



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
9 December 2013

Original: English

---

### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives**

### **Statement submitted by Rehabilitation International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## Statement

### **Mainstreaming girls and women with disability into society: a win-win for all**

The move towards implementing the post-2015 development agenda must provide a historic opportunity to rectify mistakes and injustices committed against women and girls with disabilities, by ensuring their full participation in the various spheres of economic, cultural and political life. Women and girls with disabilities must be recognized and appreciated for the contributions they can make in the development of their communities and societies. They are an important resource who must be tapped by being included in the workforce so they can be productive, earn and pay taxes just like everyone else. They must be enabled to contribute to the global economy.

As stated by the President of the General Assembly at the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, held in New York on 23 September 2013, given the size of such a marginalized group, the onus is on us all to ensure that any future sustainable development goals include persons with disabilities.

There must be some deliberate efforts to consider and include their concerns in all policymaking and programming going forward. Where needed, special measures must be taken at all levels to integrate women and girls with disabilities into the mainstream of development, giving real meaning to the intent behind the new Millennium Development Goals of “not leaving anyone behind”.

Rehabilitation International thinks it is very important to mainstream girls and women with disabilities into women’s associations. This will contribute to making the voices of girls and women with disabilities heard and taken into account in society. It is imperative that mainstream women’s associations include girls and women with disabilities in their political work to ensure that disabled women and girls’ rights are recognized and fulfilled.

Rehabilitation International attaches the utmost importance to the need to include women and girls with disabilities in education, given that they are the most marginalized members of the disability community, both in high-income and less-resourced countries. Education is a basic human right that is said to be the foundation of development and central to the achievement of all other development goals.

However, the enjoyment of the right to education continues to be denied to millions of disabled women and girls for various reasons.

Despite the narrowing of the gender gap in recent years, girls with disabilities in general continue to account for the most number of out-of-school children of primary school age. They are more likely than boys with disabilities to be denied the opportunity to access education, owing to, among other reasons, the low value attached to female children with disabilities even by their own families.

The global literacy rate is estimated at 3 per cent for all adults with disabilities and 1 per cent for women with disabilities. Women with disabilities often have limited access to vocational and skills development training, resulting in less opportunity for employment. When they are employed, disabled women face lower wages and rates of job retention and progression. While all persons with disabilities

face enormous challenges getting employed, men with disabilities are often twice as likely to be employed as women with disabilities.

Similarly, while all women with disabilities of all ages often have difficulty with physical access to health services, women with mental and psychosocial disability are highly susceptible to gender discrimination, violence, poverty, dislocation and other social deprivation. The consequences of discrimination on account of gender and disability are particularly serious for women with disabilities living in countries where they are subjected to social, cultural and economic disadvantages that prevent them from accessing basic services, including education, health care and employment.

In this regard, Rehabilitation International vows to continue its over nine decades of global work for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and their full enjoyment of these rights on an equal basis with others.

---