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DISABILITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

BARI, ITALY 15-16 SEPTEMBER 2007

SEPTEMBER 15

OPENING GREETINGS

Francesco Colizzi President AIFO

I welcome and greet the speakers and all the people present at this extraordinary event of Bari's annual Levant Fair. Bari is a town, which for its history and geography, has represented and will represent a bridge between East and West, North and South and today it is and it will be in future a selected place of work and a permanent seat.

This will allow us to meet each year in the same setting, involving Associations of people with disability, NGOs that work in the southern part of the world- such as AIFO-the Local administrations - present here today and represented in the Town Council and in the Region of Puglia -, representatives of the Italian Government, of the European Union, of the Arabian League and many other exponents of the work that has been carried out from a long time in the Mediterranean basin. Such wide involvement is needed and essential, so that today's and tomorrow's work becomes common conscience.

Giampiero Griffo Member of the World Council DPI

Good morning, I would like to bring you the greetings of 650 millions of people with disability, who live in the world and who celebrated this year the utmost achievement of their rights. The United Nations, in fact, have approved the "Convention on the Rights of Disability People". This convention has started its ratification process on the 30th of March of this year. In this occasion we want to increase the attention of the Agencies of the rich Nations of the EU towards persons with disabilities. These people live for 80% in the poorest Countries, and therefore result to be the poorest people in the world. There are very few resources assigned to the development cooperation in these countries and article 32 of the Convention, which talks about inclusion, refers exactly to these countries. You have to consider also that, in this process of cultural modification, which started with the Convention, disability is not an isolated situation, the World Health Organization declares that the condition of disability is and will be a common condition of the human race. 420 million people live in the Mediterranean area and 10% of them are persons with disabilities. DPI is present in 142 Countries in the world, but in this area an area called "Arabian Region" has been created, because we are convinced that the identities and the cultures must be supported and that they will build bridges on their own. The more bridges we'll build, the more there'll be a Mediterranean area of peace, equity, participation and development.

I am aware that the world of politics is also made by us; there is no distinction when there is an ability to create involvement, dialogue and proposals. I am sure that in this room all the supports needed are present, as we hoped for about three months ago when we started, to make this dream become reality today with the presence of all the Institutions that have been involved and with our goodwill.

We hope that this is the first stone of a process that leads to something solid. We wish that politicians will grasp this signal. We will surely go on with the NGOs and disabled peoples' organizations (hereinafter DPOs) to build this inclusive and participative world, where each one has the citizenship which his dignity deserves and can contribute in the development and welfare of society.

Susi Mazzei Councillor of Social Politics, of the Municipality of Bari, delegated by **Michele Emiliano** Mayor of Bari

I bring the greetings of Michele Emiliano and his and my determination, responsibility and engagement to make Bari an accessible city, so that it may become a town from where these bridges start from. We were asked to make a deep cultural and administrative change. I thus reconfirm the Mayor's determination to collaborate with the associations, the disabled people and with all of you, so that Bari can be a starting point to build the bridges we are talking about.

Cosimo Lacirignola Chairman, Fiera del Levante

[The beginning of the seminar was delayed due to the absence of a ramp to give access to the podium]

This morning I wanted to welcome you in an adequate way but my good intentions were hindered by little and big material problems and I would like to apologise. While greeting you I realised, once again, that the physical characteristics of the territory prevent us from being equal but I will personally see to it that for next year these obstacles, that hindered your simple access today, will be removed.

I founded a non-profit organisation, "Levant Philanthropy"; its aim is to alleviate the need of our society thanks to solidarity tickets, helping those that suffer, breaking down a series of limits. My engagement is the engagement of him who has inherited a glorious 75 years old institution and hopes that when you return to the Fair many of these obstacles that hindered you today won't exist anymore.

INTRODUCTION TO WORK

Francesca Ortali Project Manager AIFO

The project, which made this initiative possible, is called "Mainstreaming Disability in development cooperation", that is to insert disability in the world of cooperation, in the politics that create cooperation and in the design of projects. The project was carried out by 12 NGOs and persons with disabilities (DPI Italy and France) from Europe. AIFO, Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (Italian Association friends of Raoul Follereau's) and DPI Italy are the Associations which carried out this project in Italy.

I would like to share a few considerations with you, on the why of this Convention and its background.

Why here at the Levant Fair?

The meaning of mainstreaming, as I said before, is to fit the disability issue transversally in every section of public and private life, more in particular we have to put disability and everything connected to it in the cooperation towards development. The Levant Fair, with its long history, has an old tradition of cooperation and economical and social collaboration mostly in the Mediterranean area. Therefore there is no better place than this one to gather companies and Public Institutions that have no interest in or concern with disability in order to start a process of mainstreaming. All the organizers and the persons involved agreed that this could be a good gamble. In fact the Public Authorities immediately understood its value, the Region with the councillors of the social policies and Mediterranean area were enthusiastic, the Municipality of Bari actively cooperated and the Management of the Levant Fair accepted the challenge... as I would like to call it, because that's what I think it is: a real challenge.

Why this theme: the Mediterranean area and its numerous opportunities?

We all know about the problems and the resources in this area; about the great sufferings and good practices existing in this area. We all know the strong bond that unites the Mediterranean countries. After the signature of the UN Convention on the human rights of the disabled people, we think that it is an important opportunity to build a common method of sharing processes that will lead consequently to the ratification by the Governments. We think that exchanging experiences is useful both to the public and private sectors in order to carry on a process in which all those who

share the same interest are involved. Last but not least, the Region Puglia, that has always had a special attention for the Mediterranean area, for the geographic, historic and cultural reasons we all know.

Why this division in workshop and round tables?

The workshops are divided according to the main themes regarding the individual as a person, not as a person with disability, but as a human being having different needs. These themes summarise the human dimension. We think that sharing good practices coming from all over the Mediterranean area, from Egypt and Lebanon, from Bosnia and Kosovo, and from all other Countries present here, represents numerous opportunities for the implementation of the Convention. However, we should reflect on the most important variable, namely the need of persons with disability to be informed and educated. According to me this issue immediately asks for discussion. I want to quote passage from a small book by Martha Nussbaum, a law and ethics teacher at the University of Chicago, who together with Amartya Sen, has analysed some sensitive themes, approaching them from the point of view of abilities and opportunities: "More than anyone else they have been deprived of information and education, necessary, even if not enough, to make their choices become a trustful indicator for the aims that should be achieved by Public Policies. Often they were persuaded to think that a lower level of life is what is right and more suitable for them on a social level, and that some important human rights, (such as education and political participation), do not regard them at all"¹. What is our duty, the duty of everyone, of the private citizen, of the NGOs that work in cooperation, of the Organizations of persons with disability, of Local and Regional Institutions, of the National Governments to make this process of education and information possible?

I sincerely hope that this Meeting represents the first opportunity of exchange and sharing on these themes.

GOOD PRACTICES OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

WORKSHOP: HEALTH, QUALIFICATION AND REHABILITATION

Moderator: **Alaa Sebeh** Save the Children, Egypt

Today I feel so happy to promote again this collaboration among the countries of the Mediterranean region, which started way back in time. You may be more advanced in certain techniques while we may have different approaches that have often proved to be more efficient when applied to the developing countries in the field of health, qualification and rehabilitation, which is this first workshop's topic. The aim is to share ideas on best approaches and models in order to provide a guide for future collaborations in the Mediterranean region.

Mervat Maher SETI Centre, Egypt

On behalf of Caritas Egypt and the Alexandria Center, it is my honour to be here with you and give a small presentation on the Alexandria Community Based Rehabilitation (hereinafter CBR) project and the cooperation with the Ministry of Health in Alexandria.

The Ministry of Health and Population's services is divided in two main sections: preventive services, including immunization, Mother and Child Health (hereinafter MCH) centres and the health education and the curative services involving centres, private clinics and hospitals.

In 1993 CARITAS Egypt in Alexandria, represented in SETI centre, signed a cooperative protocol with the Ministry of Health in Alexandria represented in MCH centres to add new services for rehabilitation of disabilities.

¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Social justice and human dignity"

The reason as to why we chose to collaborate with the MCH Centres to implement Community Based Rehabilitation project is due to a number of reasons: they serve a wide scale of persons at low socio-economic level in rural and sub rural areas, they take care of mothers from pregnancy to delivery, of child from birth until school age and because they provide services of immunization and health education. I wish to highlight that all these services are free.

MCH centres are the best places for awareness programs, to control prenatal, perinatal and childhood causes of disabilities as well as early detection of disabilities and also early interventions.

We developed relationships with the Ministry of Health in Alexandria through

- Personal meetings with responsible people in the ministry of health in Alex. To present the actual CBR services done in various MCH Centers .
- Monthly reports from the technical team in MCH Centers themselves to health responsible people
- Monthly invitation to all health responsible to attend the monthly meeting for technical team which is organized by CBR department in SETI – Center

Periodic invitation to all health responsible to attend various conferences organized by the CBR department as well as attendance to annual celebrations of competitive activities and other festivals. So they are involved in all CBR activities and problems, also meeting with the head of health of education department in the Ministry of Health in Alexandria to be involved in awareness programs of disabilities in their health educational plan.

Following the division of local Health Authority in Alexandria, we have CBR projects in the regions of Karmouz, Kabari (west); Hadara (middle); Smouha, Bucchos (east); Mandara and Amrawi (Montaza area). As of today, we do not cover the areas of Gomrok and Amria. An important achievement I wish to highlight is the good level of cooperation reached at both vertical and horizontal level between health centres in Alexandria. Thank you.

Perla Amodio Interuniversity Centre of Research for Sustainable Development CIRPS – “La Sapienza” University, Rome.

Good morning to all of you, I would immediately like to tell you how happy CIRPS is to participate in this event. CIRPS is the Interuniversity Centre for the Research of Sustainable Development of the “La Sapienza” University of Rome and it is a partner of DPI Italy in many projects that regard International Cooperation. CIRPS’s new experiences are: project “ NEBAME “- a training programme of mobility and exchange of experiences between administrators and experts of the Italian Local Institutions on the one hand and the Balkans and the Mediterranean area on the other, finalised to obtain a high level training of the Balkan administrators in order to create a network of common knowledge and a more efficient cooperation; the project “Saharawi” – set of initiatives and activities based on the Convention and on the rights of persons with disability: one of these activities has been to give knowledge on disability issues, to guarantee the participation of persons with disabilities in the “SAHARA-MARATON”. Another activity started a dialogue between Associations and institutions of disabled persons present on the territory, in order to create a DPO and the presentation of a project, to product photovoltaic devices for finding water, entrusted to the families of people with disability to create empowerment. Lastly, CIRPS is working together with DPI on the European Project “EU4ALL”, which intends to implement a life long access to education and training for everybody, most of all in the ITC (computer science) sector to guarantee employment in the future. The project sustains the concept of accessibility to ITC: technologies must relate with and guarantee support and accessibility to the various modalities of consultation and functionality, existence of infrastructural support to offer equal didactic and educational opportunities. To achieve this it is necessary to create a single informatics system together with an accessible environment and an instrument that validates this system as to influence and modify the international method of learning.

Stefania Lauri Project Manager OVCI

OVCI carried out a project in Morocco that started from a reflection on the abandonment of children with disabilities. Next, we tried to activate a project that prevented child abandonment and developed a sustainable system to promote the socio/educational integration of disabled children. But we needed a language that was close to their way of life, so that the needs that came from the population could be understood by the National Organization. In fact, working at various levels, the OVCI noticed that when facing the problems related to disability the local administrative and educational activities are distant from real life activities, due to a language that is remote and disconnected from real life, so there is a problem of comprehension.

I would like to present the project by means of audio-visual support which tells the story of a child, Brahim, and how his life and that of his family has changed from the moment in which the project supported by OVCI was activated. The activities carried out by this project are illustrated through the eyes of this child.

(projection of video)

Halit Ferizi HandiKOS, Pristina, Kosovo

It is a pleasure to be here with you today and to thank the organizers of this important meeting. The opportunity to meet each other and to exchange experiences through this bridge of communication and that disability has become a human diversity and recognized as a human diversity that will move us and push us towards global peace and human rights as a new model for world development. At a young age in 1974 I was involved in a car accident which left me with a spine injury, after having received wrong information after ten years I didn't know who I was or what had happened to me, so I decided in 1983 to create my own organization of persons with disability and nucleus of persons that work together. In Kosovo at that time there was a political, social and economical crisis, following the United Nations mission in Kosovo, we wanted to know how we could be part of this mission, and how we would be taken into consideration of their instruments, such as conventions and human rights instruments. After a round table discussion it was decided to create a Task Force on disability with the objective of creating a common framework that can serve for the policy makers to include the needs of persons with disability and in 2001 we produced an important document on the framework of disability issues. This important document was used to create better conditions and inclusion for persons with disability and recognition of their human rights and accessibility. The main aim of this task force was to have an important political involvement. It took almost five years for the government to accept this policy framework. The aim was to create a strong association and make our voice heard. Even though there are strong machines that create important documents they are not able to put pressure on the member states. A brief introduction of my organization: it a non-governmental organization, established in 1983, our aim is to fight for human rights and their promotion. The network is made up of 26 offices in different municipalities , and 12 community-based rehabilitation centres, many services like transport and capacity building and training and diffuses information from house to house, family to family and person to person and self-help support (this presentation is being supported by images).

WORKSHOP : LIVING IN AUTONOMY / EMPLOYMENT

Moderator: Enzo Martinelli Leonard Cheshire International (LCI), England

The organization I represent is based in England; it is one of the biggest English NGOs, accredited in Europe and is supported by a network of 250 organizations working on disability in 50 countries oif the world; not necessarily in developing countries. In fact there is a presence also in Europe and Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Portugal, Malta, Greece and Cyprus. On the European scenario, Leonard Cheshire International is part of the International Disability and

Development Consortium (IDDC), like AIFO, and within that consortium we created a working group dedicated to economic issues linked to disability. In particular, together with Handicap International and other NGOs, we presented a study on best practices on access to micro-finance.

Anne Leymat Inclusion Unit – Handicap International, Lyon

I work for Handicap International, present in more than 60 countries all over the world. In the Mediterranean area we have more than 7 programs in North Africa, Middle East and South East Europe. In this occasion I will present results of the study titled *“Good Practices for the Economic Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Developing Countries - Funding Mechanisms for Self-Employment”*².

As you know, poverty is a cause of disability due to the poor or lack of adequate access to services that may prevent some impairments and is a consequence since persons with disabilities often lack access to education and income generating activities leading to the denial of their human, economic and social rights. More than 82% of persons with disabilities in the world live with less than 2 dollars per day. Like the rest of the population in DC, most persons with disabilities turn to self employment because of lack of other opportunities in the job market. Such premises brought us to concentrate on the requirements for successful self-employment.

Main factors include personal attitude, self confidence as well as specific know-how to develop sustainable micro-enterprises. However, as all micro-entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities need to have start up capitals and access to financial services and through this study we could observe that linking persons with disabilities in developing countries to funding mechanisms.

It's true that persons with disabilities are underrepresented among the clients of microfinance institutions. While it is estimated that persons with disabilities constitute an average between 10-12% of the population, microfinance organizations report an average from 0 to 0.5% of persons with disability among their clients. We identified different kinds of challenges or barriers: the first could be linked directly to the person in terms of self exclusion from the services (lack of self-esteem, motivation, know-how) while another aspect could be the expectations from persons with disabilities and their families to constantly receive charity. Such attitude is not compatible with sustainable micro-finance institutions (hereinafter MFI) which would naturally lead to exclusion. Other aspects include external barriers much more in link with environmental where the person is involved. This can be related to factors such as stigma, prejudices and architectural barriers. I am now going to analyse such barriers.

Attitudes and prejudice in the society, especially among the staff of MFI, clearly highlights the need for personnel training to increase experience in estimating/evaluating the persons' resources and also to distinguish between the real and the perceived credit risk when it comes to a person with disability. Another reason could be the financial product design so the credit methodology utilized by MFI such as group methodology, weekly repayment, compulsory savings or credit history, might hinder persons with disabilities from participating. Another reason is the lack of accessibility both in terms of physical environment as well as access to info and communication.

There are different methodologies to limit such barriers. The first is inclusion in mainstreamed services raising of awareness, building the bridge between the MFI and the disability movement in order to know each other's constraints, establishing developing partnerships. The global idea is that persons with disabilities who have the capacity to manage the business, who have a good business plan and can comply with the MF providers are able to access financial services and this kind of approach is much more sustainable and cost efficient in terms of implementation. Another idea is to do a simple kind of adaptation, simple so that it will not hinder the sustainability of the MFI for instance in terms of financial product design, location of the group meeting or to reduce the size of the group. The study identifies different advantages from establishing partnerships between

² http://www.handicap-international.org.uk/page_133.php

MFI and. In fact each organization focuses on providing its core services which is what they know best: DPOs will provide social work, self confidence building, peer counseling whereas MFI will provide financial services thus promoting m services instead of separate ones.

The second approach we identified is provision of funding mechanisms through credits and grants by DPOs themselves, which we found to be very common on the field. We find it less effective and sustainable than inclusion in mainstream institution as it targets only persons with disabilities. However it is interesting to notice that there is much more adaptation in terms of financial product design such as lower interest rates, longer repayment terms, longer grace periods. Some projects have been very successful, especially in reaching the poorest segments of society. This approach is quite interesting as it allows to reach the very poor people, especially in the rural areas where MFI are not much present.

Concluding, I would like to mention that persons with disabilities, as any other entrepreneur, demonstrate that they are willing and able to manage business and credits successfully and the most successful strategy would be to work towards an inclusive society while empowering persons with disabilities.

Enrico Azzone CTM Lecce

CTM is one of the few organisations from the Region of Puglia engaged in international cooperation. CTM activities cover various projects and various countries. We have been working for many years in Lebanon, since 2005 we have launched three projects concerning disability and the overcoming of barriers: two of them deal with vocational training of people with physical disabilities and involve local partners. The aim is to make the territory autonomous implementing the cooperation's activities as an instrument for the future. The local partner associations are managed by two women with disabilities and this is very significant because I would like to remind you that the Lebanese women suffer a double discrimination – being women and disabled. The aim of the project is to create training for people with disabilities that answers the demand of the local labour market, building 6 vocational training centres offering handcraft activities to produce on scale models and thus guarantee them a space on the export market. I would also like to remind you that in Lebanon the Law n° 220 of 2000 obliges public and private companies to employ disabled people, i.e. 3% of their human resources should be represented by persons with disabilities. The most important thing for whichever activity, including the CTM's, is the diffusion of information among persons, information regarding their human rights including development, equal access and treatment and getting rid of the charity approach.

Obviously political and public awareness are still lacking and we need awareness raising campaigns to draw the attention of the public on the issue of disability. I'd like to give special attention to information which evidently goes together with the supply of services; to avoid that people with disability continue to live in marginalised conditions and to make them aware of their rights and duties equal to all other citizens.

All activities should be part of the whole society. Besides the technical activity of the NGOs, we need governmental actions that direct the collective resources towards a full accessibility of the rights to employment, to health, to live in an inclusive environment, to education. Lastly I'm proud to tell you that of the 35 emergency projects financed by the Italian government ours was the only project that regarded the rights of the people with disabilities. I was immediately asked for a business plan of the physical therapy and rehabilitation centres and of the possible economic development; this is to show that the financier always tends to intervene within the frame of economic productivity. Of course there will be productivity but only after overcoming the accessibility obstacles in favour of everyone, not only the people with disability.

Gordana Ilić UMRL – Association for the Assistance to Persons with Mental Disability, Banja Luka - Bosnia

Good morning, it is an honour for me and my organization to be present here today and to be involved in this project. I am representative of an organization that deals with intellectual disabilities and try to coordinate their livelihood in our community. Considering that during the 60s to the 90s we did not know anything about the third sector and non governmental sector, for us that started this development only in the 2000, the process needed lots of learning and managing skills and adapting. At the very beginning in 2001 in order to implement these activities we created a database as a prerequisite for future steps in our activities. Ever since then when we created the database we started implementing projects and the legal system and creating strategies to facilitate the projects that created self sustainable activities in the community. In this NGO we realized that it was not possible to make radical changes, that is why our main aim was to create a partnership with the local government and the local community and the municipality. After 5 years and after our initiative, the city of Banja Luka received a beacon award that gives them a special status for the municipality who started to develop projects in the governmental sector. Considering that we contributed significantly to this award, the city issued a certificate of recognition which was considered also an accomplishment also for us, for our activities. I will start with our main activity and the services that we started implementing, a project on a day care centre for persons with mental disabilities. According to our database it was established that there were 386 categorized disabilities in all age groups but after ulterior studies it was found that they were even more than 700 that live in Banja Luka. The so-called PAC projects in partnership with the local communities we decided to request funds for a day care centre. Our main goal was offer day care to all beneficiaries (this presentation is using visual support – power point).

The true partnership resulted in between the local municipality, the local community and our organization and we signed an agreement in 2001 and it became a joint service. We would like to create a partnership with the Ministry of Education to promote didactical material as an instrument in education for the inclusion of persons with intellectual disability. If we look at the 22 standard rules , the first one is the development of awareness and consciousness. If we work in these services we will never be afraid to become old or disabled.

WORKSHOP : SOCIAL ISSUES

Jahda Abou Khalil AODP Lebanon

I thank the organizers for giving me this opportunity. I am the general director of an Arab organization and I am also the editor of a magazine in the sector. My presentation is based on a research I have done. Studies on disability issues are very few and on disabled women almost non-existent. I carried out this research on 21 women with disability in 7 Arab countries. The objective is to highlight the areas of oppression and the condition of women with disability compared to women with disability in the rest of the world. The aim is to diffuse information on the potentialities of these women. We started with women writers who depicted the conditions of women with disabilities and how activist women view them. The 21 women came from Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Bahrain Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. 12 of these women suffered from physical disabilities. Some stories of empowerment of some of the women involved in the research. Last year we organized a conference of Women with Disability in which 200 women with disability took part from different Arab countries.

Alaa Sebeh Save the Children, Egypt

The new approach to development cooperation is eventually moving towards the understanding that social barriers are fundamental issue the respect of the rights of persons with disabilities entails also the designing the rehabilitation process by themselves where the role of professionals is to clarify, explain and educate, if this is the right word to use.

In this framework, training is a very important tool to bring about a social change empowering persons with disabilities and creating an enabling environment for inclusion and Human Rights.

In many's opinion, including mine, Community Based Rehabilitation (hereinafter CBR) represents the best approach to be implemented in any disability program as it includes different components. The new CBR guidelines are about to be published by the World Health Organization and they will eventually cast the light on what it really is, which is far from the perception that it consists of simplified technology, not up to professional standards. This presentation will certainly not be enough but I'm inviting those of you who are against this approach to read more, to go to the WHO website and to try to get a better understanding.

CBR proved to be very efficient, particularly for developing countries, as it can reach around 70% of persons with disabilities and fulfill most of their needs without any kind of specialized institution or services. We can thus divide all services in three levels:

- Community level: educational, social, religious, health services can be mobilized and used. All the existing personnel working at the community level as well as persons with disabilities and families can be involved to empower themselves and to create self help groups. All this kind of work could be done at community level with very minimal support from highly specialized professionals.
- Specialized professionals: they are in the mid level, performing different roles in supporting training education, follow up and back-up of the work done at community level. For instance, they know the technology, simplify it and support those who are working at community level. Their contribution is pivotal in reaching the final objective of enabling the person to go back to his/her community and family. Percentage of persons which need highly specialized services is no more than 25%.
- High level professionals: 5% of the disability population really need highly specialized services, not available at community level. This is where professionals should have direct intervention and support to create national specialized services.

It is also important to pinpoint that much work can happen at both community level and national level, where to advocate for national legislation policies and resource allocation through the sharing of opinion of persons with disability themselves.

Training in CBR is provided at multiple levels: things that the person *must* learn, that *should* learn and that *would be good* to learn. I wish to present to you some examples of good practices: in Egypt one of the major project implemented by the World Bank and supported by Save the Children was the mainstreaming of disability services in all existing local levels such as libraries, primary schools informal education, all local activities. This meant that the donor, when designing the activity, would have had to consider the fact that 10% of the population has a disability and he has to target to reach this percentage if he is supporting education or library or whatever.

The donors represent an important component in the development framework and can play an innovative role, in supporting CBR management systems, by promoting inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in designing the whole project themselves. It is also important to support the role and the management skills of the referral system (such as hospitals, national health centers, n.d.r.), of which we have very good examples: CBR may not reach every person so when this occurs, he/she needs to have a reliable referral system. Although it has been designed for developing countries CBR is still very valid for developed and industrialized countries³.

Diana Indjov Youth with Disability in EC, Bulgaria

I am a person with disability and I am member of the Youth with Disability in EC Bulgaria. I started to work in the American Congress 10 years ago. Our organization follows the social model based

³ To know more about Community Based Rehabilitation please visit:
<http://www.aifo.it/english/resources/online/books/cbr/cbr.htm>

on human rights and ability of persons with disability and not the medical model based on limitations and inability. Almost 20 percent of the population are persons with disability but only about 10 percent are recognized as such by the government. Bulgaria is not developed enough to give support to persons with disability even because it went through many economic and political crisis. Moreover in Bulgaria disability is not linked to poverty. The World Bank on the other hand recognizes that disability is linked to poverty. Poverty causes lack of aides and medicines, let alone lack of accessibility which leads to genocide because these disabled persons, and political suicide, not even having their basic rights respected. Persons with disability after having went through a process of empowerment should be involved in the political changes and to do this they must have leadership positions and act on an international level. Women with disability are highly discriminated as are children. Very important is the right to education and changes in policies regarding education, understand special needs and special roles. Also important is environmental accessibility and accessibility to information (websites). There are many wonderful international documents such as the UN Convention but are they applicable?

Mervat Maher CBR projects in Egypt

The problem of disability in Egypt has certainly major economical, health and social harmful consequences. I would like to start with a very brief panoramic of the situation of disability in Alexandria: 75% of the disability population is represented by persons living with an intellectual disability. In numbers we are talking about 1.800.000 persons, only 2% of which are reached by services, around 36.000 persons. Services are quite limited in big cities, address only certain ages and mild disabilities. The quality level of services is low and they tend to guide to exclusion. We notices that the major lacks are linked to prevention and awareness programs, legislations, insufficient staff & personnel, effective approaches & program suitable to Egyptian community, early screening and intervention in addition to the negative attitudes of the society.

CARITAS, through the SETI Center, has started up CBR projects in Alexandria 14 years ago, where there are 7 domestics projects in various districts serving about 2543 persons with disabilities and their families. The Egyptian population is now estimated to have reached 70 million thus making the disability population a consistent element. With the awareness that only 2% of them see their essential needs addressed, it goes without saying that the kicking off of CBR projects became a pressing need.

CBR activities in Alexandria are organized in four phases:

1. involvement of staff working at Mother and Child Health (hereinafter MCH) centers for which an agreement exists between SETI & The Ministry of Health: as the MCH staff includes both doctors & paramedical personnel, changing of attitudes and the importance of parent and family involvement are key concepts for initial training; at the same time community awareness and involvement activities are carried out.
2. CBR trainers from SETI center together with MCH staff make contacts with the community leaders, persons with disabilities and their families: community volunteers are trained and home visits are organized, training the families in rehabilitation techniques are provided.
3. gradual transfer of responsibility to parents groups and CBR steering committees which would manage the continuation of activities with regular support from MCH staff.
4. last phase will be reached when the responsibility is completely transferred to the CBR committee and the MCH team and the CBR program belongs to them. Now 6 of C.B.R projects in Alex. Could reach the last phase.

Training activities serve different classes and adopt multiple methodology. Those activities include small scale training meetings, workshops, training courses. Such activities utilize both theoretical and practical methods and differ according to the disability-specific groups to be trained, including parents, volunteers, personnel at medical center, social workers and CBR friends. During the training session, various issues are tackled:

- CBR thinking , philosophy and particular strategies
- Family empowerment
- Advocacy program
- Methods of dealing with persons with disabilities
- Early detection and the importance of early intervention
- Public awareness
- How to formulate the psychomotor sessions.
- Behavior managements
- And other medical , social , cultural , subjects , which are needed by trainers

On a wider picture, single training sessions are flanked with general activities organized in all projects and they include:

- Early intervention sessions and classes
- Educational classes
- Pre-vocational and vocational classes
- Weekly clubs
- Sport activities
- Summer camps
- Competition activities (Award of excellence)
- Publication of 3 bulletins each year

In identifying difficulties faced in the implementation of the projects, there is the instability of volunteers staying at work, the need to increase the number of team members, the reduced capability of the few funding available to reach the periphery of the city and other governorates. Other difficulties derive from the lack of implementation of laws related to disability, the limited role of fathers in CBR activities (only about 1% are involved), the need for additional assistance where there is more than one person with disability in a family and the lack of centers taking care of severe and multiple disabilities. Overall there is the pressing need for increased community awareness.

On the other hand, we have been able to reach admirable results such as a sustained co-operation with the Ministries of Health, Social Affairs, Education, Youth and Sports and official religious organizations. At the end of 2003 we have established a CBR NGO where members are parents of persons with disabilities. Also, we consider the requests to our department of 3 different health centers to establish CBR projects an excellent result.

Thank you.

Antonio Ferraro Member Board of Directors AGENSPORT Lazio Region

Normally with motor intervention for disabled people, people mean talks, programmes and projects limited to the level of assistance. In Italy there are only few experiences that use sport as a tool that facilitates the achievement of certain objectives in the field of cooperation towards development.

As was also suggested by the UN, we should enforce the enormous social-educational power of sport activities for the growth of the whole society, to unite the Nations, and keep away war and horror. In 2006 at Turin, the International Group " Sport for Development and Peace", inaugurated by Kofi Annan's delegation, highlighted in its final report, among other key results, the close relationship between the promotion of sports and the attainment of the millennium's aims, identifying sport as one of the less expensive and more efficient instruments for their achievement.

I would like to tell you about the experience of many realities that represent the good practices of this new way of considering sport in decentralised cooperation projects involving persons with disabilities. Few examples:

- The IUSM, University of Physical Science of Rome offers a Master called “Education and integration of the social needs of the elderly people and disabled people: methodologies and techniques of assistance in the motorial and expressive activities“.
- “ Ultras Project “, by the UISP, (Sport for All Union), which has close contacts with the LISPED (Sports League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights) in Congo, with the aim of raising public awareness towards the struggle against any kind of discrimination.
- National and international initiatives of ANPIS, National Poli-Sportive Association for Social Integration. Their last initiative is the one of the “the train of crazy people“ to Peking, that has involved hundreds of “mad people“ (using the words of the President)“to cancel together kilometre after kilometre, the prejudices and discriminations against persons with mental disabilities“.
- The project of Agensport, “ COME2PLAY “, was carried out together with the Italian MFA. It took place in Ethiopia, where a joined delegation of DGCS / UTC and Agensport met the Italian Ambassador in Ethiopia, and the major Federal, Regional and Local Authorities, engaged in issues regarding youngsters and sports, with the University of Addis Abeba, International and Italian NGOs, UNICEF and the Ethiopic television. The Agensport delegation together with the NGOs CISP and COOPI and Addis Abeba’s Municipality identified land and spaces on which carry out of sportive initiatives for youngsters in need promoted by the Region of Lazio. From these meetings, the Agensport mission has had a general agreement, showing the fact that the Local Institutions are searching new ways to growth and emancipation of youths. The programme wants to be a pilot action model in the sport sector.

In the cultural paradigm we can identify different level strategies:

- 1) Using sport as a source of advantages in different areas, as individual development, as the promoter of gender equity, of health and prevention of illness, social integration, the development of social and economic capital.
- 2) Elaborate and apply a training model for young people to increase their physical and relationship development together with their social and working integration.
- 3) Recover, rehabilitate and build new sporting structures dedicated to the different age groups, depending on the context and characteristics of the project.
- 4) Study in depth the characteristics of the local labour market to create specific experts in the sport field and to identify ways of integration on the labour market.

Agensport’s activities focus on the children and teenagers of Addis Abeba and especially to those living in the streets with the general aim to give them a place of aggregation and shelter, where they can practice sport and play games. Learning and practicing sport is the main objective of this project because regularly practiced sports under a competent supervision, can contribute efficiently not only to the health of people, but promotes the development of characteristics such as the awareness of one’s body, the responsibility of oneself and the sensation of being able to count on oneself. Sport creates an environment where children, teenagers and young people learn those social skills that are the pre-condition for the development of the abilities necessary in social life, in a life full of self-determination and independence.

ROUND TABLE

APPLICATION OF THE CONVENTION: THE ROLE OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Vincenzo Divella President of Bari’s Province

The role of Local Institutions is, and will be, important in this field. As Institution, we have the duty to monitor, in the field of employment, the obligatory employment of disabled people. We should notice that the employment lists include indistinctly all people with disability, both civil as work disabilities. We are trying to increase scholastic integration, training more support teachers. At present, in collaboration with Bari’s Local Health service, we hope to transform some vocational

apprenticeships in real job contracts to employ 50 young persons. As regards the provincial transport we are glad to announce that the 29 new buses are all equipped with ramps, making transport of people with special needs accessible. I will see to it personally, as a representative of my administration, to engage the Province to collaborate in the realization of other projects to improve accessibility and equal treatment.

Salvatore Nocera Vice-President FISH

The approval of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities represented a further opportunity for consideration: up to day, we have fought for our rights; the UN Convention has opened our minds to the problems of the world, especially that part which lives facing greater difficulties where rights are seen as expectations and still pending.

From today's reflections we'll have material and instruments to modify the reality of the Local Institutions. We should remember the important event of decentralisation to which the Italian national law n.142 of 1990 on Local Institutions has contributed together with the law n.328 of 2000 on the decentralisation of the social laws, and the law on constitutional reform of 2001 which moved the centre of gravity of the decisional choices from the National Planning more and more towards the Regions and Local Institutions: for this reason the dialogue with the Associations and planning is important in order to respect the Convention through the method of International Cooperation, based not on an old colonial logic, but on a collaboration system of reciprocal knowledge and respect of the social and cultural climate. The Local Institutions can do a lot, in this direction, through the associations. The common aim remains the antidiscrimination of the persons with disabilities, respecting the religious and cultural identities of the people with whom one cooperates. I hope that the Italian Institutions want to make this, now irreversible, choice in the Italian culture and want to help Italian Organizations and Associations of persons with disabilities in full agreement with the Local Institutions, the Organizations and the Associations of Disabled people of the Countries with which they cooperate. I wish you will obtain good results from this Convention.

Gildo Baraldi General Chairman OICS – Interregional Observatory for the cooperation towards development

The Observatory is actually the common Agency of all the Regions, autonomous Italian Provinces for the Cooperation, and the chairman is, and I'm glad to say it in this occasion, the President of the Puglia Region. The decentralised Cooperation follows and fully shares the logic not of the rich nation's charity towards the poor Nation, but rather of a creation of an advantage partnership with mutual development, in which each Country puts on the table its good elements and offers them to achieve a reciprocal advantage. As we all know, the growth of the GDP, is important, but it doesn't guarantee development, of which base is always the full social inclusion, therefore I think it is important to celebrate the proclamation of the Convention, and I think its implementation is indispensable, we should make it real and not only "positive". I'd like to tell you an episode: the story of the Meeting with Giampiero Griffo. In that period he was working on a European project on the accessibility of the National Park of the Magdalena, in Sardinia. One of the project's activities was reconverting, or better, giving back the original accessibility to Garibaldi's house and all the space around it. It is known that Garibaldi, after being wounded on the Aspermont, needed and designed an accessible house, because he had become physically impaired. Since it was declared historical heritage, the house became inaccessible. Giampiero and his friends were capable of bringing back to its original state the space surrounding the house, but not the house itself: nothing could be done because it was part of the historical heritage, but we know, "historically not genuine". This story shows us two things: the first is that nobody has models to export, but we have the possibility to give create partnerships. The second is that the pacts of agreement to cooperate must be respected and concluded. I see that there are members of the Arabian world present today and we have to apologise because many years ago as OICS, a Region assigned us the task to develop a feasible dignified employment for disabled people in social companies. It

was a success and the Tunisian Government was so enthusiastic that it asked the Italian Government to be involved in extensive projects of cooperation in this field. The Italian Government said yes, but in the meantime the Regional Council had changed political colour and did not maintain the promise made by its predecessors. There is only one way to overcome this obstacle and that is to pass from cooperation, that is, and must also be governmental to cooperation with a very strong involvement of the whole civil society. Today's occasion can be a test for us all: not only should we give attention to disability as the "target" of cooperation, but also as the subject of cooperation.

Michele La Macchia President ANCI Puglia – National association of Italian municipalities

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. A proposal for the implementation of the Convention, could be to make the convention ours as Local Institutions. We'll it send to all the 7000 Municipalities associated to ANCI, asking them to insert it in the column of "fundamental Principles" of their Municipality statute, to draw practical inspiration from it and assumption of responsibility. Besides, as ANCI, we have been involved for many years in decentralised cooperation with European Countries and also with the Mediterranean Countries. I have brought with me the text of a Protocol written by ANCI and UNDESA (Department of the United Nations for Economical and Social Affairs), which offers the expertise of Italian Municipalities for the decentralization and social activities in the Mediterranean Countries in order to do training and organise decentralisation of local communities. At last, I believe and hope in a bigger European fund as to realise the aims of Associations as ANCI, because they are carriers of widespread interests. We are not talking about a one way activity, as if we export models or assistance, we see our activity as an exchange between equals of experience and of good practices. As our experience with some Albanian Municipalities where we identified anti-seismic rules. We need to start necessarily from the concept of inclusiveness, even in the International Cooperation. As ANCI we have to extend the participation to the NGOs and the Organisations that have been engaged for a long time in this field, also to learn from their experiences and give continuity to policies. At last ANCI Puglia has understood that the Mediterranean is an essential part of its development, and its fundamental aim will be the interlocution and exchange with the partners of this area, to increase a politic action aimed to make of cooperation in the Mediterranean an objective to increase its development and the hope of peace and development among the populations. We are willing to sign engagements with whoever wants to go in this direction: with DPI for an Intent Protocol, to urge the European Commission to see to it that the resources assigned to these activities fit the nice and too many words that have been said; to guarantee equality and coherence between ratification and feasible implementation of the Convention.

Francesco Colizzi AIFO President

What can we ask from the Local Institutions at this stage of Convention's life? First of all that they know the text and content; then, the diffusion and spreading at wide range of the same text and to inspire the administrative activities with the Principles decreed by the Convention. The Local Institutions can then lobby from the bottom, having become the carriers of the interest of all the people, to obtain from the government and parliament the implementation of the Convention in all Countries, and thus demanding a social, educational and cultural movement to raise awareness for the urgent need of its application.

Giampiero Griffo Member of the World Council DPI

Writing the Convention at the UN wasn't simple, but in spite of the limits of political pressure, it was approved. This makes us understand how the ONU of Governments can become the Organisation of People as well and that the civil society, if well organized, can overcome all the vetoes that pop up inevitably when you have to deal with the common problems of 191 Countries. We organised this Conference with AIFO and FISH because we are convinced that the ratification of the Convention, thanks to the concrete and real alliance with Local Administrations, has to find the

instruments so that civil society will take part in the process of inclusion. Important will be then, to monitor the situation with them, and evaluate the real application of the Convention. I'm sure that change will come with awareness. Our "Mainstreaming" project made a survey of the activities in Italy that dealt/deal with cooperation towards development including disability, and we think it is appropriate that this job is addressed to and carried out by a Public Administration. After that we need alliances, to diffuse the Convention's philosophy: it is not the disabled person that has to be rehabilitated, but it's the contiguous society that has to rehabilitate itself with a systematic organization.

CONCLUSIONS

Silvia Godelli Regional Councillor for the Mediterranean Area, Puglia Region

These data are eloquent: 10% of the population is represented by persons with disabilities and this percentage is bound to grow. Unfortunately there is something wrong with our society because it has developed the syndrome of "the removal of problems", a self damaging dimension, which sees the issue of disability as something belonging to someone else. If we broaden our view, from the point of view of a Region that wants to distinguish itself, and stand out for its territorial cooperation, we are faced with the problem of how to interact with the Partner Countries to achieve inclusion in full respect of the issue of the persons' Rights and not only of the regional, general, economic and energetic image which represents anyhow another side of those Rights. All our Administration's experiences are isolated phenomena and are not included in projects and if they are it is only marginally and this is a problem. I also noted another difficulty, namely the world of associations, when addressing Institutions regarding the field of cooperation it has problems to understand and to be understood. Cooperation means listening and afterwards talking. Furthermore, the Governments with whom we would like to cooperate doesn't show any intention to include disabled people, sometimes we face resistance or almost preclusive obstructionism. Therefore we must act cautiously in these fields to avoid further rejection phenomena.

Nevio Baruffi National Manager ANPIS (Sports Club National Association of Sports Clubs for Social Integration)

ANPIS is an Association with 2000 associates and about 80 Sporting Clubs. We are working in Europe, and at international level. The experience of the "Train Rome-Peking" gave a special attention to the activities for mental disability, psychiatric patients, mental health assistants, relatives and citizens, travelling to China as ambassador-testimonial of good practices taking along their message "together mental(ly) free". The train was the symbolic carrier of rights. We will present this project by means of visual supports.

SEPTEMBER 16

OPENING GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION

Francesco Colizzi President AIFO

The Convention has to become reality and the fact alone that 22 Countries of the Mediterranean Area promptly signed it shows the expectation of these people. We should all advocate it, possess it and claim it. Very important was the availability of the Local Administrations in this occasion. Little daily examples show us how difficult it is to transform rights in concrete reality, rights that seem to be acquired but they aren't because of our mental laziness. We take many realities for granted instead of giving them the necessary attention as the stimulus coming from associations or people in charge that continue to claim the apparently confirmed rights. The road towards the implementation of the UN convention will be long but we are convinced it will be a road of liberation, as Giampiero Griffo said.

Enzo Falabella, FISH Puglia

I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to attend this Event. Our objective is to claim powerfully the dignity, the independence, the cohesion and social inclusion of the people with disability. The rights are equal and for everyone. In Puglia we have lost ground and time, but only through the creation of a net-work of associations and Institutions from Puglia it is possible to achieve social inclusion. It is necessary that Puglia is present in this process to avoid these social barriers that still exist and to grow culturally. We'll continue in this direction in the future.

MANIFESTO: DISABILITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

Sunil Deepak scientific department AIFO

[Sunil Deepak presented the manifest " The Cooperation towards development and respect of human rights of persons with disability in Mediterranean Countries "- **ANNEX 1**].

The Manifesto is the concrete result of activities that started a long time ago. The text has been sent to all the speakers that have taken part in this meeting. Participation is fundamental to this important document because thanks to the participation it gets an open dimension always in evolution. The Manifesto is divided in two general parts: the first describes the situation, records, documents, Regional, National and International Conventions on the theme of disability and cooperation; the second part suggests a number of concrete actions that should be carried out.

ROUND TABLE

THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND THE RATIFICATION PROCESS

Giampiero Griffo Member of World Council DPI

The International Cooperation contributes to the application of the Convention and engages the NGOs to regard the theme of disability and mainstreaming.

The ratification is a process that foresees various passages and that article 4 beside the obligation of ratification, mentions the involvement of the organizations of people with disability. The first passage is the approval by the General Assembly of the U.N on the 13th December '06. The second passage is the signature from all the States. On the 30th March '07 Italy signed together with other 80 Countries and the EU thus starting the ratification procedure. Each Country, after examining its own codification, will include the text in its National Legislation. In Italy, the Italian Government will present a bill that will be discussed and approved by the Chambers: Minister Ferrero (*Italian Minister of Social Affairs*) was appointed as the person in charge of the Convention within the Italian Government.

Up till today, the number of the Countries that have signed is 102, the number of the Countries that have ratified it is 5. Which means, that we should arrive at 20 signatures - the suitable number according to the Convention- to become operative. On this basis a Conference of the States that have ratified the Convention will be summoned by the UN to elect a Committee of action and monitoring. If Italy will ratify, we'll have the possibility to propose a candidate.

Nichi Vendola President Puglia Region

I would like to launch an idea for next year's Levant Fair, namely organise an international event on the theme of disability involving the territory's key actors. The battle against social, physical disability, i.e. environmental barriers, against pretended disability and prejudices, is a battle that

has to spread over the territory, encouraging everybody's goodwill, words and attitude. The Puglia Region faced a discouraging fact, being the last as regards the investment in social issues. The territory is a desert if we look at the social-assistance services. There is a lot of rhetoric on the family theme, but the families living in certain difficult conditions, also economical, for example families with mentally disabled children feel abandoned and alone. Each family is imprisoned in its pain and in the desperate battle to assure and obtain some rights. We should think about the territory in a different way. Today the territory is a desert or a jungle whereas it should become social-ness, community and protection for the people. Today, there should be no public pity or charity at the centre of the social State, of the Welfare state, today, people want the dignity of their everyday choices. Try to read through the magnifying glass of a disabled person's body, the history of a city, and you will see the architectonic barriers, since our towns have been built on the alliance between land buying and selling and building. Therefore we should ask: is the demolition of the architectonic barriers a benefit to few or to all?

Civilisation is the reorganization of the city to fit the needs of everyone. The administrative and project activity "SACS" of the Puglia Region foresees the supply of computers to disabled people. I remember the difficulty we had in the past in providing computers to mentally disabled children: it was unimaginable for the Government of those days, we had to justify the possibility that a mentally disabled child could use a computer, which is a fundamental instrument in creating relationships. We were able to get the funds from a stressed Regional budget and financed these expenses. The idea that has guided the project "SACS" on the theme of disability is to hand the keys to the disabled people, to open a door that will them in the condition of having no more needs, of being independent and to have a total vision that gives the freedom of being protagonist of the participation in rights. The Region strongly feels this battle for the Convention, which does not want to be a humanitarian battle, another battle, but is the battle that gives back dignity to politics. This is the invitation for next year: we'll meet here, please involve us – as Region – to organise a big meeting and "invade" the Fair's spaces. This is the aspiration of the Puglia Region.

Raffaele Tangorra General Director DG inclusion and Social Rights (CSR) Delegate of the Ministry of Social Affairs

I bring you the greetings from Minister Ferrero, who is following with attention the ratification work of the Convention, which will turn society upside down because disability is in the environment, not in the persons. For what concerns the ratification, the Government is accelerating the process towards the ratification of a programmed measure. For now we have to promote the accompanying relations, giving priority to the examination of all the existing legislations. Besides this at the end of July the Minister the most important associations of the sector informing them on the procedure undertaken and the future one. I would like to remind you of a specific aspect of the Convention namely the monitoring activity. This could be a swift process through the creation of an Observatory in relation to what the article 33 of the Convention is, through the request/proposal of funds forwarded in the Financial Law. We would like to carry out the three dimensions of the convention immediately, i.e. the representation, planning and monitoring.

Raafat Ghoneim Head of the disability and rehabilitation department- Arab League, Egypt

It is a real pleasure to represent the General Secretariat of the Arab League at this conference. Let me express my deepest respect for each of the presidents of the organizations present here (AIFO, DPI, FISH) for their efforts to improve the status of PWD and their inclusion into the community.

Education and employment are two major contributors in the total development process in general, including the Millennium Development Goals. The council of the Arab League during its Summit, approved an important document, aiming for the rights of PWD in the Arab countries, called for the Arab Decade of PWD from 2004-2013. By resolution no. 283 it is highlighted that persons with disabilities' capabilities and capacities are enhanced with training and rehabilitation, care services and equal opportunities. The Council of Arab Ministries of Social Affairs has issued resolution no.

523 concerning the implementation of the International Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities urges all Arab States to sign the convention and its protocol. The Secretariat of the League of Arab States attaches great importance to this resolution not only because it has become an international obligation but also because it represents a national commitment that we will attempt to develop. The Secretariat is also following the signature of the Convention that was signed by 13 Arab States until now. We have also received confirmation from other members of the Arab League that they were about to sign it, together with the protocol attached thereto. The Council of Ministries of Social Affairs, on January 26 session has conducted a study in order to develop an Arab Plan of Action and Program for the implementation of the Arab Decade of PWD and coordinate between them to reach a viable result of application.

In this context, we welcome suggestions and contribution from all countries of the world, governmental and non governmental organizations dealing with disabilities issues for the development of our goals and enhance it further in addition to being fully ready to consider all views and ideals in order to improve the lives of PWD and define their rights.

Paola Viero Senior Expert, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Delegated by **Patrizia Sentinelli – Vice Minister**

I bring you the Vice Minister's greetings and her full support to the results of the Conference, I also bring you the greetings of the General Direction of Cooperation to development, whom I represent. Many the projects were started for the rights of the underage disabled people through decentralised cooperation, the agencies of the UN or NGOs engaged in this sector as AIFO, recognised NGOs recognized that have authorization to manage the related funds. I agree with the intervention of Nichi Vendola: disability regards everyone, this is not a problem of the others, but our problem. Therefore we give full support to the Convention and to its implementation, especially for the very poor Countries: most of their population lives in total misery, and the chief victims are children, women, the elderly and the disabled; if these conditions add up, the situation gets even worse. The role of the International Cooperation has to promote programmes that protect the rights of the poorest and the weakest. The deputy minister and we proposed to set up, at the Technical Central Unit, a workgroup, open to the contribution of the associations, experts and NGOs to outline anew the guidelines of the cooperation on the light of the new Convention. Following this, we would like to favour the use of the cooperation funds in this direction, with a particular attention to the Countries in the Mediterranean area. I'll report to the Vice Ministry, the opportunity to have a Meeting with the present participants to analyse how to steer our engagement in this direction. We are open and willing to continue our cooperation and collaboration with all of you.

Nawaf Kabbara President of the Committee of Arab speaking countries – DPI Lebanon

"Buongiorno a tutti". I started with an Italian sentence because I think this is the first step in our cooperation together. In fact I think the most important result of this international Conference is to have created a common language concerning disability. So even though we might need translation from one language to another, we are using the same speech all over the world.

I believe the International Convention on disability brought a double shift of paradigm in the international arena, from a paradigm based on the interest of the state towards a paradigm based on Human Rights. As a result of this, we have the second shift from the medical "invalidated" approach towards the social model of disability. We all recall, in France and in Russia, we used to call a person with disabilities as "*invalide*" (French language) and this means a person incapable of productivity and therefore he or she is outside the margins of society. That's all right in a society based on productivity and but not in one based on Human Rights, where the issue of empowerment of the rights of the person with disability turns into political power within the society. That is why it is very important for the disability movement to participate in politics and in cooperation as to develop skills that will bring about change in the countries.

We think that the international cooperation together with the international monitoring are the two important tools to make sure that the Convention, in another 10 years, will not be just a piece of paper. It is impossible to have a common cooperation all over the world so we should start to work regionally. The Mediterranean area is a very interesting region to work with. A common language of cooperation will help us to crush the cultural barriers between the South and the North of the Mediterranean area. It will show that the Arab world and Europe can work together.

It is time to show that we are serious about what we are doing, about ratifying the Convention. We discussed with the chairman of DPI Europe the idea of working together with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Bari, with the local communities, with the European community to convene the first meeting including DPOs, NGOs and government officials to start a common understanding to change the Mediterranean in an accessible place, free from barriers. An excellent starting point is represented by the Manifesto, introduced here this morning.

Some time ago I met the governor of the Region of Cairo Region and I asked him why there were no accessible ramps and pavements in Cairo. He replied that in Cairo there are more than 1 million persons unemployed and I would have got help if I asked for it. This is nice but we cannot only rely on the help of others. We want ramps and even with those sometimes we have to call for help. We need to show that we can work together, that we have the same objectives.

I would like to regard this conference in Bari as the start of a very strong and serious cooperation among the disability movements from the two sides of the Mediterranean area.

Erminia Emprin Senator, Rifondazione Comunista (Communist Refoundation Party)

Thank you for these two days of intense work. We have gone beyond the goal of codification: there is civil and social mobilization for its world wide realisation, starting from the realities in which we live and from creation of solidarity relationships, particularly among the people from Mediterranean Area. I am also very glad for the fact that for the first time in the legislation of 2006, there is a "portfolio" for the Ministry of Social Solidarity, giving it thus an autonomous dignity. I would like to add a remarkable fact: with the signature of States, this Ministry, offered its commitment and not the Ministry of Foreign Office. This is also a clear sign of change, that will become even stronger with the participation of the Associations.

The Convention is a reference frame, in following it we have to give ourselves a series of objectives that are written on the agenda of political engagements, among them the ratification of the same. We'll then have to ratify it, knowing that we'll have to find concrete, feasible decrees and guarantee the direct participation of the movements for the overcoming of disability while drafting them and while carrying them out, using debate and discussion platforms. Further on, I'd like that at the end of this Conference we would have the intention of organizing a meeting with disabled women and with MPs of our and other Mediterranean Countries in order to create social relationships and enlarge these relationships, as well as strengthen the ones we already have because we know that, without the patrimony of richness, we'll not be able to produce a policy of change. The implementation of the Convention is a more complicated matter: in Italy, the Regional Competences cover a great part of social policies, and this necessarily means a capillary work, involving all different Regional Departments. For example, we could try to activate the Regional Councillors by sending them the final document of this Assembly (Bari's Manifesto) because, from this document together with our Constitution and the European Chart of Rights the Regions draws the reference principles with which to modify their own statute.

Pietro Barbieri FISH President

At the conclusion of the Conference I'll try to be concise, starting from a synthesis of the work done. I would like to start from the final document, the Manifesto of Bari that this Convention wants to issue as a synthesis around which to develop policies. First of all, I'd like to underline that this document gives birth to the experiences of the representatives of the disabled people in the whole

world, not only the Italian ones. The second element is the involvement of the Government regarding International Cooperation. Interesting is the proposal to constitute a work group with our organisations for the guide-lines of cooperation, from which concrete contents will emerge to give to article 32 of the UN Convention. In this process it is important to understand which cooperation we intend to establish: either a cooperation on disability based on the medical model, or going to create opportunities and rights as the Convention says. Fundamental is our engagement to work and collaborate with the Local Administrations in the same direction to generate possibilities and opportunities for everyone.

But the same importance has the presence and intervention of our Parliament, to produce the change thanks also to the ever growing presence of disabled people in the local realities – as we could see with our presence in this town. It is therefore important to evaluate if the Parliament really has really leadership role, or if the society is ahead. The alliance with the associations and with the movements can certainly realise that important towing which is needed to involve the people's conscience profoundly. Also the hospitality offered to us for next year will represent a challenge and we'll have to work a lot for it. We should be more present on the territory with our associations to guarantee the inclusive policies for the safeguarding of our rights. For this reason the foundation of FISH Puglia, some time ago, is very important.

I then leave you with a "goodbye" to next year.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

The participants of the seminar “*Disability and Development Cooperation in the Mediterranean: a sea of Equal Opportunities*” held in Bari 15-16 September 2007, gathering representatives of Disabled Peoples’ Organizations, Non Governmental Organizations, governments, national and international institutions

Considering that three continents overlook the Mediterranean sea, with 24 countries in which live about 420 million persons of which over 42 million are persons with disabilities;

Considering that persons with disabilities face discrimination and lack of opportunities in access to rights, goods and services, are subject to continuous violations of their Human Rights and represent almost half of the poorest population of the world;

Recalling the recent approval of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (December 13, 2006) which represents the essential international instrument for the protection of Human Rights of persons with disabilities;

Recalling that art 32 of the United Nations Convention highlights the contribution that International Development Cooperation can offer for the protection and promotion of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities;

Recalling that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities assigns a fundamental role to organizations of persons with disabilities that “in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the [...] Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities” must be consulted attentively and actively involved;

Recalling that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities has been signed by eighteen Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Andorra, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, S. Marino, Syrian Arab republic, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey) and by the European Commission;

Reaffirming the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed their full enjoyment without discrimination;

Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others;

Emphasizing the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development;

Concerned about the difficult conditions faced by persons with disabilities who are subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion,

political or other opinion, national, ethnic, indigenous or social origin, property, birth, age or other status;

Recognizing that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation;

Recognizing that children with disabilities should have full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children, and recalling obligations to that end undertaken by States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Recalling that the United Nations Millennium Development Goals global action calls for the eradication of poverty in the world by 2015 and that the 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome, paragraph 19 refers to disability:” We recognize the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed full enjoyment of their rights without discrimination. We also affirm the need to finalize a comprehensive draft convention on the rights of persons with disabilities”.

Taking into account the European Commission Communication on the role of the European Union in the promotion of Human Rights and democratization in other countries [COM(2001) 252 final] which promotes the dialogue with third countries and a more systematic inclusion of Human Rights issues in the political dialogue and the contribution coming from civil society and Non Governmental Organizations;

Taking into account the European Commission Guidelines on Disability and Development for EU Delegations and Services of March 2003;

Taking into account that European Parliament adopted a Resolution on Disability and Development (19 January 2006), urging the Commission and Member States to include disability in all future EU geographical and thematic initiatives for development cooperation;

Reaffirming the commitment of ACP-EU countries (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly) in Resolution 3313 of 13 October 2001 on the rights of persons with disabilities in ACP countries;

Recalling the African Decade of persons with disabilities (1999-2009) and the Arab decade of persons with disabilities (2004-2013);

Recalling the commitment of richer countries to increment development cooperation funds to reach the 0,7 of their Gross Domestic Product;

Taking into consideration the commitment of richer countries of the Mediterranean towards development cooperation and, where existing, national guidelines for development cooperation projects directed to persons with disabilities;

Call

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission and on Mediterranean states a rapid ratification of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, on the Arab League and on the Mediterranean states to promote cooperation among Mediterranean countries directed to the protection of the Human Rights of persons with disabilities and to the strengthening of a civil dialogue with organizations of persons with disabilities;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, and to EU Member States to act upon development cooperation projects in compliance with article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, which commits state parties to ensure “that international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities”;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission and on Mediterranean states to ground all development cooperation projects directed to persons with disabilities to the principles and norms of respect for Human Rights and fundamental freedoms sanctioned by the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, and to EU Member States to increase development cooperation funding directed to persons with disabilities;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission to start appropriate budget lines geared to sustaining the exchange of experiences and good practices, the promotion of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities and to set the priority on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities sanctioned by the United Nations Convention into programs directed to the Mediterranean area;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission and on Mediterranean states to strengthen the role of persons with disabilities and their organizations and families in development cooperation projects, so that they can be directly capable of self-representing their rights and needs; partnerships and concrete collaboration among development cooperation NGOs and disabled peoples' organizations should be rewarded;

On the Council of the European Union and the European Commission and on Mediterranean states to pay particular attention to the situation of children and women with disabilities, which are particularly vulnerable groups, in development cooperation projects;

On the EU institutions and National Agencies on development to support the African Decade of Disabled People (1999-2009) and the Arab decade of persons with disabilities (2004-2013); by means of political and financial commitments;

On national Agencies on development to adopt Guidelines on development and disability, based on the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.