

Disabled Peoples' International
Sapporo Declaration
October 2002

In 1981 at the 1st World Congress in Singapore, disabled people recognized that we must unite and we must fight for our rights. Today in 2002 we are united, and we stand together as never before. We have national assemblies in some 135 countries in every continent of the world. We are ready to fight for our rights!

In Sapporo, our largest gathering yet, more than 3,000 people from some 109 countries have heard presentations and debated issues, we recognize that much has been achieved since our inception in 1981; we also recognize that much remains to be achieved. According to the United Nations states, there are 600 million disabled people worldwide, 82% live in developing countries. Unlike other citizens of their societies, disabled people live in the most deplorable conditions, isolated and excluded from their communities by barriers of policy, environment and attitude. For this reason, we fight against wars, poverty and the eradication of all forms of discriminations especially against disabled persons.

Disabled people are unquestionably the largest and most discriminated minority group in the world, whose human rights are systematically violated. These violations against the poorest of the poor result in worsening living conditions, degrading in human treatment, lack of adequate housing, healthcare, education, employment, social inclusion and, often face death. Our rights under existing UN conventions are generally ignored or marginalized in monitoring procedures. Therefore:

We demand a specific international human rights convention that is reflective of the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and that includes a strong convention-monitoring mechanism informed by the unique perspective of people with disabilities to ensure the credibility, legitimacy and efficacy of the convention;

Disabled people demand a voice of our own in the development of this instrument. We must be consulted at all levels on all matters that concern us.

We request the UN Secretary-General to continue to provide facilities necessary for the development of an International Human Rights Convention for disabled people to reallocate resources to support the work of the United Nations Program on Disabilities; We urge all UN member states to support the formulation and adaptation of this convention and to establish a Voluntary Fund to support the participation of disabled people, in particular from developing countries;

We encourage all disabled people and their organizations to educate the public and their political representatives on the need and benefits of a convention.

In addition:

We demand that every country adopt and implement anti-discrimination legislation and policies that ensures the equalization of opportunity for disabled people.

Adapted by the World Assembly and amended by the World Council of Disabled People.