



Press Release

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“UNESCO TAKES LEAD IN DEVELOPING FRAMEWORK FOR RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND BARRIER FREE COMMUNICATION”

Islamabad, 12 September 2011 – UNESCO proposes implementation of UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Pakistan, with recommendations for inclusive education and barrier free communication especially in mainstream media for giving equal opportunity and access to education and communication information to the persons with disabilities.

UNESCO, in partnership with Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP), organized a consultation seminar on the implementation of the United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities focusing on “Inclusive Education/Literacy and barrier free communication and information with special emphasis on Women with Disabilities, today in Islamabad to formulate the road map for peruse the neglected area of rights of disable persons.

Talking to the workshop, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, Director, UNESCO Islamabad said, “We are geared for the formulation of legislation of anti discrimination law for the rights of disable people in Pakistan; to institutionalized the principle of inclusive education for all including disable students, and to promote barrier free information system, such as provision of brail information for blind people and sign language for deaf persons, particularly addressing to the issues to disabled women”.

The aim of the workshop was to draw recommendations to develop Inclusive strategy for the disable people in Pakistan. The participants’ representing different organizations and institutions working for the rights of disable people from all four provinces, were part of consultation roundtable sessions to draw the recommendations, according to the needs and gaps, which are at present hindering the equal opportunity and access for the disable persons in the country. The workshop was unique as the 33% participants were disabled, but freely and extensively interacted with the rest of the participants to share their views and opinions.

“ Rights of the disable people are not recognized and people still see eradication of disability through the lens of charity and good will but not a fundamental human right, we have to start our actions perhaps with the promotion and public awareness, and we feel that the first step would be to include mass media, as there is no TV programs with sign language interpretation. We have to reach the people living in rural community”, Dr. Kay Nagata further added.

One of the recommendations in lieu with CRPD was to develop the curriculum on inclusive education, which presently is outdated and was prepared without any participation of target groups. UNESCO aims at developing the pro inclusive curriculum for the persons with disabilities for inclusive education with all major stakeholders in the relevant ministries.

Another recommendation for the barrier free communication for persons with disabilities is to sensitize media to include use of sign language and programs that can serve as access to information in the public space.

As a step forward, UNESCO proposed to hold an interprovincial forum inviting all stakeholders including Secretary Education, Secretary Literacy and Secretary Special Education from all four Province, along with

other local partners to adopt the aborted national policy and the proposed recommendations of today's roundtable, for the mainstreaming of Persons with Disabilities for an inclusive education in Pakistan.

This forum will aim at enacting the national education policy for inclusive education, which was aborted due to the devolution of Federal Ministry of Education.

On 25 September 2008, Pakistan signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted on 13 December 2006.