



**PANEL DISCUSSION ON
ADDRESSING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

25 March 2013 (14:30 – 17:30)
San Francisco Convention Centre, Quito
Salón Landáburo, level -2

Concept note

According to the first ever World Report on Disability, produced jointly by the World Health Organization and the World Bank in 2011, the number of children aged 0–14 years experiencing disability is estimated at 95 million, with 13 million children experiencing severe difficulties.

In spite of their disability, most of these children are victims of some form of inequality. They face obstacles in terms of access to education, health care in general and rehabilitation and reintegration in society. For some children, their disability means being stigmatized and excluded. In low-income countries, the situation is even more worrying: scarce resources make it impossible to meet the special needs of these children given the number of other daily challenges to be faced. This is compounded by the fact that poverty is a constant risk factor for illness and disease that can lead to disability.

Some proposed measures are inappropriate and tend to be a source of additional difficulty for these children, who are often left to their own devices and placed in institutions. The lack of adequate counselling and care is detrimental to their mental and psychological well-being.

All of these may be considered violations of the rights of children with disabilities as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), and the more recent Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Disability - often the result of a number of factors, many related to the social environment - should not be a cause of discrimination and exclusion. Children with disabilities should be able to enjoy their rights to the full and have their dignity respected.

Meaningful action involving all stakeholders, in particular parliamentarians, must be taken in accordance with the instruments and mechanisms governing the rights of children with disabilities. Such action should result in the provision of better care and assistance to these children and should include ensuring equal opportunities for them and their rehabilitation and integration into their community.

It is against this backdrop that the panel discussion will take place during the 128th IPU Assembly in Quito.

UN experts, parliamentarians and Civil society representatives will seek to:

- Sensitize MPs to the situation of children with disabilities and their families;
- Make MPs aware of the contribution they can make by exchanging good practices on:
 - Putting in place appropriate legislation – based on existing standards and mechanisms – to promote the rights of children with disabilities;
 - Allocating adequate resources for the formulation of related policy and the implementation of related programmes;
 - Sensitizing the public to disability with a view to changing their perceptions about children with disabilities;
 - Following up the implementation of national plans of action; and
 - Advocating for not placing children with disabilities in institutions and for the establishment of independent monitoring bodies.