



International
Labour
Organization

Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2014–17



Gender,
Equality
and Diversity
Branch

Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2014–17

**A twin-track approach of mainstreaming
and disability-specific actions**

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Introduction

This strategy and its action plan guide the ILO's efforts towards becoming an organization that is truly inclusive of women and men with disabilities. They cover the full spectrum of the ILO's work, including its internal practices, and build on reform results to work more effectively as 'ONE ILO'. They apply to the current and following biennia, i.e. 2014-15 and 2016-17, build on existing initiatives and follow up on the Governing Body's endorsement of the ILO's work to promote disability inclusion (GB.316/POL/2, as amended).

To achieve fully the ILO's mission of contributing to peace, prosperity and progress by advancing the creation of decent work opportunities for *all women and men*, it is important to effectively and systematically include women and men with disabilities. Of the one billion persons with disabilities globally – that is, 15 per cent of the world population¹ - at least 785 million are of working age.

Disability inclusion

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 support and reasonable accommodation so that they can fully participate.

Where reliable statistics are available, these show that the unemployment rates of persons with disabilities are higher and, more significantly, their labour market participation rates are well below those of non-disabled people, as persons with disabilities are often not even looking for a job.² This exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market represents a significant waste of potential, resulting in an estimated loss of GDP of between 3 and 7 per cent.³ The World Social Protection Report 2014-2015 highlights the fact that many countries have an insufficient coverage of persons with disabilities in their social protection programmes and that, where provisions are made, these often do not support their participation in the labour market.⁴

1 WHO, World Bank (2011) World Report on Disability

2 OECD (2010) *Sickness, disability and work: Breaking the barriers: A synthesis of findings across OECD countries*

3 ILO (2009) *The price of exclusion: the economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work*; Employment working paper No. 43

4 ILO (2014), *World Social Protection Report: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice, 2014/15*

The ILO has a longstanding commitment to promoting social justice for people with disabilities, dating back to the 1920s. Highlights in the ILO work promoting equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the world of work through all its means of action, are the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) and the Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace of 2001.

With the major international policy shift to a human rights-based approach to disability, there is a far greater emphasis on promoting disability inclusion and tackling discrimination faced by people with disabilities. This shift was marked by the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006, which, among other provisions, promotes fundamental principles and rights at work and social protection. The emphasis on non-discrimination as a cross-cutting theme

Disability Inclusion
The ILO Governing Body

- (a) welcomed 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 requested the Director-General to report back as deemed appropriate by the tripartite screening group;
- (b) supported 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.

Document GB.316/POL/2, paragraph 35, as amended by the Governing Body, Geneva, November 2012

in the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008 reinforces this new perspective on disability. These developments lead to a greater focus than in the past on people with disabilities accessing the general labour market and employment-related programmes and services. This is also reflected in the increasing demand for the ILO's expertise on disability inclusion in a wide range of areas, including skills development, employment promotion, social protection and non-discrimination.

As a human rights as well as a development issue, disability inclusion requires a cross-cutting approach throughout all ILO activities and means of action. Without this, the goal of decent and productive work for all women and men everywhere cannot be achieved. This will be of particular relevance in the implementation of the post-2015 Development Framework, which will require increased attention to persons with disabilities by all stakeholders.

As a cross-cutting theme, disability inclusion will contribute to the achievement of the ILO's four strategic objectives set in the 2010-15 Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) and their corresponding 19 Outcomes and the Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs) linked to these as well as to the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). Disability inclusion is also of relevance to all the Areas of Critical Importance (ACIs) and has to form a core part of the new transitional strategic framework to be developed for 2016-17.

The strategy and action plan take account of the views of ILO managers and staff, gathered through consultations with relevant departments at ILO Headquarters and a questionnaire survey of ILO field offices (see Annex), as well as the findings of the Disability Inclusion Initiative (DII) benchmarking and evaluation reports of 2009 and 2012 and the results of the 2014 ILO staff survey on disability inclusion. It builds on the accessibility improvements made in the HQ building since 2001 and on the DII pilot-tested in the Employment Sector from 2009.

Disability Inclusion Strategy 2014–17

The strategy is guided by the following principles:

- Non-discrimination
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility
- Respect for disability as part of human diversity
- Gender equality
- Involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations.

The strategy sets out to achieve six distinct, interconnected and mutually complementary results which are supported by effective internal and external communication measures.

A twin-track approach is adopted to achieve these results with disability issues being included in ILO activities and means of action, including internal practices, and at the same time disability-specific actions being promoted as necessary to address situations of particular disadvantage. The measures and actions to achieve the results are outlined in the *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2014-17* which forms the second part of this document.

1. Enhanced promotion of international standards relevant to persons with disabilities

In the framework of international standards, the ILO promotes equality of opportunity and equal treatment for women and men with disabilities as well as non-discrimination on the basis of disability. While all ILO standards apply to persons with disabilities, those of most relevance are the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), along with the CRPD, adopted in 2006.

The strategy aims to enhance the application of these international standards to persons with disabilities by seeking to ensure that disability considerations are taken into account in activities throughout the ILO's work on monitoring and implementing international labour standards. This includes in particular initiatives related to fundamental principles and rights at work, the work of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards. A further aim is to strengthen the link between the work of the ILO and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in reviewing reports of States Parties to the CRPD.

2. Disability perspective reflected in all programming and reporting

The strategy aims to make disability issues visible throughout the full spectrum of the ILO means of action. An important element of this is the explicit reference to disability in ILO programming, including in current ACIs, as well as in the outcome areas, cross-cutting themes and governance outcomes proposed for the transitional strategic framework envisioned for 2016-17, including the Centenary Initiatives, and the future programming arrangements for the period 2018-21.

Towards the ILO Centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment

It is ... incumbent on the ILO to embark on its second century with an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable in the world of work: to those in or close to poverty or in danger of falling into poverty; to those working in conditions of abuse and denial of their fundamental rights; to those excluded from society and decent work opportunities; to those whose work threatens their human dignity and physical and moral integrity; and those who live in fear of the future for lack of access to vital social services and protection. If reaching those people is hard and addressing their needs harder still, that is all the more reason for the ILO to redouble its efforts to meet its responsibilities to them.

Extract from the International Labour Conference 2013 Director-General's Report 1A, Para 147

The strategy seeks to ensure that reports to the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference effectively reflect disability issues, thus contributing to the visibility of disability in the ILO decision making bodies. At national level, the strategy aims to encourage explicit prioritization of activities to improve the livelihoods of women and men with disabilities in DWCPs and CPOs.

3. Increased attention to people with disabilities in ILO's work with constituents and in its technical cooperation

Due to its tripartite structure, the ILO is particularly well placed to address the increasing requests for technical advice and capacity building relating to disability issues in the world of work in a way that recognizes the important roles of different stakeholders in the process of promoting decent employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities. The strategy aims to promote consideration of disability issues in both general and specific policy and legal advice and capacity building provided for government ministries, employers' and workers' organizations as well as civil society organizations. The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) serves as an example of a successful initiative in raising disability awareness among employers' organizations, with the involvement of international Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs).

Technical cooperation (TC) programmes and projects form an important ILO means of action, at national level, regionally and globally. However, people with disabilities are at this stage included explicitly in only a relatively small number of projects and programmes. The strategy aims to encourage, and where necessary, support the effective inclusion of men and women with disabilities among the target beneficiaries of ILO mainstream technical cooperation activities, building on experience to date.

Wherever possible, this will be complemented by TC projects focused exclusively on persons with disabilities as ultimate beneficiaries, aiming to promote their inclusion in the mainstream of society by tackling particular disadvantages they face.

An important element of the strategy is thus guidance on disability issues in the form of sensitization and capacity building for constituents, as well as ILO programme and project staff. Sensitization using a participative approach will be arranged upon request through Disability Equality Training (DET), drawing on the existing network of ILO DET facilitators.

4. Disability-inclusive ILO internal practices promoted

In the framework of the ILO policy on the employment of persons with disabilities, adopted in 2005, and the establishment of the Reasonable Accommodation reserve in 2009, as well as the work undertaken in recent years to improve the accessibility of ILO headquarters and field offices, the strategy involves making ILO internal practices more inclusive of women and men with disabilities. Particular attention is paid to the recruitment, hiring and retention of employees with disabilities. In addition, the strategy supports the continuing improvement of the physical accessibility of ILO premises, as well as the accessibility of all ILO proceedings, websites, publications and reports. Special attention will also be given to delegates with disabilities attending the sessions of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, who will be offered disability-related support as required.

5. Strengthened knowledge base

Much evidence already exists on what works to promote decent and productive work effectively for women and men with disabilities. A central part of the strategy is to make this information easily accessible through extending and updating the Disability Inclusion Knowledge Sharing Platform based on the PLONE system that systematizes and links the knowledge available. A focus is also placed on identifying knowledge gaps and addressing these through research and compilation of information on good practice.

Particular attention is paid to areas of emerging interest to the ILO, linked to the ACIs and the Centenary Initiatives. Examples include good practice in promoting the employment of youth with disabilities, inclusion of persons with disabilities in national Social Protection Floor initiatives and the impact of multiple discrimination on employment opportunities. The strategy also promotes the development of reliable, comparable statistics on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities, relevant to shaping disability employment policy, programmes and services. Moreover, opportunities are sought to undertake collaborative research and develop joint publications with other departments to ensure that disability considerations are reflected in an increasing number of ILO publications.

6. Strengthened strategic cooperation within the UN system

The ILO has been partnering with other UN entities in the area of disability inclusion for many years. Two current examples of multilateral cooperation that have strengthened the ILO's impact in promoting equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are the Inter-Agency Support Group to the CRPD (IASG) and the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). Not surprisingly, the ILO is a founding member of both of these important partnerships.

Disability and development

We, the Heads of State and Government, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 September 2013 to reaffirm our resolve to work together for disability-inclusive development and the commitment of the international community to the advancement of the rights of all persons with disabilities, which is deeply rooted in the goals of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Extract from the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on Disability and Development (A/68/L.1), New York, September 2013.

To enable the ILO to continue to be a leading player in all relevant global processes affecting the employment of women and men with disabilities, in particular the post-2015 Development Framework, the strategy involves further fostering its partnership with other UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations, with a focus on areas of particular strategic importance to the ILO's mandate. This could be achieved, for example, through the establishment of an ILO-led Global Partnership on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, aiming to address the need for a stronger knowledge base on inclusive employment. At the same time, such a partnership could draw attention to the importance of promoting equal employment opportunities and adequate social protection coverage for persons with disabilities by bringing together the key stakeholders relevant in this area.

Implementing the Strategy

Effective implementation of the strategy will be enhanced by the following elements:

- High level commitment, starting with the ILO Director General and the Senior Management Team, followed by directors and managers in headquarters and in the field;
- Strong endorsement by ILO tripartite constituents;
- Adequate allocation of human and financial resources to facilitate disability inclusion in the work of relevant departments and field offices.

Effective communication is pivotal to increasing the profile of disability issues within the ILO and among its constituents, international organizations, other stakeholders and the general public. The strategy supports the continuing use of both internal and external communication channels, including social media networks, to raise the visibility of the ILO's efforts in disability inclusion among audiences within and outside the organization.

To further increase the level of attention to disability issues in the on-going work of the ILO, a network of disability champions among ILO staff in headquarters and the field is proposed, to be agreed with directors and managers throughout the Office. The disability champions, whose role should be acknowledged adequately by their managers also through the performance appraisal process, would be fostered and supported to acquire the adequate level of disability-knowledge and technical capacity.

The Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch (GED), which includes the Disability Inclusion and Equality Group, has primary responsibility for promoting and monitoring the implementation of the strategy and for producing the corresponding reports. Collaboration is proposed in particular with the existing network of regional gender specialists. The actual implementation of the strategy will require the commitment of all ILO headquarters departments as well as the field offices.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process is proposed through reviews to be commissioned in late 2015 and 2017.

**Disability Inclusion
Action Plan 2014-17**



Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>1. Enhanced promotion of international standards relevant to persons with disabilities</p>	<p>Number of references in ILO CEACR reports to persons with disabilities or disability as a prohibited ground of discrimination (2013: 54)</p> <p>Number of CRPD Committee recommendations focusing on training, employment and social protection of persons with disabilities that are in line with recommendations of the ILO supervisory mechanism (2013: 4)</p>	<p>2014-15: 70 2016-17: 90</p> <p>2014-15: 18 2016-17: 20</p>	<p>Publication to promote coherence and synergies between the CEACR work related to ILO Conventions No. 111 and No. 159 and the CRPD</p> <p>Publication on reasonable accommodation covering persons with disabilities and other groups of workers</p> <p>Mainstream International Labour Standards promotion activities (ratification, implementation) include persons with disabilities</p> <p>Assessment of the impact and relevance of ILO standards with respect to the effective promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular in light of recent developments, including the adoption of the CRPD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NORMES • FPRW • GED

Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>2. Disability perspective reflected in all programming and reporting</p>	<p>Number of references to disability in the outcome areas, cross-cutting themes and governance outcomes of the transitional strategic framework 2016-17. (Explicit disability indicator falls under Outcome 2 “skills development” in 2010-15 SPF)</p> <p>% of reports to the GB and ILC that effectively reflect disabilities issues (2013: 31)</p> <p>% of DWCPs that explicitly mention persons with disabilities in priority or outcome statements. (48% of 61 draft or final DWCPs in April 2012)</p> <p>% of 2014-15 CPOs explicitly mentioning disability issues (2012-13: 3.6)</p>	<p>1 outcome</p> <p>1 cross-cutting policy driver</p> <p>2014-15: 40</p> <p>2016-17: 50</p> <p>2014-15: 60</p> <p>2016-17: 75</p> <p>2014-15: 5</p> <p>2016-17: 8</p>	<p>Engagement with and support to ACI teams regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities</p> <p>Involvement with PROGRAM and outcome area teams in relation to the transitional strategic framework 2016-17, including Centenary Initiatives</p> <p>Promote the inclusion of disability considerations in all relevant reports to the GB and the ILC, by reviewing draft GB and ILC reports and provide technical support on disability inclusion as required</p> <p>Engagement with and support to field offices regarding future DWCPs and CPOs, as well as reporting on implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROGRAM • Field offices • ACI teams • Outcome areas teams • Centenary initiative teams • GED

Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>3. Increased attention to people with disabilities in ILO's work with constituents and in its technical cooperation</p>	<p>Number of governments introducing legal and policy changes to support disability inclusion with ILO support (2012-13: 3)</p> <p>Number of ILO general technical cooperation projects and programmes that explicitly target persons with disabilities (2013: 20)</p> <p>Number and type of initiatives undertaken with workers' organizations (None)</p> <p>Number of ILO GBDN meetings and awareness raising trainings held for active and potential company members, and employers' organizations (2012-13: 5)</p> <p>Number of active company GBDN members (2013: 23)</p>	<p>2014-15: 5</p> <p>2016-17: 8</p> <p>2014-15: 25</p> <p>2016-17: 35</p> <p>2014-15: 5</p> <p>2016-17: 15</p> <p>2014-15: 17</p> <p>2016-17: 19</p> <p>2014-15: 25</p> <p>2016-17: 40</p>	<p>Conduct capacity building courses on labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities, at national level, regionally at ITC Turin, including in collaboration with on-going TC projects</p> <p>Provide technical advice to ILO constituents, on request, on the training, employment and social protection of persons with disabilities</p> <p>Provide advice and training to field offices, on request, on how to include people with disabilities in their work</p> <p>Updated version of TC disability inclusion guidance prepared and available on PARDEV website</p> <p>PARDEV Technical Cooperation Manual revised to include reference to the inclusion of persons with disabilities</p> <p>Review of ILO TC projects from disability perspective</p> <p>Advice provided on project design and implementation, on request</p> <p>Sensitization and capacity building provided on request to TC programme and project staff, and included in relevant training courses.</p> <p>Disability Equality Training provided to constituents and /or field offices upon their request</p> <p>Continue to recruit new members and provide support to GBDN company members and employers' organizations through the secretariat based at ILO HQ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTRAV • ACT/EMP • GOVERNANCE (Labour Law and Reform) • Other HQ Technical Departments • PARDEV • Field offices • ITC Turin • ILO GBDN • ILO/Irish Aid Partnership Programme – Disability • PARDEV • GED

Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>4. Disability-inclusive ILO internal practices promoted</p>	<p>Number of measures improving implementation of the ILO Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (No baseline)</p> <p>ILO HQ building renovation complies with accessibility standards (No baseline)</p> <p>Number/% of internal reports and external publications and reports that meet accessibility standards. (None)</p> <p>% of content on ILO information websites that complies with the World Wide Web Consortium standards level A (No baseline)</p>	<p>2014-15: 2</p> <p>2016-17: 6</p> <p>2016-17: Southern part of main building accessible</p> <p>2014-15: 5 GED and GBDN publications in accessible PDF</p> <p>2016-17: 100% of GED and GBDN publications in accessible PDF</p> <p>2014-15: 50</p> <p>2016-17: 70</p>	<p>Actions taken to improve the ILO Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, resulting from the 2014 ILO staff survey on disability inclusion</p> <p>INTSERV (Facilities Management) continues action to improve accessibility of HQ and field offices</p> <p>INTSERV reviews emergency evacuation procedures from a disability perspective and makes changes as required</p> <p>INTSERV staff sensitized on disability requirements in collaboration with GED, as required</p> <p>RELMEETINGS (OFFDOC) takes action to increase accessibility of internal reports</p> <p>PRODOC takes action to increase accessibility of ILO official publications</p> <p>RELMEETINGS (MMU) takes action to arrange meetings that foresee specific needs for people with disabilities</p> <p>DCOMM takes action to improve the accessibility of the ILO websites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDG/MR • HRD • INTSERV • RELMEETINGS • DCOMM • GED

Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>5. Strengthened knowledge base</p>	<p>Number of active users of ILO Knowledge Sharing Platform (PLONE) on disability inclusion (2013: 145)</p> <p>Number of new publications and tools focused on persons with disabilities or including adequate attention to persons with disabilities (2013: 11)</p>	<p>2014-15: 250 2016-17: 400</p> <p>2014-15: 14 2016-17: 18</p>	<p>ILO Knowledge Sharing Platform (PLONE) on disability inclusion updated, extended and maintained</p> <p>Knowledge gaps identified and publications and tools to address these gaps undertaken, in collaboration, where appropriate, with other Departments</p> <p>Preparing disability-focused contributions to upcoming mainstream ILO publications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDG/P • ACT/EMP • ACTRAV • RESEARCH • Statistics • GED

Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>6. Strengthened strategic cooperation within the UN system</p>	<p>% of UNPRPD-funded projects at country level and globally that involve ILO field offices or HQ. (2012-13: 64)</p> <p>Number of post-2015 development targets or indicators that include reference to persons with disabilities in areas related to the ILO mandate. (None)</p>	<p>2014-15: 40 2016-17: 50</p> <p>2014-15: 2</p>	<p>Lead and reinforce UN system wide work on the Employment of People with Disabilities, linked to the post-2015 Development Agenda</p> <p>Participate actively in UN inter-agency meetings concerning the implementation of the CRPD</p> <p>Collaborate in initiatives of other UN agencies, linked to ILO mandate.</p> <p>Participate in the Policy Board and Management Committee of the UNPRPD</p> <p>Provide technical advice to ILO country offices participating in joint UN agency projects funded by the UNPRPD</p> <p>Engage actively in discussions regarding indicators and targets for the post-2015 Development Framework, including in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Support Group for the CRPD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York office • ACT/EMP, ACTRAV (Global Partnership on the Employment of People with Disabilities) • Field offices • PARDEV • GED

Results	Indicators (Baselines)	Targets	Indicative activities	Key partners
<p>Communicating internally and externally</p>	<p>% of ILO staff taking ILO on-line course on persons with disabilities. (None)</p> <p>Number of disability champions in HQ and field offices (None)</p> <p>Number of visitors to and downloads from ILO disability inclusion website (2013: 8,740 visitors; 11,581 downloads)</p> <p>Number of reports on disability issues and ILO disability activities on ILO general websites and social media channels. (2013: 39)</p>	<p>2014-15: 5 2016-17: 15</p> <p>2014-15: 30 2016-17: 50</p> <p>2014-15: 20'000 visitors 20'000 downloads 2016-17: 30,000 visitors 30,000 downloads</p> <p>2014-15: 50 2016-17: 70</p>	<p>Online training course on persons with disabilities available to all staff and managers</p> <p>Tailor-made training and advice to ILO staff and constituents, upon request</p> <p>Maintenance of the disability section of the ILO website</p> <p>Strategic use of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and other mainstream events to promote ILO messages on decent work for people with disabilities</p> <p>Support provided to disability champions to enable them to acquire disability-related knowledge and technical capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCOMM • HRD • INFOTEC • ITC Turin • GED

Annex: Questionnaire survey of ILO field offices on the proposed disability inclusion strategy

Summary of Findings

Introduction

To take stock of the extent to which ILO field offices were currently catering to women and men with disabilities in their on-going activities, and to assess corresponding support needs in the field, 48 ILO offices were invited to take part in a questionnaire survey conducted in November and December 2013. 25 offices responded – 52 per cent of those invited, providing valuable feedback from Regional Offices, Country Offices and Decent Work Teams.

Geographical distribution of responses

Africa: 7
CO-Abuja, CO-Algiers, CO-Antananarivo, CO-Harare,
CO-Lusaka, DWT/CO-Cairo, DWT/CO-Pretoria

Arab States: 1
RO-Arab States

Asia: 7
CO-Beijing, CO-Dhaka, CO-Hanoi, CO-Jakarta,
CO-Kathmandu, DWT/CO-New Delhi, ILO-Tokyo

Europe and Central Asia: 7
DWT/CO-Budapest, DWT/CO-Moscow, ILO-Ankara,
ILO-Brussels, ILO-Lisbon, ILO-Paris, ILO-Rome

Americas: 3
DWT/CO-Port-of-Spain, DWT/CO-San José, DWT/
CO-Santiago

Current and future work on disability inclusion

19 of the responding offices (76%) confirmed that they were undertaking on-going work on disability issues to varying degrees at the time of the survey and felt that it was important continuing to include women and men with disabilities in their work during the 2014-15 biennium. Activities mentioned included the revision of legislation, the compilation of national good practices in employing persons with disabilities and the inclusion of people with disabilities in vocational training programmes.

In addition to disability-specific activities, 17 of the field offices (68% of those that took part) said they are planning to feature disability issues in general conferences and seminars over the next two years. Further, 8 offices (32%) acknowledged the need for improved statistics on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities and are planning to compile an evidence base on disabled persons, as part of their data collection. As lack of appropriate high-quality data related to disability was regarded by ILO staff as one of the major barriers to disability inclusion in the 2010 and 2012 DII assessment reports, the efforts in the field to improve statistics will be exceptionally valuable. Also, 8 field offices intend to increase the capacity of staff to take women and men with disabilities into account in their work by including a module on disability inclusion in future training courses conducted by the respective offices.

Importance of increased human and financial resources

22 of the participating offices (88%) stressed the pivotal importance of personal contact with disability specialists to enable them to make disability inclusion a standard approach in their work. As there are currently no specialists on disability inclusion in field offices or in Decent Work Teams (DWTs), with the exception of national project coordinators and a regional programme coordinator under a current technical cooperation programme, the field offices tend to contact the ILO Disability Inclusion and Equality Group of the Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch (GED) at headquarters.

At the same time, field offices call for a substantial increase of locally available human and financial resources exclusively dedicated to the inclusion of women and men with disabilities.

Support and services required

Among the more specific services and supports the field offices felt would advance their ability to take women and men with disabilities in their activities into account, training courses (76%), email-based advice (72%), practical guides and checklists (72%) as well as online courses and knowledge banks (64%) were the ones most often referred to. Other support services the field offices saw as essential include regular updates on disability issues, availability of disability inclusion tools in local languages, and support in drafting their own disability action plan.

The provision of adequate support requested by field offices – in particular, the development of tools, regular updates on information with regard to disability inclusion and individualized technical backstopping – will clearly require allocation of sufficient resources to the ILO's work on the inclusion of women and men with disabilities.

These survey results corroborate the findings of the two previous Disability Inclusion Initiative assessments, namely those of the 2010 benchmarking report of the DII and the corresponding evaluation of 2012, which pointed out that lack of specialists in the field as well as limited funds hamper the effective inclusion of people with disabilities in the work of the ILO.