Welcome to the World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation Update.
This first update highlights progress in the work on the World report during the past months, directs you to related content on the WHO website and also informs on important events and dates in the 2007 calendar.

A note from the executive editor: These are exciting times to be working in disability. The world is finally refocusing on the situation of persons with disabilities. This attention is long overdue as is a report which outlines why disability is so important and details the evidence base on what is being done, where are the gaps and how they can be filled. The development of this report has generated enormous interest from a wide range of stakeholders. Keeping you informed about the processes and abrest of the progress is important to us. WHO sees its role on the world report as one of stewardship - drawing knowledge and experience from a diverse constituency of experts, including people with disabilities, academics and professionals with broad interdisciplinary and geographic orientation. This extensive consultation is intended to ensure that an authoritative and relevant document is produced that will increase the knowledge base and play an important role in shaping policy and enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities. The report will be a call to action. Above all, it is intended as part of a process that enhances collaboration and complementarity of actions across sectors to bring about the necessary change in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities and ensure their full participation in every facet of life. Alana Officer

Background: The World Health Assembly Resolution 58.23 (May 2005), on "Disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation", requested WHO to produce a World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation based on the best available scientific evidence.

The aim of the report is to provide governments & civil society with a comprehensive description and analysis of the importance of disability and the responses provided and make recommendations for action. This initiative will contribute to raising world-wide awareness about disability, rehabilitation and inclusion. It will promote actions which are evidence based and goal driven for including disability in the human rights and development agendas at country, regional and global levels.

The objectives of the report are;
- To summarize existing information on the status of disability, rehabilitation, inclusion and the lived experience of persons with disabilities
- To document the evidence base demonstrating the gap between what exists and what is required
- To issue a call to action with a path forward in an evidence based framework

Although policy makers are seen as the primary target audience, the report is also intended for a broad multisectoral audience, including academics, disability and development actors, service providers, media, people with disabilities and their families.
The content of the Report will include current data and trends on disability and rehabilitation, causes of disability, existing responses including evidence of what works in prevention, habilitation and rehabilitation as well as broader issues such as improving access to information and environments, health care, education and employment. The challenges and gaps in knowledge and cross cutting issues such as justice and rights, participation and equal opportunities will be covered. Attention will be focused on key messages (See box 1).

**Box 1: Key messages**
- Full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society is essential and within reach
- Disability is a human rights issue
- Poverty is a cause and effect of disability
- Disability affects entire families
- Disability is a development issue
- Disability is likely to affect most people at some time in their lives
- Disability is a continuum of experience which varies across the life span
- Disability is difficult to define, it is varied, multidimensional, cross cutting and complex
- Balance primary prevention and respect for the integrity of people with disabilities
- (Re)habilitation is important
- Here is the evidence on what works - use it - much remains to be done

The Process for development of this report is modelled on previous successful report processes, such as those used for the World report on violence and health and the World report on road traffic injury prevention. These experiences have shown the need for broad consultation, an extensive review process and wide dissemination. The processes recognize the advisory role of organizations of persons with disabilities in decision-making on disability matters and ensures that organizations of persons with disabilities represent persons with disabilities in all key fora.

Two committees (editorial and advisory) made up of representatives from professional associations, non government organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, UN agencies, partners and personalities from low-middle and high-income countries will guide the consultation processes and support the development of the report.

The role of the Editorial Committee is to coordinate the development of the report and ensure the highest possible quality of its content. On 6-7 December 2006 the Editorial Committee, which includes nine external experts (see box 2) from different regions of the world met in Geneva and elaborated the objectives, target audience, the process for developing the report, the draft structure and main contents of the report. The selection of authors to draft the report is currently in process so as to draw knowledge and experience from a broad constituency of academics and practitioners, with diverse disciplinary and geographic backgrounds.

**Box 2: Editorial Committee**
- Dr Katherine Seelman
- Dr Maya Thomas
- Dr Qui Zhuoying
- Ms Ros Madden
- Dr Sally Hartley
- Dr Tom Shakespeare
- Ms Venus Ilagan
- Dr Sandor Sipos representative from the International Disability Alliance
- Dr Sondor Sipos representative from the World Bank
- Dr Mark Swanson representative from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The Advisory Committee, in addition to commenting on the report, will lend political support to the development, launching and implementation of the report. The committee is selected and chaired by Dr Catherine Le Gales-Camus (Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health).

**Box 3: Advisory committee**
- Chinese Disabled Peoples Federation, Ms. Tang Xiaoquan, President
- HRH Prince Mired bin Raad bin Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan
- ILO, Mr José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director
- International Disability Alliance, Ms Joy Sebenzile Matsebula and Ms Kicki Nordström
- International Disability and Development Consortium, Mr Johannes Trimmel, Chairperson
- International Paralympic Committee, Sir Philip Craven MBE, President
- International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, Prof Gerold Stucki, Vice President
- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Urbano Stenta, Disability Adviser
- Ms Mariam Doumbia and Mr Amadou Bagayoko (Amadou & Mariam) Artists from Mali
- UN DESA, Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General
- UNESCO, Peter Plympton Smith, Assistant Director-General for Education
- World Bank, Dr Robert Holzmann, Director Social Protection and Labour
- World Confederation of Physical Therapy, Ms Brenda Myers, Secretary General
- World Federation of Occupational Therapy, Ms Kit Sinclair, President

An **extensive review process is planned**. The first draft of the report will be reviewed in regional consultations in early 2008 to verify the scientific and cultural accuracy of the content. A peer review process will be undertaken before finalization. The report will be **disseminated widely** in 2009 in different formats and languages. Country launches are anticipated to ensure the report is part of a broader process that enhances cooperation and complementarity of actions across sectors.

**Partnerships**

**A joint report** The World report will be produced jointly with the World Bank (WB). Previous experiences of joint reports, such as the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* - have shown the benefit of collaboration between agencies on such documents for increasing synergies, augmenting awareness, political will and action across sectors and complementarity in implementation.

**Working together:** An underlying principal of this report is the building of partnerships for disability, rehabilitation and inclusion efforts. The report will be produced in cooperation with professional associations, non government organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, experts and other UN agencies. Collaboration is also being expanded within WHO with advice and support being sought from different departments and units including, measurement and health information systems, mental health and substance abuse, prevention of blindness and deafness, chronic disease and health promotion and the units of family and community health. Similarly the WB is strengthening collaboration between health and the human development network. The external and internal "partners" contribute enormous technical and political weight ensuring the best quality of information and the widest possible dissemination.
**Funding:** So far financial contributions have been committed by New Zealand Ministry of Health, Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) and the Global Partnership on Disability and Development (GPDD) to
- Support the compilation and review of country, regional and global data
- Write and review the first complete draft
- Initiate the regional consultations

Additional funding sources are being explored.

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**The UN convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Implications & Synergies**

The 13 December 2006 saw the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Eighty one (81) countries plus the EC have signed the convention since it was opened for signature on March 30th. The Convention is a comprehensive and far-reaching treaty that denotes the need for a major change in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities from objects of charity, social protection and medical treatment to citizens capable of claiming their rights, making free and informed decisions about their lives and being active members of society. When ratified by governments this convention has the potential to transform how people with disabilities can live their lives. It offers a way forward to ensure that those persons with disabilities enjoy the same human rights as everyone else - in education, employment, access to health care and rehabilitation, access to buildings etc.

Despite the magnitude and importance of disability and the significant political and policy changes, awareness of and scientific information are lacking. There is no global document that compiles and analyses the way countries have developed policies and the responses to address the needs of people with disabilities. This is particularly pertinent for low and middle incomes countries where the majority of disabled people live and the gaps are greatest. The *World report on disability and rehabilitation* will be available in 2009. For those countries that will not have signed and ratified the convention we hope it will contribute to increasing awareness, understanding and the political will to do so. For those countries that have ratified, this report will provide them with an authoritative situation analysis and clear recommendations based on the best scientific evidence. The availability of this knowledge will play an important role in awareness creation, intensifying networking and shaping policy in line with the UN convention and enhancing the lives of people with disabilities.

**Important Events in 2007**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30th April</td>
<td>Identification of Lead Authors and chapter working groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-19th June</td>
<td>Chapter outliners to be discussed at the second Editorial Committee meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-9th October</td>
<td>First drafts of chapters to be reviewed by the Editorial Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Second draft to be completed by December end for review in regional consultations in 2008</td>
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---------- The global and national launches are planned for 2009 ----------