
Finnish Federation of the Visually Handicapped, Finland  
The Icelandic Association of the Blind, Iceland  
Organization National de Ciegos, Spain  
Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired, Sweden  
Royal National Institute for the Blind, United Kingdom

#### **Middle East and North Africa**

Union Nationale des Aveugles de Tunisie, Tunisia

#### **Countries in transition**

Armenian Association of the Blind, Armenia  
Croatian Association of the Blind, Croatia  
Czech Association of the Blind, Czech Republic  
Estonian Federation of the Blind, Estonia  
Federation of the Blind, Hungary  
Latvian Society of the Blind, Latvia  
Council of the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, Lithuania  
Polish Association of the Blind, Poland  
Romanian Blind Association, Romania  
Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union, Slovak Republic

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

WBU, Costa Rica

### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

Association Burkinable Pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants, Burkina Faso  
Association Nationale des Deficients Visuels au Tchad, Chad  
Association Nationale des Aveugles et Deficients Visuels du Congo, Congo  
Ethiopian National Association of the Blind, Ethiopia  
Association Nationale des Femmes Aveugles de Cote d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast  
Kenya Union of the Blind, Kenya  
Synskadeorganisation, Namibia  
Somali Society of the Blind, Somalia  
Zimbabwe National League of the Blind, Zimbabwe  
The Council for the Blind, Zimbabwe

### **South, East Asia and the Pacific**

Fiji Society for the Blind, Fiji  
All India Confederation of the Blind, India  
National Council for the Blind, Malaysia - NCBM  
Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped, Singapore  
The Sri Lanka Federation of the Visually Handicapped, Sri Lanka

## **Introduction**

This report analyses the replies to the questionnaire sent not only to the governments of the UN Member States, but also to 600 national NGO's within the disability field. The number of responses from the NGO's was not as high as from the governments of Member States, representing, however, a very interesting material. In this report I will separate, among the total of 163 replies from NGO's, the 33 replies from World Blind Union (WBU).

Part I of this report presents and analyses the results from the NGO's belonging to WBU, which have answered the questionnaire. Each table corresponds to a specific question in the questionnaire (the number of the question is marked). For each question, after the presentation

of the results, comparisons are made between a) the results from the organization in question and the results from the total of NGO's responding to the questionnaire, and b) the results from the organization in question and the replies from governments. In this way we can locate the issues where convergence, or divergence, of views exists, between the particular NGO's and all the NGO's having responded to the questionnaire, and between the particular NGO's and the governments.

The information in Part II is presented in rather a detailed form, in order to expose the collected data of the responding NGO's.

The decision to send the questionnaire, not only to governments of the Member States, but also to NGO's of these states within the disability field, proved to be worthwhile. The different perspectives and views indicate a more complex picture of the degree of achievement of each country implementing of the Standard Rules. When the government and one, or many, NGO's give the same answers there is a guarantee for the reliability of the received data, but when, on the other hand, the answers differ many questions arise. For instance: Who knows what about whom? Does the organization for the blind know the conditions for the mentally disabled? Is there a trend that governments give an idealizing description, while NGO's give a pessimistic one? The comparisons in this report are not aiming at indicating the greatest possible differences, but to find out the greatest possible achievements with the standards, set out by the Rules. Yet, attention has to be paid to cases where the answers from one and the same country are not concordant. For several questions, the difference between the percentages reported by WBU organizations and governments, is ten percent or more. What do such differences tell us?

The answers differ, now and then, on specific details on very essential issues, like what kind of services that are available, and what persons with disabilities are entitled to. That the answers differ, on issues such as the role of the co-ordinating committee, is rather evident, since it is a question of assessing, of evaluating a process between two or more parties. But in case of divergent answers about social and economic rights questions arise. Is there an information gap even among the most prominent spokesmen for persons with disabilities? Do organizations have too small resources in order to keep themselves well-informed? Or do the disability organizations work rather separately from each other; concentrating on their own, specific disability group, due to the complexity of the matter, that is ¥disability¥, is it a too big an issue to keep record of?

The divergence is of course in many cases the result of a different perspective due to different roles: The government is the actor implementing policies within a wide range of issues, while NGO's are experts in a specific field, actors who therefore very well know what is happening in a limited area. The answers from the NGO's can thus sometimes be the verification, or falsification, of the answer from the governments. The government answer giving a more optimistic view than the answer from NGO's could depend on the fact that - being the responsible part for the implementation of policies, conventions and rules such as the Standard Rules - the government wants to demonstrate that it has carried out its obligations.

By elaborating the specific replies of different NGO's, comparing the answers with the NGO's as a whole - a rather common procedure - and with the governments, one trait has emerged, rather unexpectedly: that specific NGO's diverge on one or many issues with the NGO's in general but converge with the answer from the government. In order to explain this, and other interesting findings, further monitoring is needed.

Distribution of NGOs belonging to the WBU according to regions

<b>Regions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
South, East Asia and the Pacific	5	15,2
Industrialized countries	6	18,2
Latin America and the Caribbean	1	3,0
The Middle East and North Africa	1	3,0
Sub-Saharan Africa	10	30,3
Countries in transition	10	30,3
Total	33	100,0

Answers from WBU organizations were received from all regions. The regions with most respondents among WBU organizations were Sub-Saharan Africa and the countries in transition. The regions clearly underrepresented are the Middle East and North Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. When compared with the responses from the NGOs as a whole, the percentages from the WBU organizations are lower regarding the industrialized countries, but higher regarding the Sub-Saharan Africa and countries in transition.

## General Policy

Table 1 (Question No. 1)

Number of WBU organizations reporting an officially recognized disability policy:

<b>Disability policy expressed in:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Having an officially recognized policy	26	81,3
Not having an officially recognized policy	6	18,8
Law	16	50,0
Guidelines adopted by the Government	15	46,9
Guidelines adopted by a disability council	13	40,6
Policy adopted by political parties	6	18,8
Policy adopted by NGO's	11	34,4

Total 32, No answer 1

As Table 1 shows, the majority of WBU organizations are reporting that the country in question has an officially recognized disability policy. The majority of WBU organizations are reporting that disability policy is expressed in law and in guidelines adopted by the government. The replies from the NGOs in general exhibit the same pattern. There are, however, clear differences regarding the percentage of countries with an officially policy recognized in law: the percentage reported by WBU organizations is lower than for the NGOs in general. When compared with the government responses, WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding disability policy expressed in law and in guidelines, adopted by the governments.

Table 2 (Question No. 2)

The emphasis of disability policy

Emphasis in national policy	Number of WBU org. indicating respective emphasis				
	1	2	3	4	5
Prevention	6	4	3	6	2
Rehabilitation	7	6	6	3	-
Individual support	4	7	5	3	1
Accessibility measures	3	4	2	4	6
Anti-discrimination law	4	2	4	2	6

1 = very strong emphasis, 5 = very weak emphasis

According to WBU organizations the strongest emphasis is on rehabilitation, while the weakest emphasis is on anti-discrimination law and accessibility measures. Thus the same pattern prevails as with the NGOs in general. WBU organizations, however, are reporting a quite strong emphasis regarding prevention. The same pattern, as NGOs in general can be discerned, when compared with the government responses.

Table 3 (Question No. 3)

Government action to convey the message of full participation

Conveying the message of full participation	Frequency	Valid Percent
WBU organizations reporting Gvt. action	14	43,8
WBU organizations reporting no Gvt. action	18	56,3

Total 32, No answer 1

As Table 3 shows, there are 18 organizations out of 32 providing information on this issue, reporting that the government has not done anything to initiate or support information campaigns conveying the message of full participation, since the adoption of the Rules. There are no great differences in percentages reported, when compared with the NGOs in general. But, the percentage is considerably lower among WBU organizations compared with government responses. There are 81% of the governments reporting that action has been taken to convey the message of full participation, but only 44% of the WBU organizations.

## Legislation

Table 4 (Question No. 4)

Types of legislation to protect the rights of persons with disabilities

Types of legislation	Frequency	Valid Percent
Special legislation	10	30,3
General legislation	12	36,4
Special and general legislation	11	33,3

Total 33, No answer 0

As Table 4 shows, the most common type of legislation is general legislation. The second most frequent type of legislation is to use a combination of general legislation, applicable to all citizens, and special legislation specifically referring to disabled persons' rights, while the least common type is special legislation. There is, however, a high percentage of countries, where the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The pattern is not the

same, compared with the NGOs in general. For the NGOs in general the most frequent type is to use a combination of special and general legislation. There are also great differences, when compared with government responses. WBU organizations report a higher percentage in case of only special legislation or only general legislation, but a lower percentage for the combination of special and general legislation.

Table 5 (Question No. 5)  
Mechanisms to protect citizenship rights

<b>Judicial/no-judicial mechanisms</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Due process	23	79,3
Recourse procedure	2	6,9
Ombudsman	7	24,1
Governmental body (administrative)	16	55,2
Expert bodies	4	13,8
Arbitration/conciliation body	0	0,0

Total 29, No answer 4

As Table 5 shows, the majority of WBU organizations are reporting that mechanisms have been adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The most frequent judicial mechanism adopted is legal remedy through the courts, while the most frequent non-judicial mechanism is a governmental body (administrative). It is interesting to note that only 7 countries out of 29 providing information on this issue, report that there is an Ombudsman. There is a clear difference as regards the percentage of governments reporting that they have an ombudsman as well as an arbitration/conciliation body, and recourse procedure. The reported percentage from WBU on these mechanisms are considerably lower than those reported by NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by the governments there is a clear difference only regarding the existence of an arbitration/conciliation body.

Table 6 (Question 6)  
Civil and political rights of persons with disabilities

<b>WBU organizations reporting that general legislation does not apply with respect to:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Education	2	7,4
Employment	2	7,4
The right to marriage	6	22,2
The right to parenthood/family	6	22,2
Political rights	6	22,2
Access to court-of-law	4	14,8
Right to privacy	3	11,1
Property rights	8	29,6

Total 27, No answer 6

As Table 6 shows, it is a considerable number of WBU organizations reporting that general legislation does not apply to persons with disabilities with respect to the right to parenthood/family, the right to marriage and to political rights. General legislation applies in almost all countries with respect to the right of education. It is also interesting to note that,

according to WBU, general legislation applies with respect to the right of employment in more than 90% of the countries. The pattern is the same as with the NGOs in general, but with some differences in the percentages reported. The percentages reported by WBU organizations are considerably lower. When compared with the percentages reported by the governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage only regarding the right to privacy.

Table 7 (Question No. 7)  
Economic and social rights of persons with disabilities

<b>WBU organizations reporting that the following benefits are not guaranteed by law:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Health/medical care	9	32,1
Rehabilitation	10	35,7
Financial security	12	42,9
Employment	11	39,3
Independent living	14	50,0
Participation in decisions affecting themselves	15	53,6

Total 28, No answer 5

According to WBU organizations, the following rights are less often guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: participation in decisions affecting themselves; independent living and financial security. The economic and social right being most frequently guaranteed by law is the right to health and medical care, although, according to the WBU, in almost 32% of the countries this is not the case. Regarding the right to employment, when compared with question no. 6, it can be concluded that general legislation is not a sufficient guarantee for the rights of disabled persons. Though, in ca 90% of the countries, there are no legal hindrances for disabled persons with regard to the right to employment, only in 60% of the countries this right is guaranteed by law. Compared with the NGOs in general there are clear differences regarding the rights to participation in decisions affecting themselves, health and medical care and rehabilitation, where the percentages reported by WBU organizations are much higher. On the other hand, regarding the right to employment and to independent living, the percentages reported by WBU organizations are considerably lower than by NGOs in general. Compared with government responses, the WBU organizations report considerably higher percentages on the following benefits that are not guaranteed by law: health and medical care, rehabilitation, financial security and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

Table 8 (Question No. 8)  
New legislation concerning disability since the adoption of the Rules

<b>Legislation on disability</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
WBU reporting enactment of new legislation	9	30,0
WBU reporting no enactment of new legislation	21	70,0

Total 30, No answer 3

As Table 8 shows, the majority of WBU organizations are reporting that no new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules. Only in 30% of the countries is enactment of new legislation reported by WBU. There are no clear differences, compared with the percentages reported by the NGOs in general. Compared with the percentages reported by the government, WBU organizations are reporting a lower percentage regarding enactment of new legislation.

## Accessibility

Table 9 (Question No. 9)  
Regulations to ensure accessibility in the built environment

<b>WBU organizations reporting that:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Accessibility standards exist	18	64,3
Accessibility standards do not exist	10	35,7

Total 28, No answer 5

As Table 9 indicates, almost 36% of WBU organizations are reporting that no accessibility standards exist. The same pattern prevails as with the NGOs in general, with no clear differences in the percentages, even when compared with the percentages, reported by the governments.

Table 10 (Question No. 10)  
Accessibility of the built environment

<b>WBU organizations reporting accessibility in:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Public places	16	88,9
Outdoor environment	14	77,8
Transportation	9	50,0
Housing	11	61,1
Accessibility standards does not exist	10	35,7

Total 28, No answer 5

As Table 10 indicates, the majority of WBU organizations are reporting the existence, to a great extent, of accessibility standards for public places exists, whereas the accessibility standards for transportation exist to a lesser extent. The pattern is the same as with the NGOs in general, with no discernible difference in the percentages reported. Nor are there any clear differences with the percentages reported by the governments, except regarding accessibility in public places, where WBU organizations report a lower percentage.

Table 11 (Question No. 11)  
Supervision of the accessibility in the built environment

<b>Accessibility in the built environment is observed by:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
National authority	11	42,3
Local Governments	13	50,0
The constructor	6	23,1
The organizers/providers of the activities	2	7,7
No responsible body exists	6	23,1

Total 26, No answer 7

As Table 11 shows, 23% of WBU organizations are reporting that there is no responsible body for observing the accessibility in the built environment. Accessibility in the built environment, when existing, is most often observed by a national authority and by local governments. The

same pattern prevails in replies, compared with the NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by the governments, WBU organizations indicate a lower percentage regarding supervision by a national authority and by local governments.

Table 12 (Question No. 12)  
Measures to facilitate accessibility of the built environment

<b>Government measures promoted:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Levelling off pavements	14	56,0
Marking parking areas	14	56,0
Installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets	10	40,0
Ensure accessibility in public places	12	48,0
Improving accessibility in housing	7	28,0
Financial incentives/support for accessibility measures	4	16,0
Special lighting/contrast colours for visually impaired	1	4,0
Provision of specially adapted motor vehicles	11	44,0

Total 25, No answer 8

According to WBU organizations, the following measures to facilitate accessibility in the built environment are the most frequently promoted: levelling off pavements; marking parking areas and ensuring accessibility in public places. The measure least of all promoted is special lighting/contrast colours for visually impaired. There are great differences in the percentage reported, when compared with the NGOs in general. WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding the following measures: installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets; ensuring accessibility in public places; providing financial incentives/support for accessibility measures and using special lighting/contrast colours for visually impaired. The percentages reported by the WBU organizations are much lower than those by NGOs in general. It is particularly interesting to note that the percentage regarding special lighting, reported by WBU organizations, is so low. When compared to the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report lower percent regarding the following measures: installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets, improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives/support for accessibility measures and providing special lighting/contrast colours for visually impaired.

Table 13 (Question No. 13)  
Special transport system

<b>Special transport is available for:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Medical treatment	15	83,3
Education	15	83,3
Work	16	88,9
Recreational purpose	15	83,3
No special transport system exists	11	36,7
Special transport exists	19	63,3

Total 30, No answer 3

There are 37% of WBU organizations reporting that no special transport system exists. When a special legislation exists, in most countries it is available for education and medical treatment. There are no clear differences in the percentages, when compared with the NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding education and recreational purpose.

Table 14 (Question No. 14)  
Adaptation of the built environment

<b>Obstacles reported by WBU when building accessible environments:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Attitudinal factors	16	50,0
Economic/budgetary factors	27	84,4
Technical factors	5	15,6
Geographical and climatic factors	7	21,9
Lack of legislation and regulations	16	50,0
Lack of planning and design capacity	7	21,9
Lack of knowledge, research and information	12	37,5
Lack of user participation	9	28,1
Lack of co-operation from other organizations	12	37,5
Lack of enforcement mechanism	15	46,9

Total 32, No answer 1

As Table 14 shows, the three main obstacles reported by WBU organizations, when building accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors, lack of legislation and regulations and attitudinal factors. There are clear differences, compared with the NGOs in general. WBU organizations are reporting a lower percentage regarding attitudinal factors, lack of planning and design capacity and lack of enforcement mechanism. Another difference is that the percentage reported by WBU organizations regarding geographical and climatic factors is higher than that reported by NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding technical factors but a higher percentage regarding obstacles, such as lack of legislation and regulations, lack of user participation and lack of co-operation from other organizations.

Table 15 (Question No. 15)  
Disability awareness component

<b>Disability awareness in the training:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
There is a disability awareness component	12	40,0
There is not a disability awareness component	18	60,0

Total 30, No answer 3

The majority of WBU organizations are reporting that a disability awareness component is not incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers. The same pattern prevails, compared with the NGOs in general. No clear differences in the percentage are reported. There are also only minor differences, when compared with the percentages reported by the governments.

Table 16 (Question No. 16)  
Status of sign language

<b>The status of sign language as reported by WBU organizations:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Recognized as the official language	9	39,1
As the first language in education	5	21,7
As the main means of communication	6	26,1
No officially recognized status	3	13,0

Total 23, No answer 10

As Table 16 indicates, 13% of WBU organizations are reporting that sign language has no officially recognized status while also 39% of the WBU organizations are reporting that sign language is recognized as the official language of deaf people. There is a clear difference compared with the NGOs in general regarding the recognition of sign language as the main means of communication, where the percentage reported by WBU organizations is higher. There is also a difference between NGOs in general and WBU organizations, regarding the percentage of countries, where sign language has no officially recognized status: WBU organizations report a much lower percentage. When compared with the governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage in cases where sign language has no officially recognized status.

Table 17 (Question No. 17)  
Accessibility measures in media

<b>Accessibility measures in media</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Reporting accessibility measures	13	41,9
Reporting no accessibility measures	18	58,1

Total 31, No answer 2

As Table 17 shows, the majority of the WBU organizations report that there are no accessibility measures to encourage media to make their information services accessible for persons with disabilities. There are no differences in the percentages reported, compared with NGOs in general. There are, however, differences when compared with the percentages, reported by governments. WBU organizations report a higher percentage of countries with no accessibility measures.

Table 18 (Question No. 18)  
Accessibility measures in public information services

<b>Public information services</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Accessibility measures in information	6	21,4
No accessibility measures in information	22	78,6

Total 28, No answer 5

The majority of the WBU organizations are also reporting that there are no government measures to make other forms of public information services accessible for persons with disabilities. There are no discernible differences compared with the percentage reported by the NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding accessibility measures in public information services.

Table 19 (Question No. 19)  
Access to information and communication

<b>Services to facilitate information/communication</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Literature in Braille/tape	26	83,9
News magazines on tape/Braille	18	58,1
Sign language interpretation for any purpose	5	16,1
Sign language interpretation for major events	10	32,3
Easy readers for persons with mental disabilities	4	12,9
None	5	16,1

Total 31, No answer 2

As Table 19 indicates, there are 16% of WBU organizations reporting that no services at all are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others. The services most frequently provided are literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation for major events, while services such as easy readers for persons with disabilities are less often provided. The main difference here, compared with NGOs in general is that WBU organizations are reporting a higher percentage regarding provision of literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding sign language interpretation for any purpose and easy readers for persons with mental disabilities, and a higher percentage, where none of the above mentioned services is provided.

## Organizations of Persons With Disabilities

Table 20 (Question No. 20)  
National umbrella organization

<b>National umbrella organization</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
There is a umbrella organization	22	66,7
There is no umbrella organization	11	33,3

Total 33, No answer 0

As Table 20 shows, the majority of the WBU organizations are reporting that there is an umbrella organization of organizations of persons with disabilities. There are only minor differences in the percentage reported, compared with those reported by the NGOs in general. There are, however, clear differences, when compared with the percentages reported by governments. WBU organizations indicate a lower percentage of countries with an umbrella organization.

Table 21 (Question 21)  
Participation in policy making

<b>Participation in policy-making</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
WBU organizations reporting participation	10	31,3
WBU organizations reporting no participation	22	68,8

Total 32, No answer 1

As Table 21 shows, 69% of the WBU organizations are reporting that no legal provisions exist mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to

work with governmental institutions. The percentage of no participation is much higher than that for NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a considerably lower percentage of participation in policy-making.

Table 22 (Question 22)

Consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities

<b>Organizations are consulted:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Never	3	10,0
Sometimes	16	53,3
Often	9	30,0
Always	2	6,7

Total 30, No answer 3

Table 22 shows, that a majority of the WBU organizations reports that consultations sometimes take place, while 10% of them are reporting that consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities, when laws, regulations and/or guidelines with a disability aspect are being prepared, never take place. There is no difference in percentage compared with NGOs in general. When compared with the government responses, WBU organizations report a higher percentage, when consultations sometimes take place, but a lower percentage, when consultations always take place.

Table 23 (Question 23)

Level of consultations

<b>Level of consultations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
National	28	100,0
Regional	8	28,6
Local	9	32,1

Total 28, No answer 5

Table 23 shows that consultations, when they take place, always occur at the national level. Compared with the percentage reported by NGO's in general, there are great differences in the percentage reported, concerning the local level. There are clear differences, when compared with the percentages reported by governments. WBU organizations report a higher percentage on the national level but a lower one on the regional and local levels.

Table 24 (Question 24)

Support to organizations of disabled people

<b>Kind of support</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Financial	25	83,3
Organizational/logistic	7	23,3
No support at all	3	10,0

Total 30, No answer 3

The majority of the WBU organizations are reporting that the government gives financial support to organizations of persons with disabilities. There are, however, 10% of the WBU organizations reporting that no support at all is given to organizations of persons with disabilities. There are differences, when compared with the percentage reported by the NGOs in general, regarding financial support, where the percentage reported by WBU organizations is

higher. When compared with the percentages reported by the governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage concerning organizational/logistic support.

Table 25 (Question 25)  
Participation in political and public life

Areas of political and public life	Number of countries reporting participation		
	Limited	Some	Great
Government	24	1	-
Legislatures	23	1	-
Judiciary	22	1	1
Political parties	20	3	1
NGO's	7	10	11

1 and 2 = limited extent  
3 = some extent  
4 and 5 = great extent

Table 25 shows that the majority of WBU organizations are reporting that persons with disabilities to a very limited extent participate in government, legislatures, judicial authorities and political parties, but to a great extent in NGOs. The same pattern prevails as that reported by the NGOs in general. However, WBU organizations are reporting a much lower participation in government, legislatures and political parties, than NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report lower percentages of participation in government, legislatures, judiciary and political parties.

Table 26 (Question 26)  
The role of organizations

Areas in which organizations are involved	Frequency	Valid Percent
Advocating rights and improved services	30	93,8
Mobilize persons with disabilities	26	81,3
Identify needs and priorities	25	78,1
Participate in the planning, implementation	20	62,5
Contribute to public awareness	29	90,6
Provide services	28	87,5
Promote/organize income generating activities	22	68,8

Total 32, No answer 1

Table 26 shows that organizations are foremost involved in advocating rights and improved services, contribute to public awareness, mobilizing persons with disabilities and identifying needs and priorities. Organizations are reporting that the area in which they are least involved, is the participating in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities and promoting/organizing of income generating activities. Nonetheless, the rates in all areas concerning organizational involvement are high, which implies that the WBU organizations apprehend their role to involve a wide range of tasks. The same pattern prevails as with NGOs in general, the only difference being that the percentage reported by WBU organizations concerning provision of services is higher. When compared with the governments, there is a clear difference only regarding the provision of services, where the percentage reported by WBU is higher than that of the governments.

## Co-ordination of Work

Table 27 (Question 27)

Co-ordinating committee

<b>Co-ordinating committee</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
There is a co-ordinating committee	24	72,7
There is no co-ordinating committee	9	27,3

Total 33, No answer 0

Table 27 shows that the majority of the organizations are reporting the existence of a co-ordinating committee. However, 27%, are reporting that there is no such committee. Minor differences appear in the percentage reported, when compared with NGOs in general. There are no differences, compared with the percentages reported by governments.

Table 28 (Question 28)

Where the co-ordinating committee is reporting

<b>The co-ordinating committee is reporting to:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
A particular Ministry	19	79,2
The Prime Minister's office	3	12,5
Other	2	8,3
There is no co-ordinating committee	9	27,3

Total 33, No answer 0

According to the WBU organizations, the authority to which the co-ordinating committee is usually reporting, is the Ministry of Social Affairs or any other Ministry. Minor differences appear in the percentage reported, when compared with NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, there is a clear difference only regarding reports to a particular Ministry, where the percentage reported by WBU organizations is higher.

Table 29 (Question 29)

Representation in the co-ordinating committee

<b>Representatives of:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Ministries	21	95,5
Organizations of persons with disabilities	20	90,9
Other NGO's	6	27,3
Private sector	5	22,7
There is no co-ordinating committee	9	27,3

Total 31, No answer 2

According to the WBU organizations, the co-ordinating committee usually includes representatives from Ministries and from organizations of persons with disabilities. Representatives from other NGOs and from the private sector are not so often included in the co-ordinating committee. When compared with the NGOs in general, the pattern is the same,

but there is a difference in the percentage reported regarding the representation of other NGOs. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage regarding representation of other NGOs and from the private sector in the co-ordinating committee.

Table 30 (Question 30)  
Participation in policy-development

<b>Involvement of the co-ordinating committee</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Participation in policy development	21	87,5
No participation in policy-development	3	12,5
There is no co-ordinating committee	9	27,3

Total 33, No answer 0

Table 30 shows that 88% of the WBU organizations are reporting that the co-ordinating committee is expected to participate in policy development. There are only minor differences in the percentage reported, when compared with those reported by the NGOs in general. No clear differences appear when compared with the percentages, reported by governments.

Table 31 (Question 31)  
Participation in performance of other tasks

<b>Involvement of the co-ordinating committee</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Reporting performance of other tasks	15	71,4
Reporting no performance of other tasks	6	28,6
There is no co-ordinating committee	9	27,3

Total 30, No answer 3

71% of the NGOs are reporting that the committee is expected to perform other tasks. The percentage reported by the NGOs in general is 57,1. There is thus a great difference in the percentage reported. No clear differences appear when compared with the percentages, reported by governments.

Table 32 (Question 32)  
Effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Improved co-ordination of programmes	9	40,9
Improved legislation	9	40,9
Improved integration of responsibility	5	22,7
Better dialogue in the disability field	12	54,5
More accurate planning	4	18,2
More effective use of resources	4	18,2
Improved promotion of public awareness	9	40,9
Too early for assessment	6	27,3
There is no co-ordinating committee	9	27,3

Total 31, No answer 2

According to the WBU organizations the establishment of the co-ordinating committee has had the following effects: better dialogue in the disability field, improved co-ordination of programmes, improved legislation and improved promotion of public awareness. However, 27% of the WBU organizations report that it is too early for an assessment of the effects. When compared with NGOs in general, there are only minor differences in the percentage reported regarding improved co-ordination, improved integration of responsibility, more accurate planning and more effective use of resources, the percentages reported there by WBU organizations being lower than those reported by NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, WBU organizations report a lower percentage for all of the above listed effects.

Table 33 (Question 33)  
Effects of the adoption of the Standard Rules

<b>The effects of the Standard Rules</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
WBU organizations reporting rethinking	14	56,0
WBU organizations reporting no rethinking	9	36,0
Too early for assessment	2	8,0

Total 25, No answer 8

Table 33 shows that 56% of the WBU organizations are reporting that the adoption of the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy while 36% are reporting that this is not the case. The percentage reported by WBU organizations regarding the fact that the adoption of the Standard Rules has not led to a rethinking, is lower than that reported by the NGOs in general. When compared with the percentages reported by governments, fewer WBU organizations report that the adoption of the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking.

## Conclusion

There are 5 questions where a broad convergence of views exists, between WBU organizations, the NGOs in general and the governments, namely the questions no 2, 9, 15, 27 and 30. In none of the issues, regarding these questions, is there any divergence between WBU organizations, NGOs in general and governments..

There are, nonetheless, a number of important issues, where divergent views exist between WBU organizations and governments. Divergence in views is almost equally frequent between WBU organizations and governments and NGOs in general.

There are also a number of important issues, where divergent views are manifest between WBU organizations, NGOs in general and governments. Divergence is not occurring over the whole range of issues in these areas, but in most of them.

The following are the areas where divergence in views is most apparent: the civil and political rights of persons with disabilities, the economic and social rights of persons with disabilities, the measures taken by the governments in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment, the obstacles reported to facilitate accessibility in the built environment, the participation in political and public life and the effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee.

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## Industrialized countries

### Denmark

#### Dansk Blindesamfund, Denmark

##### General policy

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government, in guidelines adopted by a national disability council, and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation and individual support. The government has done the following in order to convey the message of full participation: an amount of DKK 100.000 has been reserved for information activities for spreading knowledge of the UN Standard Rules. A booklet has been published by 'det Centrale handicapråd', including 6 interviews with perspectives of the UN Standard Rules. The Rules have been published in an authorized Danish translation.

##### Legislation

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is means of appeal. Administrative and other non-judicial bodies include an Ombudsman and independent expert bodies.

General legislation applies to persons with visual disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, independent living. According to the Government even the benefit of financial security is guaranteed by law.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

##### Accessibility

There are building regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, means of public transportation and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority, by local governments and the constructor. No measures have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment. According to the Government, measures to facilitate accessibility have been promoted up to a certain extent. These include: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets, ensuring access to public places, improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives for accessibility measures when building and renovating housing, providing financial

support for adapting private buildings, installing lighting and using contrast colours for visually impaired and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities including the right to reduced fare, half price for a guide and for the person him-/herself on trains, buses, domestic flights and ferries. There is also, to a certain extent, special handicap-transportation, but very restricted. Special transport is available for whatever purpose. At a varying degree all of the following factors are obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments: attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, technical factors, geographical and climatic factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation, lack of corporation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with visual disabilities. However, the library service upon request might produce certain key information. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with visual disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille. In addition, electronic bulletin boards are provided. However, none of the services pointed out above are being provided to a satisfactory extent.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which 27 organizations are represented. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. A number of legislative rules provide that disability-organizations appoint members to councils. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at both the national, regional and local level. No support is given by the government to organizations of persons with disabilities, except from an inconsiderable amount. However, organizations receive a part of the surplus from the state lottery. The Government states giving financial support to organizations.

The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Parliament and to all the Ministries. The co-ordinating committee includes representatives of many ministries, of organizations of persons with disabilities, of representatives from organizations of municipalities and counties. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks e.g. consultation, monitoring of the state chosen areas. The council might also take initiatives and suggest changes in current legislation and administrative rules. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, a better dialogue in the disability field and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Rules has so far not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy but might be applied to enhance and endorse the existing policy.

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# Finland

## Finnish Federation of the Visually Handicapped, Finland

### General policy

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government, in guidelines adopted by a national disability council, and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation and individual support. The government has done the following in order to convey the message of full participation: an amount of DKK 100.000 has been reserved for information activities for spreading knowledge of the UN Standard Rules. A booklet has been published by 'det Centrale handicapråd', including 6 interviews with perspectives of the UN Standard Rules. The Rules have been published in an authorized Danish translation.

### Legislation

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is means of appeal. Administrative and other non-judicial bodies include an Ombudsman and independent expert bodies.

General legislation applies to persons with visual disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, independent living. According to the Government even the benefit of financial security is guaranteed by law.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

### Accessibility

There are building regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, means of public transportation and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority, by local governments and the constructor. No measures have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment. According to the Government, measures to facilitate accessibility have been promoted up to a certain extent. These include: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets, ensuring access to public places, improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives for accessibility measures when building and renovating housing, providing financial support for adapting private buildings, installing lighting and using contrast colours for visually impaired and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities including the right to reduced fare, half price for a guide and for the person him-/herself on trains, buses, domestic flights and ferries. There is also, to a certain extent, special handicap-transportation, but very restricted. Special transport is available for whatever purpose. At a varying degree all of the following factors are obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments: attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors,

technical factors, geographical and climatic factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation, lack of corporation form other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with visual disabilities. However, the library service upon request might produce certain key information. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with visual disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille. In addition, electronic bulletin boards are provided. However, none of the services pointed out above are being provided to a satisfactory extent.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which 27 organizations are represented. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. A number of legislative rules provide that disability-organizations appoint members to councils. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at both the national, regional and local level. No support is given by the government to organizations of persons with disabilities, except from an inconsiderable amount. However, organizations receive a part of the surplus from the state lottery. The Government states giving financial support to organizations.

The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Parliament and to all the Ministries. The co-ordinating committee includes representatives of many ministries, of organizations of persons with disabilities, of representatives from organizations of municipalities and counties. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks e.g. consultation, monitoring of the state chosen areas. The council might also take initiatives and suggest changes in current legislation and administrative rules. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, a better dialogue in the disability field and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Rules has so far not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy but might be applied to enhance and endorse the existing policy.

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## **Iceland**

**The Icelandic Association of the Blind, Iceland**

## **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the government, in policy adopted by political parties and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on rehabilitation, accessibility measures, individual support, anti-discrimination law and prevention.

Since the adoption of the Standard Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation. The Government states that, since the adoption of the Rules, having both initiated and supported information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation, exclusively dealing with disability matters. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts). The non-judicial mechanism is an Ombudsman.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. According to the Government, general legislation does not apply with respect to the right to property. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security, employment, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility in the built environment requiring that public places and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority and by local governments. The following measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets, ensuring access to public places, improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives/support for accessibility measures in housing and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities (subsidized transport by the city of Reykjavik). Special transport is available for medical treatment, education, work and for recreational purpose. According to the Government, special transport is available only for education and work. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors and economic/budgetary factors. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people. According to the Government, sign language is used as the first language in education of deaf people and recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature

in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation being available for any purpose.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which all organizations of disabled persons are represented. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national, regional and local level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government and to some extent in NGOs. The role of the organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, contribute to public awareness, provide services, promote/organize income generating activities. According to the Government, organizations do not promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The committee includes representatives of Ministries and of organizations of persons with disabilities. According to the Government, the co-ordinating committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Finance only. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks, e.g. to finance projects. The establishment of the co-ordinating committee has led to improved co-ordination of measures/programmes in the disability field. According to the Government, the establishment of the co-ordinating committee has also led to improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, more accurate planning, more effective use of resources and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy. According to the Government, the adoption of the Rules has not led to such a rethinking.

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## **Spain**

### **Organization National de Ciegos, Spain**

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the government, in guidelines adopted by the national disability council, in policy adopted by political parties and in policy adopted by NGOs. According to the Government, disability policy is expressed in law and in guidelines adopted by the Government. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on anti-discrimination law, rehabilitation, prevention, individual support and accessibility measures. According to the Government, anti-discrimination is the least emphasized aspect in the disability policy.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has conveyed the message of full participation through legislation. The Government states not having done anything to initiate or support

information campaigns conveying the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts). The non-judicial is an Ombudsman. According to the Government, non-judicial mechanisms also include a governmental body (administrative) and a special arbitration/conciliation body.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to: education, employment, political rights, the right to privacy and property rights. According to the Government, general legislation also applies with respect to the right to marriage and the right to parenthood/family. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, employment and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted since the adoption of the Rules. According to the Government, several laws concerning disability have been enacted since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility in the built environment requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, means of public transportation and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority, by local governments, and by the constructor. The following measures have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets, improving accessibility in housing and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There is special transport arrangements available for whatever purpose. According to the Government, special transport is only available for medical treatment and education. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, geographical and climatic factors and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no government measures to encourage media or other forms of public information services to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation for major events. According to the Government, sign language interpretation is available for any purpose, easy readers for persons with mental disabilities being also provided.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy development or to work with governmental institutions. According to the Government, there are such legal provisions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at both the national, regional and local level. The government gives financial and organizational/logistic support to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties and to some extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services,

mobilize persons with disabilities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities. According to the Government, organizations do not promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee or any similar body. According to the Government, there is a national co-ordinating committee, reporting to Her Majesty the Queen of Spain. It includes representatives of several Ministries, of organizations of disabled people and of experts. The committee is expected to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes in the disability field, improved legislation, a better dialogue in the disability field and improved promotion of public awareness.

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## Sweden

### Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired, Sweden

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government, guidelines adopted by the national disability council, in policy adopted by political parties and in policy adopted by NGOs. According to the Government, disability policy is also expressed in law. The emphasis in this national policy - in descending scale - is on accessibility measures, individual support, rehabilitation, prevention and anti-discrimination law.

Since the adoption of the Standard Rules, the government has done the following in order to convey the message of full participation: translated the Standard Rules in Swedish with a preface by the Minister of Social Affairs, stressing the importance of the Rules. The Rules have through conferences, also been made known.

#### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected both by general and special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts), while the non-judicial mechanism is an Ombudsman. According to the Government, non-judicial mechanisms also include a governmental body (administrative), and a national/regional supervision.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to: education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling and financial security. The Association is, however, adding the following explanation: all depends on what you mean with 'guaranteed'. If you mean almost without exemption, the above benefits are guaranteed. If you mean an absolute guarantee, only financial security is guaranteed. The benefits of employment, independent living, participation in decisions affecting themselves

are not guaranteed by law, neither in the relative, nor in the absolute sense of the term guaranteed. According to the Government, even the benefits of employment, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves are guaranteed by law.

No new legislation has been enacted, since the adoption of the Standard Rules. According to the Government, the following laws have been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules: the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with certain Functional Impairment and the assistance Benefit Act, the Act concerning the Disability Ombudsman, the act concerning Pilot Project with Parental Influence on school attendance of children with mental retardation and an amendment in the Act concerning Suitable Public Transport to Persons with Disabilities implying that the needs of persons with disabilities must be taken into consideration in planning and implementing the transports.

## **Accessibility**

There are laws and regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places, the outdoor environment and land, sea and air transportation are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by local governments and by the constructor. According to the Government, accessibility is also observed by a national authority. The following measures have been promoted by the government to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts, accessible toilets and ensuring access to public places. According to the Government, even the following measures have been promoted: improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives for accessibility measures when building and renovating housing and when adapting private buildings to the needs of persons with disabilities, installing special lighting and using contrast colours for visually impaired and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. Special transport arrangements include reduced prices for travelling by taxi and train. Special transport is available for medical treatment, education, work and for recreational purpose. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design capacity and lack of enforcement mechanism. The Government does not regard attitudinal factors as an obstacle, when building accessible environments. Only to a limited degree there is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is not recognized as the official language of deaf people. But it is used as the first language in education of deaf people, and is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. According to the Government, sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people. There are government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and other persons: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille, sign language interpretation being available for any purpose and easy readers for persons with disabilities.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which the organizations of the visually impaired and of the deaf are not represented. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. According to the Government, there are such legal provisions. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. When taking place, consultations occur at both the national, regional and local levels. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government,

legislatures, and political parties and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to: advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is annually reporting to the government. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks e.g. information, supervision. It is too early for an assessment regarding the effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee. According to the Government, there is no national co-ordinating committee in Sweden.

The adoption of the Standard Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy. According to the Government, however, the standard Rules are expressing views which are very close to the Swedish policy on disability and they are an important and appropriate instrument to develop the policy in this field.

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## United Kingdom

### Royal National Institute for the Blind, United Kingdom

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government, guidelines adopted by the national disability council, in policy adopted by political parties and in policy adopted by NGOs. According to the Government, disability policy is also expressed in law. The emphasis in this national policy - in descending scale - is on accessibility measures, individual support, rehabilitation, prevention and anti-discrimination law.

Since the adoption of the Standard Rules, the government has done the following in order to convey the message of full participation: translated the Standard Rules in Swedish with a preface by the Minister of Social Affairs, stressing the importance of the Rules. The Rules have through conferences, also been made known.

#### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected both by general and special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts), while the non-judicial mechanism is an Ombudsman. According to the Government, non-judicial mechanisms also include a governmental body (administrative), and a national/regional supervision.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to: education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling

and financial security. The Association is, however, adding the following explanation: all depends on what you mean with 'guaranteed'. If you mean almost without exemption, the above benefits are guaranteed. If you mean an absolute guarantee, only financial security is guaranteed. The benefits of employment, independent living, participation in decisions affecting themselves are not guaranteed by law, neither in the relative, nor in the absolute sense of the term guaranteed. According to the Government, even the benefits of employment, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves are guaranteed by law.

No new legislation has been enacted, since the adoption of the Standard Rules. According to the Government, the following laws have been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules: the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with certain Functional Impairment and the assistance Benefit Act, the Act concerning the Disability Ombudsman, the act concerning Pilot Project with Parental Influence on school attendance of children with mental retardation and an amendment in the Act concerning Suitable Public Transport to Persons with Disabilities implying that the needs of persons with disabilities must be taken into consideration in planning and implementing the transports.

## **Accessibility**

There are laws and regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places, the outdoor environment and land, sea and air transportation are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by local governments and by the constructor. According to the Government, accessibility is also observed by a national authority. The following measures have been promoted by the government to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts, accessible toilets and ensuring access to public places. According to the Government, even the following measures have been promoted: improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives for accessibility measures when building and renovating housing and when adapting private buildings to the needs of persons with disabilities, installing special lighting and using contrast colours for visually impaired and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. Special transport arrangements include reduced prices for travelling by taxi and train. Special transport is available for medical treatment, education, work and for recreational purpose. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design capacity and lack of enforcement mechanism. The Government does not regard attitudinal factors as an obstacle, when building accessible environments. Only to a limited degree there is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is not recognized as the official language of deaf people. But it is used as the first language in education of deaf people, and is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. According to the Government, sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people. There are government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and other persons: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille, sign language interpretation being available for any purpose and easy readers for persons with disabilities.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which the organizations of the visually impaired and of the deaf are not represented. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. According to the Government, there are such legal provisions. Disability

organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. When taking place, consultations occur at both the national, regional and local levels. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, and political parties and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to: advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is annually reporting to the government. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks e.g. information, supervision. It is too early for an assessment regarding the effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee. According to the Government, there is no national co-ordinating committee in Sweden.

The adoption of the Standard Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy. According to the Government, however, the standard Rules are expressing views which are very close to the Swedish policy on disability and they are an important and appropriate instrument to develop the policy in this field.

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## **Middle East and North Africa**

### **Tunisia**

#### **Union Nationale des Aveugles de Tunisie, Tunisia**

No reply was received from the Government of Tunisia.

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the government, in guidelines adopted by the national disability council, in policy adopted by political parties, and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on prevention, rehabilitation, individual support and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules the government has conveyed the message of full participation, through seminars and other action.

#### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts). The non-judicial mechanism is a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies with respect to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage and the right to parenthood/family. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, employment, financial security, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, means of public transport and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority, by local governments and by the constructor. The following measures have been promoted by the government to ensure accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, ensuring access to public places and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. Special transport is available for medical treatment and education. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. The only service provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others is literature in Braille/tape.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities and political parties and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities and contribute to public awareness.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Social Affairs. It includes representatives of many Ministries, of organizations of persons with disabilities, of other NGOs and from the private sector. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development. The establishment of the co-ordinating committee has led to: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, a better dialogue in the disability field and more accurate planning.

The adoption of the Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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# Countries in transition

## Armenia

### Armenian Association of the Blind, Armenia

No reply was received from the Government of Armenia.

#### General policy

The officially recognized disability policy in Armenia is expressed in law. The emphasis in this disability policy - in descending scale - is on anti-discrimination law, individual support, prevention, rehabilitation and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to initiate or support information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation.

#### Legislation

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation.

General legislation apply to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court-of-law, right to privacy, property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security, employment, independent living, participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted since the adoption of the Standard Rules.

#### Accessibility

There is legislation and other forms of regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that housing is made accessible. There are no standards requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, land, sea and air transportation are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by the Armenian Association of the Blind. Improving accessibility in housing is the only measure having been promoted in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment. Special transport arrangements are available for medical treatment, education, work and for recreational purpose. The most difficult obstacle, when planning to build accessible environments, is economic/budgetary factors. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no measures to encourage media or other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and other persons: literature in Braille and literature on tape.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations take place at the national level. The government gives financial and organizational/logistic support to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties and NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Prime Minister's office. The government expects the national co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development but not to perform other tasks. The establishment of the co-ordinating committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, a better dialogue in the disability field, more accurate planning, more effective use of resources and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Standard Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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# Croatia

## Croatian Association of the Blind, Croatia

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law. According to the Government, disability policy is also expressed in guidelines adopted by the Government. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on anti-discrimination law, prevention, rehabilitation, individual support and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to initiate or support information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation. The Government states that it has taken action in order to convey the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of general and special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts). The non-judicial mechanism adopted is a governmental body (administrative). According to the Government, non-judicial mechanisms

also include independent expert bodies. General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court-of-law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security and employment. According to the Government, even the benefit of independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves are guaranteed by law.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places are made accessible. According to the Government, there are rules also requiring that the outdoor environment, means of public transportation and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority and by local governments. The following measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas and ensuring access to public places. According to the Government, even other measures have been promoted such as: installing lifts and accessible toilets, improving accessibility in housing and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are lack of legislation and regulations and lack of enforcement mechanism. According to the Government, the most difficult factors to build accessible environments are attitudinal factors and economic/budgetary factors. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers. According to the Government, there is such a disability awareness component. There are no government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille. According to the Government, even sign language interpretation for major events is provided.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties and NGOs. According to the Government, disabled people also participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, contribute to public awareness and provide services.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The committee includes representatives of many Ministries. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks, e.g. protection of disabled veterans. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved legislation, a better dialogue in the disability field and improved promotion of public awareness. The establishment of the committee has not led to improved co-ordination of

measures/programmes, improved integration of responsibility, more accurate planning or more effective use of resources. According to the Government, there is no national co-ordinating committee.

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# Czech Republic

## Czech Association of the Blind, Czech Republic

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this national policy - in descending scale - is on individual support, prevention, anti-discrimination law, rehabilitation, and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to initiate or support information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation applicable to all citizens. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. There is no institutional mechanism/arrangement to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The only body available for that purpose is NGOs. According to the Government the judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts). Non-judicial mechanisms include a governmental body administrative.

The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, financial security and participation in decisions affecting themselves. According to the Government, even the benefits of training, rehabilitation and counselling and of employment are guaranteed by law to disabled people.

The Law on education has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules. According to the Government, since the adoption of the Rules, the legislation of the Czech Republic is being changed to a large extent. Every law and regulation which may concern disability includes special article(s), applicable to the persons concerned.

### **Accessibility**

There are laws and regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places and the outdoor environment are made accessible. According to the Government, there are even rules requiring that also air transportation is made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority. According to the Government, local governments are reviewing the operation of accessibility standards. The following measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, ensuring access to public places, providing financial support for accessibility measures in housing and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. According to the Government, other measures also being provided are: installing of light signalling for the deaf and installing of

sound signalling on pedestrian crossings for the blind in the big cities. Special transport includes financial support for transport in special city lines. Special transport is available only for the purpose of work. According to the Government, very few lines in public transport are accessible for physically disabled. Subsidies, however, are provided for individual transport for all purposes. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors and lack of legislation and regulations. To some extent, there is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people. According to the Government, the right of deaf children to be educated by the means of sign language, is guaranteed by law. There are government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. According to the Government, there are no measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible for disabled people. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation being available for major events.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are always consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities and political parties but to a great extent in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to advocate rights and improved services, contribute to public awareness and provide services. According to the Government, organizations also mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities and participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Prime Minister's office. The committee includes representatives only of the organizations of persons with disabilities. According to the Government, the committee also includes representatives from eight Ministries and from the private sector. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks (e.g. public awareness programmes). The establishment of the co-ordinating committee has had the following effects: improved legislation and improved promotion of public awareness. According to the Government, the co-ordinating committee has also had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes and more effective use of resources.

The adoption of the Rules has only partially led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy. The Government states that the adoption of the Standard Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy, the disability policy having started one year before the adoption of the Standard Rules, as a new attitude in this field.

# Estonian Federation of the Blind, Estonia

## **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy in Estonia is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government and in guidelines adopted by a national disability council. According to the Government, disability policy is also expressed in law and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules the government has not done anything to initiate or support information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation. The Government states that it has initiated and supported a campaign about the social integration of disabled people, lasting from June 1996 to May 1997.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts), while the non-judicial mechanism available is a governmental body (administrative).

The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling and independent living. According to the Government, even the benefits of financial security, employment and participation in decisions affecting themselves are guaranteed by law.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the 'Social Welfare Law' and the 'Employment Law' have been enacted. According to the Government, even other laws have been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules: The Income Tax Act, The Child Allowances Act, The Working Hours and Days Act.

## **Accessibility**

There is legislation and other forms of regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places, the outdoor environment and land, sea and air transportation are made accessible. According to the Government, there are rules requiring that even housing is made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by local governments. The following measures have been promoted (in few places) to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing automatic doors, lifts and accessible toilets, ensuring access to public places and using (very seldom) contrast colours for visually impaired. Special transport arrangements include free transport for buses and trains and limited only the seriously impaired. According to the Government, there is compensation of gasoline for private transports, persons with severe disability have the right to free public transport and persons with less severe disability pay half price on public transport. There is also a special taxi service in some municipalities, since 1995. Special transport service is available for the following purposes: medical treatment, education, work, recreation. Special taxis can be ordered for all purposes (where this service is available). The most difficult obstacles, when planning to built accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. To some extent there is, a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no government measures to make public information services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and other persons: literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille. According to the Government even sign language interpretation for major events is provided.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization 'the Estonian Board of the Disabled People'. Ten major out of 21 disability organizations are represented. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at both the national, regional and local levels. The government gives financial and organizational/logistic support to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities but to some extent in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness and provide services.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Social Ministry and to the Government. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Finance, of Health and Social Affairs, of Employment, and of Education, as well as of organizations of persons with disabilities. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development. It is too early for an assessment of the effects of the co-ordinating committee. According to the Government, the effects of the co-ordinating committee are: improved co-ordination, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, a better dialogue in the disability field, more effective use of resources and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Rules has led to - however, not to a great extent - a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## **Hungary**

### **Federation of the Blind, Hungary**

The Federation provides answers only as regards blind people.

### **General policy**

There is no national disability policy. According to the Government, the officially recognized disability policy in Hungary is expressed in law and in guidelines, adopted by the Government. The emphasis is on: anti-discrimination, prevention, rehabilitation, individual support and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules the government has not done anything to initiate or support information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts), while the non-judicial mechanism is a governmental body (administrative). According to the Government, non-judicial mechanisms include an ombudsman and a special arbitration/conciliation body.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court-of-law, the right to privacy and property rights.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. According to the Government, there are rules to ensure accessibility in the built environment requiring that public places and the outdoor environment are made accessible. No responsible body exist for ensuring the accessibility in the built environment. The organizations of disabled people are trying to convince constructors to create accessible buildings. The only measure which has been promoted in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment is marking parking areas. According to the Government, even other measures have been promoted to facilitate the accessibility: improving accessibility in housing, giving financial support for the costs of adapting private buildings to the needs of disabled persons and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. Local transportation is free for the blind; on long distance trips they get a 90% discount on train and bus tickets. Special transport is available for any purpose. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. The following service is provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape. The Federation produces Braille material and talking books, with government support.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. According to the Government, there is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties, and NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness and provide services. According to the Government, organizations do not participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and

measures.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Welfare. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, of Employment as well as of organizations of persons with disabilities. The government does not expect the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development or to perform other tasks. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved legislation, better dialogue in the disability field and improved promotion of public awareness. The establishment of the committee has not led to improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved integration of responsibility, more accurate planning or more effective use of resources. According to the Government, there is no national co-ordinating committee.

The adoption of the Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## Latvia

### **Latvian Society of the Blind, Latvia**

No reply was received from the Government of Latvia.

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on prevention, rehabilitation, accessibility measures and individual support.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has initiated and supported information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts). Non-judicial mechanisms include an Ombudsman and a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment and political rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security, employment, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

New legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

### **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority. The only measure provided in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment is the providing of specially adapted motor vehicles.

Special transport for persons with disabilities includes free transport (with the exception of taxi cabs), being available for medical treatment, for education, for work and for recreational purpose. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of knowledge, research and information and lack of enforcement mechanism.

Sign language for deaf people has no officially recognized status nor is it used as the first language in education of deaf people. It is, however, recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities, but no government measures to make other forms of public information accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines in Braille (not on tape) and sign language interpretation for major events.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures and judicial authorities, to some extent in political parties and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee or any similar body.

The adoption of the Rules has led to changes into legislation.

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## **Lithuania**

### **Council of the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, Lithuania**

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law and in guidelines adopted by the government. According to the Government, disability policy is expressed only in law. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation, prevention and individual support.

In order to convey the message of full participation the government has declared the 1996 as the year of the disabled.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of general legislation and general legislation. There is no judicial mechanism to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. According to the Government, the judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of disabled people is due process (legal remedy through courts). The non-judicial mechanism for that purpose is a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court-of-law, the right to privacy and property rights. Only the benefit of financial security is guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities. According to the Government even the benefits of health/medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, employment and independent living are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules. According to the Government since the adoption of the Rules, the 1995 Act concerning the proclamation of 1996 as the year of the disabled has been enacted.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment, though not working in practice. Special transport is available only for medical treatment, in urgent cases. According to the Government, there is free, subsidized special adapted transport available for: medical treatment, education, work and for recreational purpose. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people, used as the first language in education of deaf people and recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities but government measures to make other forms of public information services accessible to persons with disabilities, e.g. free mailing of Braille literature. The following services are provided to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. According to the Government, there are such legal provisions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. According to the Government, organizations also receive organizational/logistic support. Persons with disabilities participate to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities. According to the Government ,organizations do not promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Finance and Social Security. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, of Housing, of Education, and of Culture as well as of organizations of persons with disabilities. According to the Government, the co-ordinating committee also includes representatives from the private sector, from the Vilnius University and from Kaunas Medical Academy. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, a better dialogue in the disability field, more accurate planning and more effective use of resources.

The adoption of the Rules has partially led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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# Poland

## Polish Association of the Blind, Poland

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by a national disability council and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation, individual support, anti-discrimination law, prevention and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation. The government states having supported the following actions, conveying the message of full participation: the Standard Rules were translated into Polish and disseminated; the principles of co-operation between the Government and NGOs were approved by the Government and disseminated, propagation in mass-media took place, mainly in the press (by co-financing from the State Rehabilitation Fund) and articles were published on the issues related to full participation of disabled people.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due procedure (legal remedy through courts), the non-judicial mechanism available for that purpose being a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to: education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court-of-law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security, employment, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by the constructor. According to the Government, accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority and by local governments. The following measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: marking parking areas, installing lifts and accessible toilets, providing financial incentives/support for accessibility measures in housing and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. According to the Government, even levelling off pavements, installing special lighting and using contrast colours for visually impaired have been promoted. There is special transport for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design-capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people and also recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities, but there are no government measures to encourage other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. According to the Government, there are also measures to encourage other forms of public information to make their services accessible. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation being available for major events.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which some 100 organizations are represented. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. The Government states giving also organizational/logistic support to organizations of disabled people. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties but to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities. According to the Government, organizations also participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures.

## **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee or any similar body.

The adoption of the rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

# Romanian Blind Association, Romania

## General policy

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the government, in guidelines adopted by a national disability council and in policy adopted by NGOs. According to the Government, disability policy is expressed only in law. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on individual support, anti-discrimination law, rehabilitation, prevention and accessibility measures.

The Ministry of Education has translated and published the Standard Rules in order to convey the message of full participation.

## Legislation

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of special legislation and general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts), while the non-judicial is a governmental body (administrative). According to the Government, there are no judicial mechanisms to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, political rights, access to court-of-law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security, employment and independent living. According to the Government, even the benefit to participate in decisions affecting themselves is guaranteed by law.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## Accessibility

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment (but there is no clear and coherent system of implementation) requiring that public places and means of public transport are made accessible. According to the Government, there are even rules to ensure accessibility in the outdoor environment and housing. No responsible body exists to observe accessibility in the built environment. The following measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: installing automatic doors and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. According to the Government, even the following measures have been promoted: marking parking areas, installing lifts and accessible toilets, improving accessibility in housing, providing financial incentives for accessibility measures and installing special lighting for visually impaired. Special transport arrangements include free and/or substantial discounts for trains, local transport and sea transport. Special transport is available for all purposes. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, lack of knowledge, research and information and lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions. The Government does not regard economic/budgetary factors to be an obstacle, when building accessible environments. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people, is used as the first language in education of deaf people and is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. According to the Government, sign language

for deaf people is only recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. According to the Government, there are such measures. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and easy readers for persons with mental disabilities. According to the Government, even sign language interpretation for any purpose is provided.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. According to the Government, there is a national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. According to the Government, consultations occur also at the regional and local levels. The government gives financial and logistic support to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties but to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities. According to the Government, organizations do not promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the secretariat for handicapped persons. The committee includes representatives of several Ministries, of organizations of persons with disabilities and of certain co-operatives, employing disabled persons. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development. The function of the committee being consultative, it does not participate in regular meetings. It is too early for an assessment of the effects of the co-ordinating committee. According to the Government, the establishment of the co-ordinating committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, better dialogue in the disability field, more accurate planning, more effective use of resources and promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Rules has not yet led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy. According to the Government, it is too early to make an assessment, whether the adoption of the Rules has led to a rethinking.

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## **Slovak Republic**

### **Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union, Slovak Republic**

No reply was received from the Government of the Slovak Republic.

## **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the government and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation, individual support, prevention, accessibility measures and anti-discrimination law.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to initiate and support information campaigns, conveying the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts), while the non-judicial mechanism for that purpose is a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment and access to court-of-law. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security and employment. The benefits of independent living and of participation in decisions affecting themselves are not guaranteed by law.

New legislation concerning employment and insurance for disabled people has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, land and air transportation and housing is made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority and by environmental offices. The following measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: marking parking areas, providing financial support for adapting private buildings to the needs of disabled persons and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. Special transport arrangements are available for all purposes. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are: economic/budgetary factors, lack of planning and design capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is recognized as the official language of deaf people, and is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities, but no measures to make other forms of public information accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and sign language interpretation being available for major events.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national and local level. The government financially supports existing or new organizations of

persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, judicial authorities, political parties, to some extent in legislatures and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, contribute to public awareness and provide services.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The committee includes representatives of many Ministries, of organizations of persons with disabilities and of other NGOs. The government does not expect the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development, but to co-ordinate the solving of specific problems of handicapped and formulate needs, submit proposals. It is too early for an assessment of the effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee.

It is too early for an assessment, if the adoption of the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## **Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **Costa Rica**

#### **WBU, Costa Rica**

No reply was received from the Government of the Costa Rica.

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government, in guidelines adopted by the national disability council and in policy adopted by political parties.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

#### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is recourse procedure by a special agency dealing with anti-discrimination issues. Non-judicial bodies include: an Ombudsman, a governmental body (administrative) and independent expert bodies. General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family and the right to privacy.

#### **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. Accessibility in the built

environment is observed by local governments. The following measures have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements and marking parking areas. There is no special transport for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, lack of planning and design capacity and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language is recognized as the official language of deaf people. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille, sign language interpretation being available for major events and easy readers for persons with mental disabilities.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization in which 13 organizations are represented. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives organizational/logistic support to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in legislatures, judicial authorities, and political parties, to some extent in government and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities. Organizations do not mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities nor participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee.

The adoption of the Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## **Sub-Saharan Africa**

### **Burkina Faso**

#### **Association Burkinable Pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants, Burkina Faso**

No reply was received from the Government of the Burkina Faso.

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government, and in policy adopted by political parties. The emphasis in this policy is on rehabilitation, prevention, individual support, accessibility measures and anti-discrimination law.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, is due process (legal remedy through the courts), the non-judicial being a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to the right to parenthood/family, political rights and the right to privacy. The only benefit guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities is the participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, geographical and climatic factors and lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language has no officially recognized status, is not used as the first language in education of deaf people, and is not recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media or other forms of public information services to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. No measures are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in legislatures and to some extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee or any similar body.

The adoption of the Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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# Chad

## Association Nationale des Deficients Visuels au Tchad, Chad

No reply was received from the Government of the Chad.

### **General policy**

There is no officially recognized disability policy.

Since the adoption of the Rules the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. No judicial mechanism has been adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Non-judicial mechanisms include a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to access to court of law and the right to privacy. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: employment (only to the physically disabled), and independent living.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

### **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places, the outdoor environment, means of public transportation, and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority. The following measures have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements and ensuring the access to public places. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, technical factors, geographic and climatic factors, lack of planning and design capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation and lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language has no officially recognized status but is used as the first language in education of deaf people. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information services to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. No services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy making and to work with

governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are never consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government and to some extent in political parties. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee.

The adoption of the Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## Congo

### Association Nationale des Aveugles et Deficients Visuels du Congo, Congo

#### **General policy**

There is no officially recognized disability policy. According to the Government, disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the Government and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis is on: anti-discrimination law, rehabilitation, individual support, prevention and accessibility measures.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

#### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. According to the Government, the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by a combination of general legislation and special legislation.

#### **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. No responsible body exists to observe accessibility in the built environment. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors, technical factors, geographical and climatic factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

There are no government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are never consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. According to the Government, organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee or any similar body.

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## **Ethiopia**

### **Ethiopian National Association of the Blind, Ethiopia**

No reply was received from the Government of Ethiopia.

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law. The emphasis in this policy is on anti-discrimination law.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts), while the non-judicial is a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The only benefit guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities is employment.

Since the adoption of the Rules, a Proclamation concerning the Rights of disabled Persons to Employment has been enacted.

### **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. No responsible body exists to ensure accessibility in the built environment. No measures have been promoted by the

government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment. There is no special transport arrangement for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors and lack of legislation and regulations. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language is recognized as the official language of deaf people, is used as the first language in education of deaf people and is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities but there are no measures to make other forms of public information services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and sign language interpretation being available for major events.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives organizational/logistic support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures and political parties, but to some extent in judiciary and NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee or any similar body.

The adoption of the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## Ivory Coast

### **Association Nationale des Femmes Aveugles de Cote d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast**

No reply was received from the Government of the Ivory Coast.

### **General policy**

There is no officially recognized disability policy. Since the adoption of the Rules the government has conveyed the message of full participation by the international day of disabled persons.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. There is no judicial mechanism to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. There is, however, a governmental body (administrative) for that purpose.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. No responsible body exists to observe accessibility in the built environment. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, lack of legislation and regulations, lack of planning and design capacity, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of user participation, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language has no officially recognized status, is not used as the first language in education of deaf people and is not recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. No measures are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. No support is given to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties and NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities and contribute to public awareness.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Employment. The committee includes representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks.

The adoption of the Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

## Kenya Union of the Blind, Kenya

No reply was received from the Government of Kenya.

### **General policy**

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

### **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility in the built environment. No responsible body exists to observe accessibility in the built environment. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, lack of legislation and regulations and lack of user participation.

There are no government measures to encourage media or other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy making or to work with governmental institutions. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to contribute to public awareness, and to promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

There is no national co-ordinating committee.

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## Namibia

### Synskadeorganisation, Namibia

#### **General policy**

There is no officially recognized disability policy.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. The only mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts). There are no administrative or other non-judicial bodies for that purpose. According to the Government, there are no judicial mechanisms that have been adopted for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The only mechanism available is an ombudsman for all citizens.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, the right to privacy and property rights. The only benefit guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities is financial security. According to the Government, none of the rights and benefits enlisted in the questionnaire is guaranteed by law to disabled people.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. The following measures have been promoted by the government to ensure accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, lack of legislation and regulations and lack of user participation. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. There are no services provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. According to the Government, there is a national umbrella organization in which persons with mental disabilities, however, are not represented. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Disability organizations are often consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at both the national, regional and local levels. No support is given by the government to existing or to new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities, political parties but to some extent in NGOs. According to the Government, persons with disabilities do not participate at all in Government, legislatures or political parties, but to a very limited extent in judiciary and NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness and provide services. According to the Government, organizations neither advocate rights nor participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures, but promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, of Housing, of Education and of Culture as well as of organizations of persons with disabilities and of other NGOs. According to the Government, the co-ordinating committee also include representatives from the private sector. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks. According to the Government, the committee is not expected to perform other tasks. It is too early for an assessment concerning the effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee. According to the Government, the effect of the co-ordinating committee is improved legislation.

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# Somalia

## **Somali Society of the Blind, Somalia**

No reply was received from the Government of Somalia.

### **General policy**

There is no officially recognized disability policy.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts). There are no administrative and other non judicial bodies.

The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care and employment.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

### **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. The only measure which has been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment is the providing of specially adapted motor vehicles. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacle, when planning to build accessible environments, is economic/budgetary factors. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language has no officially recognized status, is not used as the first language in education of deaf people, nor recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage public information services to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. No measures are provided in order to

facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others.

### **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization of persons with disabilities. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are never consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. The government gives financial support to existing or to new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in political parties and NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to mobilize persons with disabilities, and to promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Health. The committee includes representatives of the Ministry of Health and of organizations of persons with disabilities. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: a better dialogue in the disability field, more effective use of resources and improved promotion of public awareness. The establishment of the committee has not led to improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility or to more accurate planning.

The adoption of the Rules has not led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## Zimbabwe

### Zimbabwe National League of the Blind, Zimbabwe

No reply was received from the Government of Zimbabwe.

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law and in guidelines adopted by a national disability council. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on accessibility measures, individual support, rehabilitation, anti-discrimination law and prevention.

The Disability Board conducts awareness workshops at different levels.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts), the non-judicial being an ombudsman.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by

law to persons with disabilities: training, rehabilitation and counselling, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places and the outdoor environment are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by local governments. The following measures have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: levelling off pavements, marking parking areas, installing lifts and accessible toilets and ensuring access to public places. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacle, when planning to build accessible environments, is economic/budgetary factors. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language has no officially recognized status nor is it used as the first language in education of deaf people but it is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities, but government measures to encourage other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The only service provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others is literature in Braille.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy making and to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs and of Education as well as of organizations of persons with disabilities, of the Zimbabwe congress of Trade Unions and of Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development, but not to perform other tasks. The effects of the establishment of the co-ordinating committee are improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved integration of responsibility and a better dialogue in the disability field.

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# Zimbabwe

## **The Council for the Blind, Zimbabwe**

No reply was received from the Government of Zimbabwe.

## **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law, in guidelines adopted by the government and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy is on prevention, anti-discrimination law, rehabilitation.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has conveyed the message of full participation by campaigns by the Disability Board.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts), the non-judicial being a government body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care and independent living.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment which establish national design standards requiring that public places, the outdoor environment and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by a national authority, by local governments and by the organizers/providers of the services. The following services have been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility of the built environment: levelling of pavements, ensuring access to public places and improving accessibility in housing. There are special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. However, special transport is not available for any of the following services: medical treatment, education, work or for recreational purpose. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language is recognized as the main means of communication between persons with disabilities and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their information services accessible to persons with disabilities, but no government measures to make other forms of public information services accessible. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and sign language interpretation being available for major events only.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy making or to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national, regional and local level. The government gives financial and organizational logistic support to organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a

very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities and political parties but to a great extent in NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Labour, Manpower, Planning and Social Welfare. The committee includes representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, of organizations of persons with disabilities, of other NGOs and of individuals co-opted by the Minister. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks, e.g. act as the watchdog of the implementation of the Disability Act. The establishment of the co-ordinating committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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## **South, East Asia and the Pacific**

### **Fiji**

#### **Fiji Society for the Blind, Fiji**

No reply was received from the Government of Fiji.

#### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the national disability council. The emphasis in this policy is on prevention and rehabilitation.

The government has conveyed the message of full participation by means of legislation.

#### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanism adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the court). The non-judicial mechanism includes independent expert bodies.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, access to court of law, the right to privacy and property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: training, rehabilitation and counselling and independent living.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. The most difficult obstacle, when planning to build accessible environments, is lack of legislation and regulations. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation being available for any purpose.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judicial authorities and to some extent in political parties and NGOs. The role of organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate rights and improved services, contribute to public awareness and provide services.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Health. It includes representatives of the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, of Education and of organizations of persons with disabilities. The government expects the committee to participate in policy development but not to perform other tasks. It is too early for an assessment about the effects the co-ordinating committee.

Too early for assessment if the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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# India

## **All India Confederation of the Blind, India**

No reply was received from the Government of India.

## **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in law.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation. The judicial mechanisms adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is recourse procedure by a special agency, dealing with disability issues. A separate national legislation on mental health has been adopted. A mentally ill person is not entitled to hold property and has access to courts through a guardian.

The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: training, rehabilitation and counselling, employment and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

New legislation has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules. (Protection of the rights and Full Participation Act - 1 of 1996.)

## **Accessibility**

Special transport arrangements include: Indian Railways allow special concessions fares for disabled people. There is no charge for a wheel chair. The Indian Airlines charge 50% of the fare for blind persons and a wheel chair can be carried free of charge. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors and economic/budgetary factors. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers. There are government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. The following measures are provided to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille and sign language interpretation, being available for any purpose.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. There are legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making and to work with governmental institutions. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judiciary, political parties and in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Prime Minister's office. It includes representatives of many Ministries, of organizations of persons with disabilities, of other NGOs and from the private sector. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks.

The Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy.

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# Malaysia

## **National Council for the Blind, Malaysia - NCBM**

No reply was received from the Government of Malaysia.

## **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy in Malaysia is expressed in guidelines adopted by the government and in policy adopted by NGOs. The emphasis in this policy - in descending scale - is on prevention, rehabilitation, individual support and accessibility measures.

The government is annually launching the Handicapped Day, in order to convey the message of full participation.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. The judicial mechanism available to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through courts). There are no administrative and other non-judicial bodies available for that purpose.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to: education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court-of-law, the right to privacy and to property rights. According to the National Council, only the benefit of employment is guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities.

No new legislation concerning disability has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are laws and regulations to ensure accessibility of the built environment requiring that public places, the outdoor environment and housing are made accessible. Accessibility in the built environment is observed by local governments. The following measures have been promoted by the government to facilitate accessibility in the built environment: marking parking areas, installing lifts and accessible toilets, improving accessibility in housing and providing specially adapted motor vehicles. There are no special transport arrangements for persons with disabilities. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, lack of knowledge, research and information, lack of co-operation from other organizations/institutions and lack of enforcement mechanism. There is no disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language for deaf people is not recognized as the official language for deaf people but is used as the first language in education of deaf people, and is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their information services accessible for persons with disabilities (without specification), but there are no government measures to encourage other forms of public information to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. The only service provided to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and other persons is literature in Braille.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. The organizations for the blind and orthopaedically handicapped are represented in the umbrella. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy making or to work with

governmental institutions. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations, when taking place, occur at the national level. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judiciary system, political parties and to some extent in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to advocate rights and improved services, mobilize persons with disabilities, identify needs and priorities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

### **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Welfare. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, of Employment and of Education, of organizations of persons with disabilities and from the private sector. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development, but not to perform other tasks. The establishment of the committee has had the following effects: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes in the disability field, a better dialogue and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the Standard Rules has led to a rethinking of the approach to disability policy in the sense that the government is more aware of the disability problems.

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## **Singapore**

### **Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped, Singapore**

No reply was received from the Government of Singapore.

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the national disability council. The emphasis in this policy is on individual support, accessibility measures, rehabilitation, prevention and anti-discrimination law.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has not done anything to convey the message of full participation.

### **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by general legislation. The judicial mechanisms adopted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is due process (legal remedy through the courts). The administrative and other non-judicial bodies include a governmental body (administrative).

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and to property rights. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, and participation in decisions affecting themselves.

No new legislation has been enacted, since the adoption of the Rules.

## **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. The only measure that has been promoted by the government in order to facilitate accessibility in the built environment is improving accessibility in housing. There are special transport arrangements available for work and for recreational purpose. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are economic/budgetary factors, technical factors and lack of legislation and regulations.

Sign language has no officially recognized status but is recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are no government measures to encourage media and other forms of public information to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape and news magazines on tape/Braille.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. Disability organizations are sometimes consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures, judiciary, political parties, and NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to: advocate rights and improved services, identify needs and priorities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness and provide services.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Development. It includes representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, of organizations of persons with disabilities and from the private sector. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks. The establishment of the committee has led to a better dialogue in the disability field.

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# **Sri Lanka**

## **The Sri Lanka Federation of the Visually Handicapped, Sri Lanka**

### **General policy**

The officially recognized disability policy is expressed in guidelines adopted by the national

disability council. According to the Government, disability policy is also expressed in guidelines adopted by the Government. The emphasis in this policy is on prevention, rehabilitation, accessibility measures, anti-discrimination law and individual support.

Since the adoption of the Rules, the government has conveyed the message of full participation through various actions.

## **Legislation**

The rights of persons with disabilities are protected by special legislation.

General legislation applies to persons with different disabilities with respect to education, employment, the right to marriage, the right to parenthood/family, political rights, access to court of law, the right to privacy and to property rights. According to the Government, general legislation does not apply to persons with disabilities. The following benefits are guaranteed by law to persons with disabilities: health and medical care, training, rehabilitation and counselling, financial security, employment, independent living and participation in decisions affecting themselves. According to the Government, there are no benefits guaranteed by law to disabled people.

New legislation is very soon coming before the Parliament.

## **Accessibility**

There are no rules to ensure accessibility of the built environment. There are no special transport arrangements. The most difficult obstacles, when planning to build accessible environments, are attitudinal factors, economic/budgetary factors, technical factors, geographical and climatic factors, lack of legislation and regulations and lack of knowledge, research and information. There is a disability awareness component incorporated in the training of planners, architects and construction engineers.

Sign language is used as the first language in education of deaf people and is also recognized as the main means of communication between deaf persons and others. There are government measures to encourage media to make their services accessible for persons with disabilities. The following services are provided in order to facilitate information and communication between persons with disabilities and others: literature in Braille/tape, news magazines on tape/Braille, and sign language interpretation being available for major events. According to the Government, sign language interpretation is available for any purpose.

## **Organizations of persons with disabilities**

There is no national umbrella organization. According to the Government, there is a national umbrella organization. There are no legal provisions mandating the representatives of persons with disabilities to participate in policy-making or to work with governmental institutions. According to the Government there are such legal provisions. Disability organizations are always consulted, when laws and regulations with a disability aspect are being prepared. Consultations occur at the national level. The government gives financial support to existing or new organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in judiciary and to a great extent in NGOs. The role of disabled persons organizations is to advocate rights and improved services, identify needs and priorities, mobilize persons with disabilities, participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities, contribute to public awareness, provide services and promote/organize income generating activities.

## **Co-ordination of work**

The national co-ordinating committee is reporting to the Ministry of Health Highways and Social Services. It includes representatives of many Ministries and of organizations of persons with disabilities. The government expects the co-ordinating committee to participate in policy development and to perform other tasks. The establishment of the committee has led to: improved co-ordination of measures/programmes, improved legislation, improved integration of responsibility, a better dialogue in the disability field, more accurate planning, more effective use of resources and improved promotion of public awareness.

The adoption of the rules has motivated our Government Officials.

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