



US - EU Cooperation in Employment and Social Affairs

EU-US Seminar
on Employment of Persons with Disabilities
(Brussels, 5 - 6 November 2009)
REPORT

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Annex I Seminar Agenda

Executive Summary

The European Union (EU) – United States seminar on employment of persons with disabilities was held on the 5th and 6th of November 2009 in Brussels. The seminar was organised jointly by the European Commission Unit for Integration of People with Disabilities and the U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy in the Department of Labor.

The seminar took place against the background of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which opened for signature on 30 March 2007, and has, to date, been signed by the European Community, all its Member States and the United States.

Over the two days, participants heard a number of expert presentations from senior officers in government departments of the United States and EU with responsibilities for disability policies, and from senior representatives of business, the public sector, disability rights organisations, and academic and legal experts. The seminar also benefited from the participation of a very informed audience which included academic, business, advisory and government departmental organisations. This quality of participation facilitated a highly informed discussion on important aspects of the position of persons with disabilities in the United States and EU, the assessment of progress in tackling disabling barriers to employment, and meeting the terms of the UN Convention. Specific thematic discussions included:

- Policy and legislation on employment of persons with disabilities
- Information communications technology and assistive technology in employment
- Transitions from education to employment
- Measuring employment of persons with disabilities

The following are **key points** underscored during the seminar:

Policy and legislation:

- The UN Convention, in establishing disability equality as a matter of human rights and law, has spurred the development of national legislation and positive change. Policy must enforce access to these rights in practice. For policy to be accurately focussed requires that statistics are reliable and capable of being used comparatively both within countries and internationally. Outcome-focussed policy developments and implementation also require good evidence, systems for legislative enforcement and monitoring, common definitions and action on a number of levels, all of which are required by the Convention.
- The full impact of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has not yet been established, particularly as a number of states have yet to take the first steps toward ratifying it. In the United States, the President has signed the Convention and it is hoped that the Senate will ratify it. In the EU, the European Commission has signed and 12 countries have ratified the Convention.

- Participants from both the United States and EU explained how the social model of disability focuses attention on actions that can be taken to incorporate persons with disabilities in the job market and eliminate discrimination.
- As is recognised by Article 27 of the Convention, employment is a key issue for persons with disabilities. However, the discussion also identified discrimination and lack of access in many other areas, such as education and support for independent living, that constrain access to employment. It was noted that many elements of the Convention have relevance to employment in addition to Article 27.
- The EU Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) has had a significant effect at the legislative level in the EU. Previously only three countries had full legal provisions in the employment equality area, whereas now all 27 countries have a law. However, the definition of disability is often narrow and protection does not yet apply to access to goods and services.
- In the United States, an amendment to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA AA, 2008) helped to broaden the definition of disability. It is hoped that the amendment, built on existing medical model tenets in the ADA, clarifies a number of legal complications introduced by court rulings. Hence, it is thought that ADA implementation will be more effective.
- The importance of affirmative action measures was discussed and it was agreed that specific kinds of measures need to be evaluated to determine which work best: for example, if employers can get around quota systems by paying fines, they are of limited practical value to persons with disabilities.

Information Communications Technology (ICT) and Assistive Technology (AT) in employment

- The use of assistive technology to address barriers was reported by a number of speakers. Speakers stressed that it is important that mainstream ICT technology is accessible and compatible with AT. For example, a provision of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act stipulates that a U.S. Federal organization procuring a product must ensure the product is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Several speakers, as well as the case studies that were presented, demonstrated that while AT is important, it has so far produced mixed results for the employment of persons with disabilities.
- It was agreed that the cost of AT accommodations should not be exaggerated: even where costs are high, these costs may decrease due to volume or time. The same applies to accessibility: anticipating the need for accommodations and incorporating them into the design from the outset in buildings and facilities cuts overall costs significantly.
- The ways in which the cost burden of accessible technology could be alleviated were discussed. It was pointed out that the barriers represented by cost burdens could be eased if companies spread the costs across all cost centres rather than having them fall only on the unit in which the individual with a disability works. Many “open source” resources are available and should be publicised.

Transitions from education to employment

- More information is needed on how to support certain groups of persons with disabilities, such as people with learning disabilities, in order to address a lack of awareness and discrimination by employers.
- Programmes to support young people's transition from education help to counterbalance the impact of the low expectations and the practical barriers that children and young people with disabilities face. Such programmes are often overburdened and under-financed.
- Success in supporting young people with disabilities in entering the labour market is most likely to occur where discussion and support starts at an early age and where the person with a disability has a choice and some control over the process.
- Disability benefits systems usually force persons with disabilities to choose between work and benefits. Most systems are organised around a "gatekeeper" concept to limit eligibility. This is not beneficial for persons with disabilities and probably is not cost effective. An alternative would be to shift to "enabling" systems, which could focus on supporting individual needs and valuing social participation as well as employment. It was pointed out that any proposed changes aimed at severely restricting eligibility should be considered alongside the inaccessibility of workplaces, incomplete anti-discrimination legislation, and other benefit linkages, such as health care.
- Sheltered and supported employment is undergoing major changes across the EU and concern was expressed about how the changes will affect persons with disabilities. There were particular concerns about privatisation of employment search programmes in the EU, with private companies being compensated to place people in jobs the processes as such having few standards and little outside monitoring. Participants expressed concern that the status quo appears to be such that "It is irrelevant whether the work is good quality or whether the person can or wants to do the job." This was considered unacceptable.

Measuring Employment of persons with disabilities

- There is a growing interest in the need for more in-depth collection of data on people with disabilities. This could include looking at detailed employment profiles of people with disabilities, as is already done with respect to gender, ethnicity or age. Such employment data collection would allow for better comparisons to be made between the experience of persons with and without disabilities.
- There is a continuing need for data that cover a sufficient range of factors and which can be used for international comparison. Examples of factors might include: Article 31 of the UN Convention requires states to collect appropriate statistics and data to formulate policy and give effect to the Convention. However, differences over the definition of disabilities result in variations over how and what should be measured. Definitions therefore need to be standardised. It was pointed out that a disability is not something owned by the individual but is the result of the interaction between an individual and a particular environment.
- There is regular collection and use of a basic set of statistics on disabilities in the EU. A specific module on disability and social integration (the EDSIM survey) has been developed by Eurostat with the cooperation of the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal

Opportunities (DG Employment). This incorporates a social model approach and starts from the barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and asks questions on employment, access to buildings, education, social participation, and transport, among others. It is being pilot tested and will be analysed in the next year or so.

- In June 2008, the U.S. added (six) questions on disabilities in the monthly Community Population Survey of Households for the first time. Findings in June 2008 showed an unemployment rate of 16.2 percent for people with disabilities compared to 9.2 percent for persons without disabilities. These numbers reflect many factors. For example, in looking at employment by educational status, 72.6 percent of people with no disabilities and a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification were in employment compared to 29.4 percent of people with disabilities.
- Public sector employee data show a relatively low percentage of employees with disabilities employed in U.S. Federal Government. Conference contributors pointed out that public sector employment of people with disabilities in the EU states for which there are data also show a low level of representation. It was noted that there is strong need for both the EU and the U.S. governments and other public sector organizations to set high standards for employment of people with disabilities.
- Across the OECD countries about one in four people with disabilities has a job; these data reflect the situation before the impact of the current international economic crisis.

In a brief concluding session, the following key points were made:

- The current economic climate is an especially difficult time for people with disabilities, both those in and those trying to enter the labour market. An increasing number of people with disabilities seeking to find work are influenced by the tightening of disability benefits policies and the decline in economic sectors where persons with disabilities are most concentrated (e.g. sectors requiring un- or low skilled labour, subcontractors for assembly of automotive wiring harnesses or similar assembly jobs). It is important to ensure that the agreed rights of persons with disabilities are upheld in this climate.
- Priorities for the future include:
 - Improving the numbers of people with disabilities who are recruited, hired, retained, and promoted in employment. Employment success experienced by workers with disabilities should be measured by the length of their employment and the grade level of their employment. Did they, for example, start at one grade and through merit promotions attain a higher level?
 - Supporting both the supply and demand sides of the issue. That is: to considering and targeting not only the supply (talent) side (people with disabilities) but also the demand side (employers), and tracking both.

Opening Session

The opening session of the seminar on Thursday 5 November 2009, consisted of a short discussion reminding everyone of the goals of the EU-US Dialogue and Objectives of the day. The session was chaired by **Belinda Pyke**, Director European Commission, DG EMPL, Equality between Men/Women, Action against Discrimination, Civil Society.

EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, **Vladimir Špidla** explained that disability equality is a matter of human rights. Legislation should guarantee equal rights to persons with disabilities. In turn, he said, policies must ensure access to these rights – in employment, access to goods and services and in other matters. The UN Convention contains a specific requirement for reasonable accommodation in the workplace. This can be achieved in a number of ways and AT and accessible ICT was one way. He pointed out that before people acquire jobs, they need to have education and that the transition from education to employment is a critical phase, specifically for people with disabilities.

Addressing another feature of the seminar, he pointed out that policy-making needs to be evidence-based, which is complicated by the lack of comprehensive and reliable statistics. Problems include the different definitions of disability used by different countries. He concluded by saying that as the number of people with disabilities in employment needs to be improved, addressing all these issues is important.

Kathleen Martinez, Assistant Secretary, Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and Head of the US Delegation, said that U.S. President Obama had brought new people with disabilities into government to support issues of equality for people with disabilities. Ms. Martinez explained that disability discrimination included exclusion, isolation and segregation. She explained that the approach to disability discrimination has evolved: from the segregation model, to the medical model and then the charity model. We have now moved past the charity model to one involving rights. The model of disability a government uses is critical in determining the level of participation of people with disabilities in the life of a country. It was important, therefore, she explained, that societies now increasingly understand disability to be a social construct. The “social model of disability” represents an attempt to shift focus, not only of state agencies but of society as a whole. It is intended to foster an accurate or a positive self image and a sense of empowerment for people with disabilities: the ability of persons with disabilities to speak for themselves.

Ms Martinez reported that, in the U.S., disability policy is to be brought to the fore in the whole Department of Labor and not to be treated as a separate issue. Reasonable accommodation is a key issue: Ms. Martinez pointed out that this too was a matter of how one approached the issue and asked: “What is reasonable accommodation? What is an inclusive environment? Are chairs and lighting not reasonable accommodations?” The fact that persons with disabilities are not represented in the media is a particular problem contributing to the social invisibility of people with disabilities. Ms. Martinez presented two video representations containing positive images: one related to the “What can you do” campaign, which is available online at <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/blog/index.php/video>

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum (EDF), explained that the social model is an important step forward. It brings to the fore the principle: “nothing about persons with disabilities without persons with disabilities.” Exclusion from employment is a key barrier to participation of people with disabilities in wider society. Statistics show that persons with disabilities

are at least two to three times more likely to be unemployed than persons without disabilities. Even in instances where persons with disabilities are in employment, they are less likely to be in higher earning jobs and more likely to be in lower status jobs. The subject of this seminar was therefore important in helping to understand and identify further steps to tackle this inequality. The lack of access to other aspects of life, such as education, constrains access to employment. Article 27 (of the UN Convention) deals specifically with employment, but all the rights contained in the Convention can lead to a better employment situation if they are implemented. The situation of persons with disabilities needs to improve qualitatively and quantitatively: many persons with disabilities are working without adequate salaries, rights, access to freedom of association and collective bargaining, etc. Many are not properly registered as workers, which needs to change.

Legislation needs to be better understood by employees and employers. Strategic litigation may be an option. However, lawyers and judges are not well informed about disability and work matters.

With regard to positive action, 16 out of 27 countries in the EU have quota schemes, of which Mr. Vardakastanis commented that probably the most successful is in France. He stressed, however, the importance of well-developed employment and training schemes for securing connection of persons with disabilities to the labour market.

He concluded that steps are needed to:

- Review the implementation of the EU Directive (2000/78/EC), now at the end of its first decade; and
- Review the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, where its relevance to persons with disabilities needs to be mentioned and addressed more explicitly.

Session 1: Policy and Legislation related to Employment and Disability

The session was chaired by **David Capozzi**, U.S. Access Board, and was divided into two themed panels.

A) Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): what is the real impact (a national case)?

Kathleen Martinez explained that the U.S. has been resistant to signing UN (HR) Treaties and has not, for example, yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, whilst U.S. engagement with the CRPD has been low, Non-Governmental Organizations in the U.S. had strong participation in CRPD's development. When discussion on the Convention started, U.S. NGOs initially found it difficult to understand the human rights approach, since historically a civil rights approach had been taken. However, the U.S. National Council on Disability did a lot of educational work in the disability community which is now mobilizing to achieve U.S. ratification. President Obama signed the CRPD in July 2009 and it needs the support of 60 senators for ratification.

Whilst U.S. law is broadly in line with the tenets of the Convention, law and policy would still need to be augmented in a number of ways if ratification took place. For example, the U.S. has no specific agenda addressing women with disabilities, which is explicitly needed to be in conformance with the CRPD. The effects of CRPD ratification undoubtedly would have a large impact on employment. Those multinational corporations based in the United States would now work to comply with an international instrument such as the CRPD, in addition to U.S. laws affecting U.S.-based operations.

Ratifying the Convention would also allow the U.S. to learn from other countries, a welcome change given that the U.S. has been out of the international disability discussions in recent years.

Virginia Carcedo Illera, Senior consultant of the European Programmes Unit at Fundacion ONCE (Spain), explained that Spain has ratified the Convention and that both it and the Employment Equality Directive have helped with the progressive evolution of Spanish attitudes towards people with disabilities. They have moved to adopt the social model and a diversity approach. The objective is inclusion (a concept which they prefer to integration). The key legal provisions are Article 49 of the Constitution, the Social Integration Act, and the Disability, Equal Opportunities, and Universal Accessibility Act. The EU Directive had been a very important impetus in adopting these Acts.

The legal framework is now in place, and is quite compatible with the Convention. The challenge is to improve understanding of the law and increase its impact. ONCE, for example, runs extensive awareness-raising programmes for employers. One important policy initiative introduced as a result of the Convention is a government strategy for persons with disabilities, drawn up in consultation with persons with disabilities.

Key points from discussion:

- The Convention's full impact is not yet known – it needs to be a tool for change, not something on paper only. The first step is ratification by all states.
- Where the Convention has been ratified, and together with EU Directives, it has spurred the development of national disability rights legislation and policy.

B) The impact of anti-discrimination legislation, quotas and other obligations

Anna Lawson, School of Law and Centre for Disability Studies, Leeds University, described the implementation of the Employment Equality Directive in the Member States of Europe. Ms. Lawson explained that the Directive has had a big effect at the legislative level: whereas previously only three countries had legislation against discrimination in employment, now all 27 countries have a law. She explained that the requirement to make reasonable accommodations is a key element of the Directive for persons with disabilities, but that it is expressed somewhat differently in different European countries. While an “effective” or “appropriate” adjustment is required in some countries, in others (for example Italy) the duty to implement reasonable accommodations is expressed in too vague a way. In yet other countries the duty only covers people with a “severe” disability. The European Commission has recently issued “reasoned opinions” to Germany and Italy regarding potential failures to transpose the Directive effectively.

Many countries have adopted facilitative policy measures to support the reasonable accommodation duty such as state funding (UK), awareness training and technical advice programmes. Article 7(2) of the Directive permits positive action measures. These take a variety of forms at national levels: reserved occupations; quota schemes, often with option to pay fine; and supported employment schemes.

Ms. Lawson explained that evidence of effectiveness of these schemes is limited. In addition, care has to be taken in working out the details of positive action schemes, which can create stigma and be shunned by people with disabilities. Therefore, she said, it is important that policies address both demand (employers) and supply (transitioning persons with disabilities into labour force).

The indirect discrimination provisions of the Directive potentially address the group dimension of discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities: for example, a job requirement which posed a barrier to a whole group of persons with disabilities could potentially be removed by the requirements of the Directive. By contrast, reasonable adjustment provisions under the Directive focus on individualised assessment of the barriers facing a person with disabilities. However, the Directive contains a proviso that member states need not introduce into their legal system a ban on indirect disability discrimination if they can show that the reasonable adjustment duty does provide an adequate redress for individual persons with disabilities. This unintended consequence has meant that in countries such as the UK there is at present no legal prohibition on indirect disability discrimination.

EU Legislation such as the *Regulation concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air* (1107/2006/EC) and the *Bus and Coach Directive* (2001/85/EC) addressing access standards in transport, lifts, electronic communication and broadcasting also address issues that are relevant to tackle discrimination of persons with disabilities. Ms. Lawson pointed out that while the Employment Directive is important, it has serious limitations: for example, the absence of a definition of disability allowed the European Court of Justice (in the Chacon-Navas case) to take a restrictive approach, and the Directive does not apply to Goods and Services. The 2008 proposed directive on access to Goods and Services, therefore, is potentially very important, and would strengthen group protections.

Christine Griffin, Acting Vice Chair, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, described the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA AA) of 2008 which came into effect on January 1, 2009. The Act was needed to restore the ADA’s broad protections as

intended by Congress. Courts had been construing the definition of “disability” too narrowly and finding too many people outside the ADA’s protections.

Ms. Griffin explained that the Act:

- Rejects the Supreme Court’s view that “disability” should be determined by reference to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures;
- Rejects the Supreme Court’s holding that the ADA requires a “demanding standard” for establishing coverage and requires that an impairment “severely restrict” major life activities; and
- Expresses Congress’s expectation that the EEOC will revise its regulation that defined “substantially limits” as “significantly restricted.”

A further important change relates to coverage where a person without disability is regarded as disabled. Under the Amendments Act, an applicant or employee is regarded as disabled if he or she is subject to an action prohibited by the ADA based on an impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor. No accommodation is required where a person is only regarded as disabled.

Ms. Griffin explained the implications of the ADA AA as:

- Making it easier to establish disability;
- Meaning that most reasonable accommodation decisions will focus on need for accommodation rather than coverage;
- Documentation sought in support of accommodation requests will often be different (e.g. describe effects on major bodily functions, limitations without mitigating measures);
- That many ADA disparate treatment claims will probably be brought under the “regarded as” prong, even if the individual may also be covered under first or second prong; and
- Avoiding qualification standards that screen individuals out based on impairments, or be prepared to defend them as applied to each individual who may challenge them.

She explained that the Amendment Act, as earlier stated in this document, built on the existing medical model ADA definition. However, the new content will make the law more effective and able to meet real need.

Key point from discussion:

- Positive action measures need to be evaluated to determine which approach works best: quota systems which employers can avoid by paying fines, thereby side-stepping the hiring and retention of employees with disabilities; or the design of schemes which improve the employment position and experience of people with disabilities.

Session 2: ICT and AT in Employment

The session was chaired by *Inmaculada Placencia Porrero*, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and was divided into two themed panels.

A) Using ICT for Employment –The Employers’ Perspective

Sally Davis, CEO British Telecom (BT), provided a case study of a major employer and manufacturer of ICT equipment. She explained how assistive and accessible technology had a positive impact on both BT’s customer base and employees. BT had analysed customer and employee profiles and understood the business case for tackling barriers for people with disabilities. This analysis indicated that BT can anticipate that up to three million of their customers may have arthritis, which affects 20 percent of the UK population. By creating accessible and inclusive products and services, BT will ensure that they remain the provider of choice. BT also estimates that 14,000 BT employees have a disability. As many as 10,000 BT employees may have dyslexia. She stated that the company’s “disability user panel” was an example of how BT benefits directly from employing a diverse range of people.

Ms. Davis explained that BT had placed inclusive design at the heart of its business development and delivery. Certain examples of accessible technology, which began as technology to address the requirements of persons with disabilities, were now mainstream, and this showed the very wide application that accessible technology could have. Similarly, she showed how ICT facilitated flexible working and, by reference to workforce data, demonstrated how flexible working policies were taken up by a wide range of employees as well as by persons with disabilities. She explained that BT considered productivity, not “presenteeism -” meaning present at work but not productive, the important issue.

BT, she explained, believed that the greatest challenge to tackling discrimination was cultural. Changing attitudes and eliminating stereotypes are examples of solutions to cultural barriers. She then explained that while technology can break down communication barriers, cultural changes were required to ensure that technology actually can be used by people who may be resistant to change. Such cultural change can be encouraged through practical assistance, training and awareness-raising. ICT, for example, was used to help raise awareness of line managers.

Changes that had resulted from this combination of policies included improved rates of return to work after illness or in the context of disability, in customer loyalty rates and in productivity through home working: for example, mental health absences fell by 30 per cent in four years. Overall, she showed that 80 percent of BT employees who were off work more than six months with illness now return to their jobs, compared with 30 percent five years ago in BT and just 20 percent in the UK nationally.

Dinah Cohen, Director, Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), U.S. Department of Defense, explained how the CAP program, established in 1990, provides more than 81,000 accommodations for staff with disabilities, not only in the Department of Defense but also in partnership with 65 other federal agencies. The program undertakes needs assessments and provides accommodations and training in use of assistive technology. Moreover, it provides disability management training and assists in policies to aid the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities.

She pointed out that much innovation and development is effectively furthered by the growing numbers of U.S. military personnel who, when injured in the field of battle, through medical interventions, lived and were brought back to the U.S.

CAP's approach is positive, she explained, understanding that an accommodation could be found for every person whatever the disability and the barrier. CAP's mission statement is "to provide assistive technology and accommodations to ensure people with disabilities and wounded service members have equal access to the information environment and opportunities in the Department of Defense and throughout the Federal government."

Cost analysis presented by Ms. Cohen showed that the average cost of accommodations (fiscal year 2009) is \$533.17. In detail the cost breakdown was:

- No Cost to Employer - 31%
- Between \$1-500 - 38%
- Between \$500-1000 - 19%
- Between \$1000-5000 - 11%
- More than \$5000 - 1%

Alex Cocq, Vice President, Human Resources – Recruitment, IBM, explained why accessible technology is important to his company. He said that accessibility was part of IBM's core values and part of the innovation agenda, which is a driving force in the industry. Accessible technology is important in securing access to the widest talent pool and it was a business imperative for consumers to be able to use products. He argued that ICT and AT should work together; the ICT industry needs to implement the established accessibility standards.

Mr. Cocq posed the question: what recruitment challenges are faced by IBM in regard to persons with disabilities? He said that such challenges included the cost of accessible technology, discriminatory attitudes of managers – e.g. perceived cost of making adjustments – finding the people needed to perform a range of skills and matching employees with the company's service providing function. For example, employees need to travel away from the home duty station to work with the customer base. He also explained how addressing budgetary concerns of managers could unblock discrimination. For example, IBM changed the budget that reasonable adjustment costs come out of so that cost was removed as a consideration for immediate managers.

Education and training of managers and human resources personnel was important. He explained that it was important that new developments avoid creating new barriers. For example, many employers use social media to recruit. However, he questioned whether this approach will have a negative impact on hiring of persons with disabilities because social media may not yet be accessible. In terms of IBM's own website, the company had designed it to be more accessible.

Mr. Cocq explained that IBM hoped these types of changes would help address the ongoing challenge to improve recruitment.

Key points from discussion:

- Assistive technology has produced mixed improvements and it is not enough in its own. BT figures show significant improvements in retaining persons with disabilities in employment, but the CAP programme, while very ambitious, has not stemmed a continuing decline in the representation of people with disabilities in federal employment.

- Most accommodations cost little or nothing. For example, it may cost nothing to change an employment practice such as someone's work hours. AT costs can be sometimes high but the costs come down with volume or time. If accommodations are built in from the start the costs come down, e.g., if a building is designed, built and fitted in an inclusive way from the beginning.

B) Improving Accessibility and Getting Reasonable Accommodation through Assistive Technology - The Users' Perspective

Eva Heckl, of KMU Forschung Austria, had analysed 82 public funding schemes for adjustments/accommodations and presented the findings of the research. Ms. Heckl explained that funding included financial support or support in kind. Two hundred case studies were considered and among these, technical adaptation of the workplace was the most common measure. This includes structural modification of premises, adjustment of office equipment, and assistive technology. Other measures are organisational arrangements, personal assistance services, qualification measures and awareness-raising measures.

The conclusions included that solutions using adaptive equipment and other technical solutions were necessary but were not enough. Training, awareness raising and personal assistance services were needed in conjunction with technical support. In discussion, Ms. Heckl noted that open source technology can assist with costs of AT. This was especially important for people outside the public sector and big companies; for people not in education or employment it was very difficult to access the technology which would help to develop skills to get into employment. She pointed out that more information is needed on means for supporting certain groups of persons with disabilities, such as people with learning disabilities. Ms. Heckl agreed that the percentage of people with mental health disabilities was low in the study and that there is a lot of ignorance and fear by employers about integrating people with mental health problems into workplaces. .

David Capozzi, Executive Director, U.S. Access Board, Washington, D.C. described the work of the Access Board on technology issues for people with disabilities, which began with the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and continued with passage of amendments to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1998. He explained the role of the Act's Section 508, which is that whenever a Federal agency procures a product, it must be accessible unless it is an undue burden to do so (this is a high threshold). Furthermore, telecommunications products and services need to be accessible to people with disabilities where "readily achievable" (this is a low threshold) according to the Telecommunications Act.

Mr. Capozzi explained that the Board published final standards for section 508 in December 2000 and reported that the estimated costs to comply with standards represents 0.01 percent to 0.06 percent of the total Federal budget, or 0.23 percent to 2.8 percent of the amount spent on information technology by the Federal government.

Because of the ever-changing nature of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in July 2006, the Board created an advisory committee to update and revise the Section 508 standards and the Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines. The committee presented its recommendations to the Access Board in April 2008. The Board expects to release new draft requirements for public comment Spring 2010. .

Mr. Capozzi explained that Section 508's impact is being felt in state governments, the private sector, and around the world because it applies whenever Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology and that manufacturers are not making different products for the Federal government and others. The purpose of Section 508 is to improve access to mainstream technology for persons with disabilities.

The Access Board was striving for clear, consensus-driven, testable, and reliable accessibility requirements. Mr. Capozzi pointed out it was critical that accessibility requirements are harmonized throughout the world. Product manufacturers want to build to a single set of requirements, or at a minimum, not be faced with contradictory worldwide requirements. The Access Board was doing what it can to facilitate this, he concluded.

Key points from discussion:

- Assistive Technology (AT) is crucial but not enough on its own – assistance, training and awareness-raising are important for ensuring that AT is understood and utilised. This is important especially for particular groups of workers such as those with learning disabilities. The Access to Work system in the UK while not widely known has been very successful.
- The cost burden of accessible technology for people not in education or employment could be eased if companies spread the cost across everyone rather than the cost falling on the individual who needs it.
- There are major access issues with many internet-operated businesses. This raised the question of the need to apply laws like the ADA to the private sector and to services on line.

Session 3 Transition: from Education to Employment

The session was chaired by *Christine Griffin*, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and was divided into two themed panels.

A) Preparation for Employment for School Leavers

Ryan Easterly, Program Coordinator, The HSC Foundation, addressed the role of transition programmes for young people with disabilities, including programmes that support young people's transition from education to employment. He provided personal anecdotes as examples of the scale of ambition that could be achieved if young persons with disabilities were given appropriate support. Mr. Easterly deduced that programmes to support young people transitioning from education to employment are important because of the low expectations and the barriers that children with disabilities and young people meet. Unlike others, they are often not asked "what do you want to be when you grow up?"

Mr. Easterly suggested improvements to transition practices, emphasizing the importance of starting transition planning early and setting high expectations for persons with disabilities. Starting a plan at age 12, for example, allows scope for the young person to think through his or her goals and for programme organisers to plan for the appropriate benchmarks of success, identifying resources the youth will need to successfully transition. For example, if a youth, as a result of his/her disability is unable to obtain a driver's license but lives in an area without public transit, a plan should be developed as early as possible addressing the lack of transportation. He argued that current transition practices can be based too largely on the educational institutional time triggers, for example, a state's eligibility rules for special education and transition services. . Transition practices should develop as many opportunities as possible for each student/youth to come into contact with a transition professional and look for other environments where transitioning youth can be found. For example, transitioning youth, regardless of their level of involvement or enrolment status at school, will eventually seek medical attention. Mr. Easterly stated that according to research, medical professionals are sometimes approached about transition issues. Unfortunately, the trend among medical professionals is that their knowledge about transition practices is extremely limited. He suggested that medical professionals receive more training into what is the transition process and the issues contained therein.

Mr. Easterly said that a successful transition plan is one that is driven by the person with a disability and is flexible, individualized and focused on achieving a good, meaningful job, not just any job. Transition funding should move towards a model where money is allocated per person, following the individual through his/her transition journey.

Mary Kyriazopoulou, Project Manager for the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, spoke about projects undertaken to assess how best to support students with special educational needs and their transition to the labour market. Ms. Kyriazopoulou explained that problems experienced by youth in transition include:

- Lack of data or comparable data;
- High percentage drop out;
- Low level access to employment, including relevant education and training leading to employment;
- Poor enforcement of existing education; and

- Low expectations and discriminatory attitudes.

Factors positively contributing to a “healthy” transition are:

- Flexible policies
- Co-ordination of sectors and services
- Student involvement

The importance of the young person’s participation and choice were emphasized. Successful transitions require close co-operation between school officials, and worker representatives and the labour market. To make transitions successful the process needs to be structurally supported by national policies and legislation.

Key points from discussion:

- Transition programmes need to be adequately funded. Examples were given from the U.S. where the transition service system for persons with disabilities is overburdened and under-financed. In Alabama, for example, an individual transition professional’s workload can be 400 people.
- Success in supporting young persons with disabilities to enter the labour market takes place when discussions and support start at an early age. Persons with disabilities should have a choice and control in the process.
- Other important factors for transition include ongoing family and peer support, financial support to the individual and coordination and flexibility of policies and services.

B) Disability Pensions: is there a benefit trap?

André Gubbels, Director General, Service Public Fédéral Sécurité Sociale, Belgium, addressed the reasons behind the rise globally in the proportion of the working population receiving disability benefits. He explained that the employment rate of people with disabilities has declined globally over the past 30 years. These trends are influenced by factors such as changes in the nature of work, economic cycles, reforms in other social protection schemes, and expansion of eligibility criteria to claim disability benefits. Trends in health, he said, do not directly explain the patterns.

Mr. Gubbels argued that because disability benefit systems usually force persons with disabilities to choose between work and benefits, this results in entrenched stereotypes about persons with disabilities as being incapable, therefore, written off, which creates benefit traps. Attempts to reform this sort of system through “sticks,” such as tightening eligibility rules, reducing payments and introducing mutual obligation requirements and “carrots,” such as “making work pay” / financial incentives, allowing partial or reduced benefits, and incentives for work trials, show no evidence of significant success.

Specifically, these approaches tend not to be appropriate for those with clear pre-existing barriers, who need immediate support, and who are not ready for benefit conditionality. They mainly increase entry into work for people who are job ready; people with moderate and severe disabilities are written off. Furthermore, people are no better off, and sometimes actually are in a more precarious situation, when they quit the rolls to take on low-paid jobs. Mr. Gubbels argued the way in which most systems are organised around a “gatekeeper” concept, which attempts to limit eligibility and assumes people will abuse the system, is not good for persons with disabilities and probably is not cost effective anyway.

From this experience Mr. Gubbels argued for a shift to an enabling system which focuses on support needs and brokering -- connecting people to resources and services. Key features of such a system would include participatory expectations for all, work expectations for many, and access to comprehensive, integrated services that support community participation and employment. Operating principles should include accessibility, equity, adequacy, portability, and responsiveness and consumer control.

Dinah Cohen outlined Federal programmes to help persons with disabilities into employment. The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), co-sponsored by the Departments of Labor and Defense, applies to a wide range of occupations in Federal agencies. The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) covers the cost of accommodations for all WRP students participating in any Federal agency. She explained the features of Ticket to Work which is a voluntary program providing social security beneficiaries with disabilities with a coupon to obtain employment-support services from an approved provider of their choice. Ms. Cohen also explained that there is a complicated range of disability benefits, other benefits, programmes and rules which intersect and sit alongside one another. The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA) aims to help navigate disability benefits and employment. The system has a long range of complex features including Medicaid and Medicare and employer-sponsored healthcare coverage.

Key points in discussion:

- The privatisation of sheltered and supported employment is reducing active choices of people with disabilities concerned: private companies are compensated monetarily to get people into jobs. This leads to a situation where it is irrelevant whether the work is high quality or whether the person can or wants to do the job.
- The respective social values determine our systems: is income security a gift or is it a right?
- Inflexibility hampers change: for example, where persons with disabilities lose medical coverage or similar services if they move off disability benefits, or experience long waits to regain access to disability benefits in future, they will be reluctant to take the risk of moving into employment.

Session 4: Measuring Employment of Persons with Disabilities

The session was chaired by Johan ten Geuzendam, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Head of Unit for Integration of People with Disabilities and was divided into two themed panels.

A) Measuring Evolution of Employment of Persons with Disabilities: Labour Force Survey

Susan Parker, Policy Development Director, Office of Disability Employment Policy, DOL, presented an analysis of the data obtained from the U.S. Community Population Survey (CPS). In June 2008 questions were added for the first time to the CPS to identify persons with disabilities. The six questions in the CPS are the same as the questions currently in the American Community Survey.

The data showed a demographic shift in the population and that disability increases by age. The employment/population ratio is 18.4 percent for people with disabilities compared to 64.1 percent for persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate is 16.2 percent for people with disabilities compared to 9.2 percent for persons without disabilities.

In each educational category the differential in employment rates between persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities is over 40 percent. For recipients with Bachelors degrees or higher, 76.2 percent of those with no disability were in employment compared to 29.4 percent of individuals with a disability.

Data also reveal the connection between occupational category and disability status. In four out of six categories the proportions of persons with and without disabilities are very nearly equal. In the professional, management, business and financial occupational sectors the proportion of people without disabilities is higher.

The figures also allow consideration of those people with disabilities, who are marginally attached to the labour market (for example, those who want to work, are available for work, looked for work, or worked sometime in the prior 12 months, but are not currently looking for work) and those who state that they do not want to work. Data of part-time and full-time status and on median weekly earnings, by disability status and sex are also collected, and demonstrate that a pay gap exists between persons with and without disabilities.

Howard Meltzer, Professor of Mental Health and Disability, Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester, spoke on trends on approaches to the measurement of employment of persons with disabilities. Mr. Meltzer explained that there is an increasing trend toward supporting the collection of data on persons with disabilities, similar toward support for collecting disaggregated data on other characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and age. This allows comparisons to be drawn between the experience of persons with and without disabilities.

However, there are no adequate international standardised measures of the economic activity of persons with disabilities, and these measures are difficult to develop because of a lack of universal definition of disability and how it should be measured. Thus, whilst there are standard measurements for economic activity, in contrast the meaning and measurement of disability is not so straightforward.

In surveys there are three general ways of measuring disability and much depends on resources and the complexity of the survey:

- A general question about limiting impact on daily activities;
- Asking a short module of questions about impact on basic or complex activities followed by an examination of the relationship between these measures and topic of survey (e.g. employment, housing, finances); and
- A survey with disability as its primary focus– hundreds of questions exploring many domains and contingencies.

Mr. Meltzer explained that comparability within and across surveys is ideal. Over the past 15 years, there have been successive European initiatives to achieve standardised statistics on disability and employment seeking to enable country comparisons:

- Questions on health, activity limitations in the European Household Panel Survey (EHPS);
- Minimum European Health Module in Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey (SILC);
- Disability module on the 2002 Labour Force Survey (LFS);
- Disability module on the 2011 Labour Force Survey (LFS);
- Limitation questions in particular disability domains in the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS); and
- Disability as a barrier to employment in the European Disability and Social Integration Module (EDSIM).

The EDSIM survey is a specific module on disability and social integration developed by Eurostat with cooperation of DG Employment. It is a result of a push to incorporate the social model approach to disability in statistical analysis, and differs from the other surveys. It starts with identifying the barriers persons with disabilities face, asking questions on difficulty in accessing buildings, social participation, transport, etc. It is being piloted in a few countries and is intended to be implemented EU-wide in 2012.

Mr. Meltzer explained that the constraints on the systematic measurement of the employment of persons with disabilities include:

- The understanding of disability: examining whether it is medical, bio-psychosocial or social;
- The size of the module permitted in the survey: numbers of questions and variables;
- The survey design: cross sectional or longitudinal;
- Difficulty operationalising disability domains using simple, useful definitions, for example, mobility (walking), sensory (vision/hearing), and cognitive (learning).
- Constraint by sticking to what has been measured before.

There is a need for comparable data which, therefore, have:

- Coherence in content (what is asked);
- Coherence in structure (how questions are asked);
- Comprehensiveness (coverage of areas/domains);
- Comprehension (respondents understand);
- Operationalisability (ease of analysis);
- Portability (across surveys and countries); and
- Utility (for a whole range policy makers)

Key points in discussion

- The need for improved, consistent and comprehensive data on disability.
- The need for data specifically at the level of individual employers. In the U.S. this is only available in the Federal sector. It is available for public and private sectors in countries with a quota system.
- Articles 31 and 33 of the UN Convention make data very important for monitoring processes. Collecting statistics on disability, therefore, is an issue looming large for those countries that are ratifying. Next year the *World report on disability and rehabilitation* will be released by the World Health Organisation. The second chapter will present a methodology for data collection.
- It was noted that while terminology may differ between countries, the objective of placing responsibility for discrimination on society is the same. Specifically, the term “people with disabilities” has been established in Britain as placing the emphasis on the disabling barriers people face, while participants explained that in the U.S. the term “people with disabilities” is used, partly in an attempt to place the emphasis on the person and get away from demeaning language such as “the disabled.” The political correctness of terminology used in this area appears to be different between countries and languages, and it also changes over time.

B) International Work: OECD Report on Disability

Christopher Prinz, OECD, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Project Leader, Sickness & Disability and Work, considered the main trends across OECD countries in the employment of people with disabilities, the reasons behind them and some policy challenges for the future. Mr. Prinz explained that it is difficult to find comparable data across countries but that nevertheless, it is clear that across all OECD countries only about one in four people with a disability has a job. Unemployment is twice as high for people with a disability (data before economic crisis). People with disabilities have benefited less from economic growth. Overall employment trends make a difference, but where employment is rising generally, the increase is less for persons with disabilities and where falling, the drop is greater for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Prinz presented data to show that there has been a gradual increase in disability benefit recipients between 1980-2007. The EU and U.S. average rate is similar (at the start of the period the EU average was higher). This reflects a medicalisation of labour market problems, with a shift towards disability benefits becoming the major employment related benefit. Mr. Prinz questioned what was driving this development. He said that the intensity and complexity of work has increased, with more people reporting longer hours worked. He believed that it also reflects policy developments: people trying to access unemployment benefits have more requirements to face, and early retirement is being phased out so therefore the disability benefit has become a benefit of last resort in many OECD countries.

Mr. Prinz said that the disability benefit system itself has a disabling effect on people who have an otherwise productive work capacity. There is a need to better reconcile the potentially contradictory goals of disability policy, e.g. to provide income security in periods of work incapacity and help people stay in the labour market or return to it as quickly as possible. Components of necessary reform include activation oriented sickness and disability benefits, assessing capacity and not incapacity, strengthening individual responsibilities, making work pay, involving employers and medical professionals in reform initiatives, and providing the right services for the right people at the right time.

Mr. Prinz said that the rapidly increasing incidence of mental illness as a basis for filing disability claims is a particular challenge as benefit systems had never been designed to deal with mental

illness. Successful disability reform depended on good evidence on the need for reform, a comprehensive reform package, consensus on the reform proposal, and implementation of reform.

Christine Griffin, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, talked about improving the participation of persons with disabilities in the U.S. Federal workforce. Ms. Griffin explained that the U.S. Federal government, despite having good policies, is not employing persons with disabilities at an acceptable rate. She presented data showing that the proportion of people with disabilities in the workforce has been declining over the preceding 10 years and the latest data showed a rate of representation of less than one percent. She explained that although employment by the government grew by more than 12 percent in the last decade, 11.5 percent of all people with severe disabilities in government employment had likely left government. Ms. Griffin said that there has been a small improvement over the last year because of the new leadership now in each of these agencies. A goal has been set of two percent representation in employment across all agencies by end of year 2010. This is to be achieved by holding hiring managers accountable for meeting targets, ensuring managers receive training on their responsibilities, including how to implement reasonable accommodations, how to use available rules, such as Schedule A, to speed the hiring of qualified workers with disabilities, and allowing traditional recruitment channels to be by-passed for the purpose of recruiting only people with disabilities in some instances.

Key points of discussion:

- If eligibility for disability benefits is tightened but the barriers remain that persons with disabilities face, such as inaccessible workplaces and discrimination by employers, the lives of persons with disabilities are unlikely to be improved. It was therefore argued that the idea of having only one (unemployment) benefit is not fully thought through and should not be done just to make it hard for people to get disability benefits.
- Government departments and the public or state sector have a particular role to play in setting a good standard for employment of people with disabilities.
- If one intends to change access to, and the structure of, disability benefits, then one should consider the interactions with other benefits. For example, in the U.S. people lose health care benefits if they go off disability benefits.

Closing session: Conclusions and follow up

The closing session formed conclusions and identified areas for possible follow up, including plans for dissemination of the results. The session was chaired by **Susan Parker**, Policy Development Director, Office of Disability Employment Policy, DOL.

Belinda Pyke, Director DG EMPL, spoke about the impact of the economic crisis on persons with disabilities. She said that the economic downturn has had an impact on the employment situation of people with disabilities. However, pre-existing targeted policies and legal rights may create a cushioning effect on the employment of persons with disabilities in the initial stages. Many persons with disabilities are also working in sheltered workshops. At the same time, those with disabilities seeking to enter the labour market are facing many challenges. Some of the employment sectors that have been badly affected are ones where many people with disabilities are employed. Restraint on public spending may also have lowered the priority given to assisting persons with disabilities looking for work and to disability training amongst staff, and impact on persons with disabilities who benefit from publicly funded/subsidised employment initiatives.

On a European level it is estimated that only 16 percent of working persons with disabilities receive some assistance to work while 44 percent of persons with disabilities seeking employment believe they could work if they were given adequate assistance. A promising concept to increase employment of people with disabilities is supported employment which provides personal assistance and workplace adaptations for disabled individuals in open paid employment.

The European Commission is launching a study comparing different supported employment approaches in Europe and giving examples on how successful schemes work. The increase in open (competitive) paid employment for persons with disabilities must stay our main goal. Anything else will fall short of our goal to create a more inclusive society. She included in her remarks the fact that the EU itself needed to do a better job of recruiting, hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. Enforcement is an issue and Ms. Pyke explained that the equality commissions in different countries report budgetary pressures. Agreement is being sought for a Directive to ban discrimination, *inter alia*, on disability outside of the labour market. One issue that arises concerns the definition of disability which is not harmonised in the EU. The UN Convention definition, which is “open” meaning that it refers to groups that are included but it does not identify all groups exhaustively, may be used. Ms. Pyke noted that ratification and implementation of the Convention is moving forward in Member States.

The Seminar’s content would be drawn upon in developing the new European Disability Strategy and in implementing the UN Convention.

Kathleen Martinez, said that the UN Convention heralds a new era. In relation to employment it means that states will have to find a way to measure employment of persons with disabilities. She expressed confidence in the commitment of the new Administration to increasing employment for people with disabilities and to President Obama’s priority of bringing people with disabilities into his Administration.

The seminar had provided those attending with information to help with steps forward. In going forward we must use the media to broadcast our work. The UN Convention needs to be used to raise the expectation bar, including bringing national laws and regulations up to the UN standard. In the

next few years she believed our priorities should include tracking and improving the numbers of people with disabilities hired, retained, measured by length of service and grade.

Secondly, we need to put equal focus to track results on the supply (the talented people with disabilities) and demand (employers) sides. In the United States some private sector companies had understood the business case for equality and had a good record on employing people with disabilities and this could be learned from.

Key points from discussion:

- Good examples from different countries, for example, the use of quota systems, case law precedents, and the sharing of best practices, have been alluded to and need to be gathered up for us to learn from.
- EU and U.S. federal institutions have similar poor records in recruiting and maintaining persons with disabilities in employment. Government bodies need to practice what they preach.
- Data collection still has to be improved in order to formulate and measure the implementation of policy.
- The use of the UN Convention in international development work should be considered and perhaps discussed in a future meeting.

Recommendations

Policy and legislation on employment and disability

- To continue to promote ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- To monitor and review the implementation of the UN Convention to ensure it leads to appropriate national legislation and policy-making.
- To consider or review implementation of the EU Directive on equal treatment in employment, which is coming to the end of its first decade, and to consider and suggest ways to improve compliance.
- To work to ensure the Lisbon strategy for Growth and Jobs and its further development and implementation are explicitly understood to support the employment of persons with disabilities.
- To continue to promote the meaning, legal requirements of, and case for, reasonable accommodation to employers in both public and private sectors.
- To make use of the strong case for the proposed EU Directive to ban discrimination on disability outside of the labour market, noting that the need for such a Directive, especially on access to goods and services, came up frequently during the seminar.
- To use as the definition of disability the so-called “Open definition” as presented in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- To draw on the findings of the seminar in developing the new European Disability Strategy and assisting with implementing the UN Convention.
- To gather together and learn from the effective practice examples referenced from different countries, for example, the use of quota systems, legal cases, emerging technology, and reasonable accommodations.
- To work to ensure that rights are effectively enforced and therefore to monitor the impact of budgetary pressures on statutory equality bodies¹ with an aim of preventing a deterioration of monitoring and enforcement effectiveness and their consequent negative impact on people with disabilities.
- To consider how the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities can be utilised in international development work, such as is required by Article 32, and to discuss this in a future meeting.
- To encourage employment programmes, including quota schemes, to be implemented in a way that improves the employment experience of persons with disabilities and to avoid employers being able to use fines as an alternative to meeting quota requirements and/or tackling discrimination.

¹ A publicly financed body independent from governmental and non-governmental intervention providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints about discrimination, conducting independent surveys concerning discrimination and publish independent reports and make recommendations on any issue relating to discrimination. They are link to the implementation of some EU antidiscrimination legislation.

Information Communications Technology and Assistive Technology in employment

- To spread awareness of the effectiveness of Assistive Technology in enabling persons with disabilities to take up sustained education and employment.
- To encourage measures to lower the cost technology to the individual.
- To encourage mainstream ICT systems to be developed so as to be compatible and accessible and to continue efforts for international harmonisation of ICT accessibility standards.
- To encourage awareness of provisions such as Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act, which states, for example, that whenever a federal agency wants to procure a product, that agency now has to make sure the product is accessible. Also section 255 of the Telecommunications Act (1996) was identified as useful.

Transitions from education to employment

- To encourage research to improve understanding of how to support certain groups of persons with disabilities, such as people with learning disabilities, in order to address lack of awareness and discrimination by employers.
- To encourage awareness of the fact that programmes to support young people transitioning from education into employment or assisting persons with disabilities to enter employment more generally are likely to be most successful when they are adequately resourced, ensuring the individual has choice, control and ongoing support.
- The EU Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is launching a study comparing different supported employment approaches in Europe and giving examples on how successful schemes work. This is to take into account the concerns raised during the seminar about the negative impact of changes in sheltered and supported employment on persons with disabilities, for example via the role of private sector brokers with insufficient attention to the wishes and support needs of persons with disabilities.
- To ensure that increasing the participation in open paid employment for persons with disabilities remains our main goal. Anything else will fall short of our goal to create a more inclusive society.
- To encourage adequate levels of support for individuals with disabilities to enter and retain desired and well remunerated employment.
- To develop the case for “enabler” benefit systems and discourage changes in benefit systems that risk making the income and poverty levels of persons with disabilities worse.

Measuring Employment of persons with disabilities

- To encourage the collection of data that are consistent across countries, comprehensive, detailed and standardised respecting the employment profile of persons with disabilities, including employers' data, so that patterns between and among states can be measured, thus more useful to monitor policy implementation required by the UN Convention.
- To track the number of people with disabilities hired, retained, measured by length of service and grade of employment.
- In research, monitoring and implementation of policy through placement of equal focus on supply and demand, that is, on the talent side (people with disabilities) and the employer's side.
- To encourage governments to “practice what they preach” by increasing the numbers of workers with disabilities employed in government and other public employment.