

DISABLED PEOPLES' INTERNATIONAL
(Extracts from 'Proceedings of the First World Congress' Disabled Peoples' International, Singapore, 30 November-4 December, 1981).

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

We maintain that all people are of equal value. This conviction implies that disabled people have the right to participate in every sphere of society. All technical and practical means available should be utilised to facilitate the participation of the disabled in the various forms of service and social activities of our societies.

The principle of equal value implies that the needs of each and every individual are of equal importance, that their needs must be made the basis for the planning of our societies and that all available resources be employed in such a way as to ensure equal participation for each and every individual. Disabled policies, therefore, very often concern the distribution of resources in the society and are, more often than not, political issues.

As a consequence of this philosophy, every development scheme or programme must contain measures which lead to the participation of the disabled. In measures for the disabled in fields where services and other activities are made available on a commercial basis, society must safeguard the interests of the disabled in order to ensure that they are not excluded from these services and activities. Anyone responsible for a particular area of activity also has primary responsibility for making the particular activity accessible to the disabled. The supreme decision making body in society has ultimate responsibility for the position of the disabled.

Disabled people have a right to grow up in their natural environment. We therefore reject all forms of segregation, and we refuse to accept lifetime isolation in special institutions.

BASIC RIGHTS.

In our common endeavour for full participation and equality for the world's disabled, the following rights are of fundamental importance.

The right to education

Knowledge is the basis for all development. Every child has the right to education, and this right must consequently include all disabled children. In the initial stages of all development schemes in the educational field the needs of the disabled must be taken into account. Teaching should be carried out in the child's natural environment. Any steps necessary to

make the teaching process available and meaningful should become a normal part of the work carried out in schools.

The right to rehabilitation

Anyone afflicted by any form of disability must be guaranteed the opportunity for training, information, and education which aims to or compensate for the functional disability. We regard such rehabilitation as both a right and an obligation for the disabled individual.

The right to employment

Employment is the basis for all personal and shared prosperity. The right to gainful employment must be extended to include the disabled. The obvious discrimination of the disabled in the labour market must be substituted for by opportunities, so that each and every individual, according to ability and capacity, can work and contribute to the maintenance of themselves and family.

The right to economic security

No human being should be obliged to beg for a living. The primary aim of any society should be to provide employment opportunities for all groups including the disabled. In cases where this aim cannot be realised society must provide for basic economic security in the form of unemployment benefits and pensions.

The right to independent living

Everyone has a right to a home of their own, that is a dwelling which provides opportunities for independent living and which allows for the maintenance of personal integrity. Measures such as special services and adjustments to the physical surroundings are necessary if this right is to include all groups of disabled people.

The right to participate in social and cultural activities

In such areas as recreation, association activities and other cultural activities there are a multitude of obstacles which prevent participation by the disabled.

These obstacles must be eliminated and opportunities made available for the disabled to participate in the various cultural and social activities on equal terms with the rest of society.

The right to influence

Each and every individual must be guaranteed equal democratic opportunity to influence the shaping of society. For the disabled there are

innumerable obstacles to full participation in the political process of decision making. The right to information must be guaranteed for groups with varying communication difficulties. Public premises must be made accessible to the disabled. The disabled must also be given the opportunity to participate in debates and meetings. Furthermore, organisations of the disabled must be given decisive influence in regard all measures on their behalf.

The right to equal partners

Disabled people have the right to equal participation in the decision making processes of all policies services, and programmes that effect their lives.