



## Governing Body

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**Policy Development Section**  
*Employment and Social Protection Segment*

**POL**

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### SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Disability inclusion

#### Purpose of the document

This paper provides background information on the ILO's work on disability. The Governing Body is invited to provide guidance to the Office on strengthening the ILO's work in order to support governments and employers' and workers' organizations in tackling disability-based discrimination and in promoting disability inclusion (see draft decision in paragraph 35).

**Relevant strategic objective:** Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income (outcome 2: Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth – Indicator 2.3 concerns people with disabilities) and Promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work (outcome 17: Discrimination in employment and occupation is eliminated).

**Policy implications:** None.

**Legal implications:** None.

**Financial implications:** None at this stage. A breakdown of the resources needed to expand the Disability Inclusion Initiative throughout the Office would be required depending on the Governing Body's decision.

**Follow-up action required:** Take further steps to increase the effective implementation of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), in the light of recent developments, and to increase the inclusion of disability issues throughout the work of the Organization based on the Governing Body's guidance.

**Author unit:** Skills and Employability Department (EMP/SKILLS).

**Related documents:** GB.316/INS/5/1, GB.316/INS/5/3, GB.316/POL/6, GB.316/PFA/3, GB.274/12 and Corr.



## Background

1. People with disabilities are now estimated to account for 15 per cent (1 billion) of the world's population,<sup>1</sup> making them the largest and most neglected minority group in the world. Following years of ILO initiatives to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the world of work, a critical point has been reached. Promoting disability inclusion and tackling the discrimination faced by people with disabilities has become central to the achievement of the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work. Furthermore, the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) throughout the world and employers' increasing awareness of the value of diversity mean that the demand for the ILO's expertise on disability is increasing.<sup>2</sup>
2. Since 1999, when the ILO's work on disability was last discussed by the Governing Body,<sup>3</sup> ILO Members have increasingly come to regard the issue as one of human rights, economic development and workplace diversity. Non-discrimination in employment is seen as a cross-cutting theme in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and fundamental principles and rights at work are recognized and promoted in the UNCRPD, 2006.<sup>4</sup>

### I. The ILO and disability

#### A. What are the facts on decent work and persons with disabilities?

- At least 785 million persons with disabilities are of working age. The prevalence of disability is rising due to demographic ageing, chronic illness, conflict and humanitarian crises.<sup>5</sup>
- While member States are gradually expanding the list of grounds on which discrimination can be prohibited in national legislation to include disability,<sup>6</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank: *World Report on Disability*, 2011, [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240685215\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240685215_eng.pdf) [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>2</sup> "... Disability is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UNCRPD, Preamble (e). <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml> [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>3</sup> GB.274/12 and Corr.

<sup>4</sup> UNCRPD.

<sup>5</sup> WHO and the World Bank, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> ILO: Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 1B), International Labour Conference, 101st Session, Geneva, 2012, Part V, Chapter 3.

situation of persons with disabilities of working age continues to be a matter of concern.<sup>7</sup>

- Available statistics indicate that people with disabilities are less likely to be in full-time employment than persons without disabilities, up to twice as likely to be unemployed and far more likely to be outside the active labour market.<sup>8</sup>
- When in employment, people with disabilities are more likely to be in low-paid jobs with poor career prospects and working conditions.<sup>9</sup>
- Women with disabilities are less likely to have a decent job than women without disabilities and men with disabilities.<sup>10</sup>
- People with certain types of disability – such as intellectual and mental health disabilities – face greater difficulties in finding and retaining decent jobs.

3. From a global perspective, this situation entails significant social and economic losses, estimated at between 3 and 7 per cent of GDP in an ILO pilot study of ten low- and middle-income developing countries.<sup>11</sup> The cost of disability benefits alone amounts to up to 4–5 per cent of GDP in some countries.<sup>12</sup> However, investment in more effective strategies for inclusion can yield returns to society. For example, in Australia,<sup>13</sup> a cumulative \$43 billion increase in GDP over the next decade is predicted if the gaps between the unemployment and labour force participation of people with and without disabilities are reduced by one third.<sup>14</sup>

## B. The ILO's long-standing commitment to disability

4. The ILO's work to tackle disability-based discrimination in the world of work is rooted in its mandate and builds on its advocacy from the early days of the Organization. The first international instrument containing provisions concerning the vocational rehabilitation of

<sup>7</sup> ILO: *Fundamental principles and rights at work: From commitment to action*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 101st Session, Geneva, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): *Sickness, disability and work: Breaking the barriers: A synthesis of findings across OECD countries* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> WHO and the World Bank, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> ILO: *Equality at work: The continuing challenge*, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 100th Session, Geneva, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> S. Backup: *The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work*, Employment Sector Working Paper No. 43 (Geneva, ILO, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> OECD (2010), op.cit

<sup>13</sup> *Review of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Australian Productivity Commission, 2004, <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/dda/report> [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>14</sup> *The economic benefits of increasing employment for people with disability*, Deloitte Access Economics, 2011, [http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Australia/Local%20Assets/Documents/Industries/LSHC/Deloitte\\_DAE\\_Report\\_8May2012.pdf](http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Australia/Local%20Assets/Documents/Industries/LSHC/Deloitte_DAE_Report_8May2012.pdf) [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

workers with disabilities was adopted in 1925.<sup>15</sup> ILO Recommendation No. 99, adopted in 1955, “served as the basis for all national legislation and practice concerning vocational guidance, vocational training and placement of disabled persons for almost 30 years”.<sup>16</sup> The landmark Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (No. 159), was adopted in 1983. A code of practice on managing disability in the workplace was adopted in 2001, primarily targeting employers.<sup>17</sup> Since 1925, the ILO has called on member States to include persons with disabilities in general programmes and services where possible, as well as to provide dedicated, disability-specific services for the most disadvantaged (now called a twin-track approach).

5. Tackling disability issues features in almost half (48 per cent) of Decent Work Country Programmes drafted or adopted as of early 2012, suggesting a strong commitment and a need to address these issues at the national level. In the ILO’s Programme and Budget for 2012-13, human and financial resources are allocated to disability primarily under outcome 2 (Skills), which has an indicator related to disabled persons. In Report V – *Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development* to the 97th International Labour Conference (ILC), developing the skills of persons with disabilities features in the ILC conclusions on this topic,<sup>18</sup> which place a special emphasis on promoting the inclusion of those persons in mainstream training and employment promotion programmes.
6. Disability is also relevant to all employment outcomes, in particular to those related to employment promotion, employment services, enterprise and entrepreneurship development and youth employment; indicators related to social protection (especially the indicator for HIV/AIDS); and social dialogue indicators (especially elimination of discrimination and capacity building of employers’ and workers’ organizations). Moreover, persons with disabilities are explicitly referred to in 70 country programme outcomes (3.6 per cent).<sup>19</sup>

### C. The ILO’s role as an international leader

7. Since the adoption of the UNCRPD in 2006, which represented a major international policy shift to a human rights-based approach to disability, and in view of the growing number of ratifications of ILO Convention No. 159 after the General Survey review in

<sup>15</sup> Workmen’s Compensation (Minimum Scale) Recommendation, 1925 (No. 22), ILO, [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312360:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312360:NO) [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>16</sup> A. O’Reilly: *The right to decent work of persons with disabilities* (Geneva, ILO, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> ILO code of practice *Managing disability in the workplace*, ILO, Skills and Employability Department, 2002, [http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_103324/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_103324/lang--en/index.htm). [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>18</sup> ILO: *Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development*, Report V, International Labour Conference, 97th Session, Geneva, 2008 and Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, *Provisional Record* No. 16 International Labour Conference, 97th Session, Geneva, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Most of these references to disability are included in Country Programme Outcomes targeting a range of issues. Relatively few focus exclusively on disability. This is a reflection of the “twin-track” approach increasingly adopted (see para 4) and the fact that concern about disability inclusion extends beyond skills and employability.

1998, when the number of ratifying countries stood at 59,<sup>20</sup> the ILO has been leading the way among the United Nations agencies in its work with governments and employers' and workers' organizations to promote training and the creation of employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities.

**Ratifications of ILO Convention No. 159 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, by region (27 August 2012)**

	Convention No. 159	CRPD
Africa	15	32
Americas	17	23
Arab States	5	9
Asia and the Pacific	15	20
Europe and Central Asia	30	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>119</b>

### **Policy advice**

8. In addition to providing support to the drafting of labour legislation, the ILO has supported countries in reviewing disability-specific and general employment legislation from a disability perspective and in drafting new laws through technical cooperation projects since 2002.<sup>21</sup>

### **Capacity building**

9. Since 2003, capacity building for governments, employers' and workers' organizations and representative organizations of and for disabled persons in developing and middle-income countries on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market has been regularly conducted in several languages by the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin (Turin Centre). A distance-learning course entitled "Mainstreaming disability equality in the world of work" has been developed and is offered. In addition, the Turin Centre facilitated the development of an interactive approach to awareness raising about disability issues (called "Disability Equality Training"), which now features alongside some ILO technical courses at the Turin Centre and at the national and regional levels. Disability has been included as an option in several general courses, including the Skills Academy, the Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development and others.

<sup>20</sup> ILO: *Vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons*, General Survey report for the International Labour Conference, 86th Session, Geneva, 1998.

<sup>21</sup> These projects formed part of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme from 2002 to the present. Countries to which specific support has been provided include China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mongolia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Viet Nam and Zambia.

## **Partnerships with other United Nations agencies**

10. For many years, partnerships have served to strengthen the Office's impact in this area.<sup>22</sup> Currently, the ILO is an active member of the Inter-Agency Support Group for the UNCRPD, established in 2007, and whose strategy and joint plan of action has been endorsed by the Office. In addition to participating in the development of the strategy and joint plan of action, the ILO sponsored and provided technical advice on the development of a guidance note entitled *Including the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in United Nations Programming at Country Level*. The ILO also participates actively in the multi-donor trust fund<sup>23</sup> established in 2011 to support the implementation of the UNCRPD at the national level. Thus, the ILO is responding to the request of the United Nations General Assembly that all "United Nations agencies continue to strengthen efforts undertaken to ... assist States parties in implementing their obligations under" the UNCRPD.<sup>24</sup> A major element of the strategy and joint plan of action is a commitment to promoting the principles of the UNCRPD within United Nations agencies and in work with governments and employers' and workers' organizations. Recent developments indicate that several other United Nations agencies and the World Bank are taking up the issue of disability in employment and social protection.

### **Technical cooperation**

11. Disability-related interventions are being scaled up through collaboration with ILO technical cooperation projects aimed at the general population. For example, the inclusive approach taken to the development of women's entrepreneurship in technical cooperation in African countries led to the adoption of the ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development, which is inclusive of women with disabilities, by the Governing Body in 2008.
12. In addition to inclusive projects, a number of disability-specific projects are being implemented reflecting the twin-track approach required to tackle the different levels of disadvantage faced by some people with disabilities (see para 4). In the past, such projects focused on developing skills training and on creating opportunities for disabled persons to generate income. More recently, since 2002, projects within the ILO–Irish Aid Partnership Programme have focused more on creating a legislative and policy environment aimed at opening up general programmes and services to women and men with disabilities; and on fostering such a mainstream approach within country-level programmes. Capacity building also features prominently in these projects. For example, a curriculum including disability-related legislation was developed and pilot tested in collaboration with universities in several countries in Asia and Africa.<sup>25</sup> Support was also provided in incorporating the topic of disability legislation into the curricula of the law faculties of selected universities

<sup>22</sup> Examples include its collaboration with the WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Disability and Development Consortium on community-based rehabilitation, the Global Applied Disability Research and Information Network on Employment and Training (GLADNET) and the Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD).

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/63/192, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/482/31/PDF/N0848231.pdf?OpenElement> [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>25</sup> See online version at: <http://disability-employment-legislation.itcilo.org/index.html>.

so that future generations of lawyers and judges will become familiar with disability issues in law.

## **II. Role of employers' and workers' organizations**

**13.** As with other issues, the ILO is well placed to address disability issues due to its international labour standards and its tripartite structure. Given that governments are taking the lead in developing a legal and policy framework in consultation with employers, workers, disabled persons and the latter's representatives (as mandated in Convention No. 159), the role of employers' and workers' organizations is crucial in making decent work for women and men with disabilities a reality.

### **A. Working with employers and the ILO Global Business and Disability Network**

**14.** The Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) is playing a significant role in the ILO **Global Business and Disability Network**, a public-private partnership developed in conjunction with the Skills and Employability Department (EMP/SKILLS) and supported by the International Organisation of Employers. In its work promoting human rights and business cases, the ILO Global Business and Disability Network (Network) aims to achieve disability inclusion in the workplace and in strategic business plans. With more than 40 multinational companies and 18 employers' organizations and national business networks as members, the Network promotes inclusion in the workplace through four main activities: knowledge sharing, capacity building, developing joint projects and services, and involving members in ILO activities or in those of its partners. The Network also influences small and medium-sized enterprises through its employer organization members and seeks support from representative disabled persons and expert disability organizations with an international reach. Its activities to date are described in the annual report for 2011 and on the Network website.<sup>26</sup> Its impact is felt at the national level, for example, through the linkage created between companies and ILO activities (e.g. company personnel mentoring young people with disabilities in Uganda) or through activities implemented by employers' organizations (e.g. sponsored job fairs for persons with disabilities in India). Furthermore, Network members and the ILO are facilitating the development of other networks (for example one in Brazil and another in the Middle East) by providing technical support.

**15.** To date, the Network has been developed with the help of financial and human resources from within the ILO, as well as through in-kind contributions from companies. Currently, the Network is at a critical juncture as it seeks voluntary contributions from its members in order to maintain itself and its activities. To ensure sustainability, the long-term business model is that of an association supported by membership fees, with donor funds solicited for specific projects. This requires building the Network's capacity to deliver specific and quantifiable member benefits.

**16.** Employers' organizations are also involved in disability activities at the national and regional levels through technical cooperation projects and local office activities.

<sup>26</sup> See [www.businessanddisability.org](http://www.businessanddisability.org)



## B. Working with trade unions

17. A major part of the mission of workers' organizations is the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of workers' rights, thus highlighting the link to disability. In fact, workers played a pivotal role in the adoption of ILO Convention No. 159 and were actively involved in the development of the ILO code of practice on managing disability in the workplace. Furthermore, "Rights and liberties indispensable for the free exercise of trade union rights are also recognized in the ... Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 27(1)(c))."<sup>27</sup>
18. In recent years, the ILO has developed case studies on trade union activities in order to promote decent work for persons with disabilities,<sup>28</sup> produced a video featuring these<sup>29</sup> and trained workers' representatives at the Turin Centre and through technical cooperation projects. Evidence from case studies identifies the role trade unions play in protecting the rights of women and men with disabilities through national laws and policies, by guaranteeing benefits such as workers' compensation after on-the-job injuries, and by promoting provisions such as non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation measures in negotiated labour agreements.
19. Trade unions in Thailand, China, Mongolia and in countries in Central and Eastern Europe benefited from capacity-building and awareness initiatives through technical cooperation projects. For example, four trade unions in Thailand were made aware of disability issues through disability equality training arranged as part of the ILO–Irish Aid Partnership Programme and were also encouraged to engage in activities aimed at promoting greater equality for women and men in the workplace through a disability champion programme. The ILO will also collaborate with the National Organization of Trade Unions in Uganda in its plans to implement a disability advocacy programme with the support of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Global Solidarity Committee, as well as that of trade unions in the United Kingdom and the United States.
20. Social dialogue on this issue is encouraged through ILO Convention No. 159 and the ILO code of practice on managing disability in the workplace; through the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in technical cooperation project steering committees, at regional and country-level meetings, and through the dissemination of case studies and examples of negotiated labour agreements and joint action that result in disability inclusion in the workplace, as well as through training activities sponsored by the Turin Centre.

<sup>27</sup> ILO: Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (1B), International Labour Conference, 101st Session, Geneva, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> See Information Note in the *Disability Inclusion Toolkit and Resource Manual*, ILO, 2011, [https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/employment/skills/download/disability\\_inclusion\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/employment/skills/download/disability_inclusion_toolkit.pdf), tab 8, Working with trade unions [accessed 19 Sep. 2012].

<sup>29</sup> *From Rights to Reality*, highlights how trade unions around the world are playing a major role in campaigning, organizing, promoting rights and providing skills training and employment services for women and men with disabilities.

### **III. Moving towards disability inclusion: Increasing awareness and building capacity**

#### **A. What is meant by disability inclusion?**

21. Broadly speaking, disability inclusion refers to promoting and ensuring the participation of people with disabilities in education, training and employment and all aspects of society and providing the necessary supports and reasonable accommodations so that they can fully participate.

#### **B. What is the Disability Inclusion Initiative of the Employment Sector?**

22. Following the decades of work on disability issues carried out by disability-dedicated specialists at headquarters and in the field, the Employment Sector's Executive Director launched the Disability Inclusion Initiative (DII) in July 2009. The approach expects and enables Employment Sector managers and technical specialists to address disability issues in their work – knowledge development, advocacy and technical cooperation – and to become disability champions with a view to fostering disability inclusion within other sectors of the ILO, among the ILO's social partners and other stakeholders, and throughout the United Nations system. Broadening the scope of the ILO's employment, skills, entrepreneurship and other policies and programmes to include women and men with disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable to poverty and discrimination, makes the ILO's capacity-building work more effective in enabling countries to meet their decent work objectives.

23. The support provided to managers and staff includes:

- Technical advice through the Disability Hotline, which responds to staff queries about constituent issues and provide support for delivering training, finding tools or reviewing technical documents and proposals.
- Practical tools and checklists, for example, *Including Persons with Disabilities in ILO Technical Cooperation Projects: Checklist and Guidance Note*<sup>30</sup> and the *Disability Inclusion Toolkit and Resource Manual*.<sup>31</sup>
- A Disability Inclusion Knowledge Sharing Platform.<sup>32</sup>
- Hands-on support through joint missions and on-site training.

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/bureau/pardev/tcguides/templates.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> The publication, which is aimed primarily at Employment Sector staff but remains useful to others, is a collection of standards, guidance notes, FAQs, and resources to further disability inclusion in the overall work of the Organization. See [https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/employment/skills/download/disability\\_inclusion\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/employment/skills/download/disability_inclusion_toolkit.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> Includes information, documents, tools, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, laws, video clips, etc.

- Referral to experts, consultants or organizations that can provide technical input when demands exceed the human resources of the Office.
24. At headquarters, the DII has continued and expanded the long-standing collaboration of the disability team with other units, departments and sectors. The new approach has produced results. For example, one-time activities such as jointly developed issues briefs on disability and cooperatives, rural employment and the informal economy are completed or forthcoming, and long-term partnerships such as the ILO Global Business and Disability Network have emerged (see para. 14).
  25. In the field, several offices and projects have shown remarkable progress in fostering inclusion, such as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform Project in Bangladesh.

### C. Benchmarking and assessment

26. A benchmarking and needs assessment exercise to mark the launch of the Disabled Inclusion Initiative identified staff perceptions and support needs, and set baseline indicators (2009–10) for measuring progress. While staff perceived disability as an integral part of the social justice agenda, they felt constrained by their lack of expertise and cited barriers such as a lack of demand from governments and employers' and workers' organizations. The overwhelming feeling was that the involvement of disability experts was required.
27. A follow-up assessment conducted in 2012 found that, between 2009 and 2012, staff disability inclusion confidence increased, especially among field specialists. Seventy per cent of respondents reported disability inclusion to be of at least average relevance to their work, compared to 57 per cent in 2009; and the majority considered it to be of at least average priority. The greatest changes in perception were recorded among headquarters and management staff. The majority of respondents rated the initiative as highly effective, thereby exceeding the expectations expressed in 2009. DII materials and services were praised with respondents expressing a preference for ILO materials over those produced by other organizations. Personal support from an ILO disability specialist was the preferred support option.
28. Based on staff responses, in 2012, an independent consultant concluded that the DII has to date been very successful in raising awareness of disability inclusion issues, embedding basic messages and tackling the resistance and objection to the topic which were apparent in 2009. The Initiative's achievements and effectiveness are particularly impressive, given the small resources which are available to it.<sup>33</sup> The groundwork has been laid for disability inclusion to become a standard ILO operating procedure, an integral and non-negotiable part of how it conducts its business.
29. Other indicators reviewed included an increase in the percentage of Decent Work Country Programmes that refer to disability in outcome and priority statements, a significant

<sup>33</sup> The disability team comprises two senior disability experts in EMP/SKILLS. Regular budgetary funds for the team's work, including the Disability Inclusion Initiative, amount to US\$230,000 for the biennium 2012–13. Extra-budgetary funds for technical cooperation projects through the Irish Aid Partnership Programme amount to \$2.7 million for the period 2012–13. In keeping with Decent Work Country Programme priorities, the funds from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account and the regular budget for technical cooperation currently support work in some countries in the Arab States, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Other human and financial resources have been leveraged or matched, at times, from other units and departments.

increase in references to disability on ILO websites, both at headquarters and in the field, with the Employment Sector showing the most significant increase (300 per cent), and an increase in the number of tools and key resources including disability, though the percentage only increased slightly between 2009–10 and 2012. The inclusion of disability in the Partnership and Development Cooperation's Appraisal Checklist for Technical Cooperation Proposals should also be noted.<sup>34</sup> The DII assessment findings point to its initial success. However, gaps and concerns remain, such as the extent of disability inclusion in tools and key resources, as well as in research (which has not yet been adequately analysed). Furthermore, although there are some encouraging developments, a more in-depth analysis of disability inclusion in technical cooperation projects is needed. The human resources aspect remains a challenge since providing technical coaching by disability specialists, developing tailored and targeted materials, and staff development and training are all labour intensive.

30. Disability inclusion is now an element of skills and employability job descriptions for specialists and some exemplary work is being done related to skills and public employment services and the inclusion of disabled persons. Senior disability specialists provide support to these specialists and other field staff, although not all requests can be accommodated due to limited human resources.
31. Considering the ratification rates for ILO Convention No. 159 and the UNCRPD, along with the greater importance being attached to disability in Decent Work Country Programmes, current demands for technical assistance, preference for ILO expertise, and reliance on direct support from the current disability team, it is unlikely that the current in-house expertise will be adequate to meet this increasing demand. Greater knowledge transfer and more training are needed. The Turin Centre is responding (see paragraph 9). Also, a short, computer-based course for Employment Sector staff, which is being developed through the DII will be enhanced and adapted for all staff in collaboration with the Human Resources Development Department (HRD). Moreover, the ILO Global Business and Disability Network provides a viable structure for working with employers' organizations and multinational companies.

#### **D. Expanding the Disability Inclusion Initiative throughout the Office**

32. Clearly, disability inclusion is a reality for many offices, units and programmes throughout the ILO. Exemplary work has been done by the International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), the Programme for the Promotion of the Declaration (DECLARATION), the Bureau for Gender Equality (GENDER), and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), to name but a few. However, a policy initiative and an implementation plan, with indicators for success, will ensure that women and men with disabilities, still often invisible in the work of the ILO, will be progressively represented in all ILO activities. Similarly, they should be represented in the staff, management, and leadership of the Organization, in an environment that is fully accessible and meets their accommodation needs. More still needs to be done.
33. Expanding the DII throughout the whole Office will require, in the first instance, an explicit policy commitment to moving forward with this issue. Thereafter, consultations with all units and sectors will be required to further assess the situation, to determine what resources can be leveraged, the additional resources that will be required, how they might

<sup>34</sup> See Appraisal Checklist, point 3.3, <https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/bureau/pardev/tcguides/templates.htm>.

be sourced, and how best to provide the necessary training and staff support. The lessons learned in the Employment Sector from the experience of the DII will provide guidance and direction.

#### **IV. ILO and disability: Overall strategy statement for the future**

**34.** In order to move forward, the main elements of the ILO's twin-track work on disability for the next five-year policy framework could include:

- Strengthening the work of the Office in order to support governments and employers' and workers' organizations in giving effect to the provisions of ILO Convention No. 159, and promoting non-discrimination on the grounds of disability.
- Continuing to work in partnership with other United Nations agencies, regional and inter-governmental bodies, social partners and civil society in order to promote the implementation of international labour standards and the UNCRPD in all regions.
- Expanding the Disability Inclusion Initiative throughout the Office as a policy initiative endorsed at the highest level, which, in turn, could assist in the implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.
- Providing technical advice to internal management on the implementation of the ILO Policy on the employment of persons with disabilities, adopted in 2005, and undertaking efforts to improve accessibility to ILO premises, meetings and information.
- Expanding, strengthening and ensuring the sustainability of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, in partnership with the Bureau for Employers' Activities.
- Strengthening linkages in analytical and practical work related to gender, youth, indigenous status, disability and other groups facing discrimination in the workplace and marginalization in society.

#### **V. Suggested points for discussion**

- What additional steps can governments and workers' and employers' organizations take to improve decent work opportunities for persons with disabilities and to tackle the discrimination they face in the workplace, and what Office support would be most helpful?
- What priorities or additions are recommended in order to improve the ILO strategy statement on disability?
- What additional steps could be taken to strengthen, expand and promote the financial and operational sustainability of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network?

**Draft decision**

**35. The Governing Body:**

- (a) welcomes the Office's initiative to develop a strategy statement and implementation plan on disability that will include broadening the Disability Inclusion Initiative and reflect the guidance provided, and requests the Director-General to report back in 12 months on the implementation plan, including financial and staffing information;*
- (b) supports the continuing work of the Office with other United Nations agencies, regional and inter-governmental bodies and multinational companies, as well as with governments and employers' and workers' organizations, in order to promote decent work for persons with disabilities.*