

Inclusive Legislation: Advancing Disability Rights – Regional Survey

MLGA/International Disability Rights

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Overview:

According to the 2011 World Report on Disability, jointly issued by the World Health Organization and the World Bank, the population of persons with disabilities worldwide exceeded 1 billion, accounting for 15% of the global population. Of these, approximately 650 million persons with disabilities live in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of people living with disabilities worldwide continues to grow, along with the aging population.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol was adopted in 2006. As a legally binding international human rights treaty, the CRPD advances the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment, and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as active members of society.

Although over 170 countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention, many countries also need to more effectively implement and enforce the CRPD through domestic legislation. The State Department’s International Disability Rights Team requests university professors and students concerned about human rights to determine which CRPD parties have enacted and effectively enforced laws upholding the rights of persons with disabilities (and which countries have not). This initial research will target two regions and 44 countries: the East Asian and Pacific Region (31 countries) and South and Central Asian Region (13 countries). Research for the report would seek to understand laws, policies and programs on disability, as well as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in other relevant laws, policies and programs.

Format of Final Project:

The final report analyzing the regions’ efforts to promote laws and legal enforcement, and any particularly successful programs, will help the State Department to promote the rights of people with disabilities around the world by highlighting gaps and identifying effective practices that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Global Health; Human Rights; International Law; International Relations; South/Central Asian Studies; Disability Rights;

Comments:

The International Disability Rights Team leads the U.S. comprehensive strategy to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities internationally. The United States, as part of our foreign policy, works to remove barriers and create a world in which disabled people enjoy dignity and full inclusion.

Discrimination against people with disabilities is not simply unjust; it hinders economic development, limits democracy, and erodes societies. In pursuing diplomacy that is inclusive and empowering of persons with disabilities, the United States: opposes discrimination against persons with disabilities everywhere and in all its forms; urges foreign governments to combat discrimination, prejudice and abuse against persons with disabilities in their countries, and to protect the rights and ensure the dignity and inclusion of all persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others; encourages and assists governments to learn about the development and effective implementation of laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities; encourages and assists civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities and their families, to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities; and encourages U.S. businesses operating overseas as well as domestic host country businesses to take into consideration persons with disabilities in relation to employment practices and local stakeholder engagement, including in their labor and human rights corporate social responsibility policies, programs, and practices.