

Editorial

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

“Break Barriers, Open Doors: For an Inclusive Society for All”

United Nations’ (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPwD) is annually held on Dec 3 to focus on issues that affect people with disabilities. It re-affirms and draws attention to the rights of people who live with disabilities. From 1983 to 1992 UN observed “Decade of Disabled Persons” to improve the life of disabled. On October 1992 UN General Assembly proclaimed December 3 as the “International Day of Disabled Persons” and was first observe on 3rd December 1992. On 18th December 2007 the assembly change the name as International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPwD) and was first observe on 3rd December 2008.

The UN symbol consists of an azimuthally equidistant projection of the globe centred on the North Pole surrounded by olive branches. The word ‘enable’ is written in lower case, ‘e’ is read and the other letters are blue. Around 15% of the world’s population, or one billion people, live with disabilities. People are often unaware of the great number of the persons living with disabilities around the world and the challenges they face.

Persons with disabilities, “The world’s largest minority”, often face barriers to participate in all aspects of society. Barriers can take a variety of forms, including those relating to the physical environment or to information and communication technology (ICT), or those resulting from legislation or policy, or from societal attitudes or discrimination. The result is that persons with disabilities do not have equal access to society or services, including education, employment, health care, transportation, political participation or justice. The day aims to promote an understanding of the disability issues and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the inclusion of persons with disabilities in every aspect of life.

Earlier, the international disability movement achieved an extraordinary advance in 2006, with adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, development dimension. On 23rd September 2011 UN General Assembly Convened the High Level Meeting on Development and Disability (HLMDD), under the theme “The way forward ; a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond”.

The meeting took place five years after UN Convention on Right of Persons with Disabilities entered into force, two years after released of the World Report on Disability and two years away from 2015 - the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It’s time to effectively implement the Outcome Document of the high level Meeting and to break barriers and open doors: to realise an inclusive society and development for all. International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2013 provides an opportunity to further raise awareness of disability and accessibility as a cross cutting development issue and further the global efforts to promote accessibility, remove all types of barriers, and to realise the full and equal participation of Persons with Disabilities in society and shape the future of development for all.

– R. N. Haldar