

GECMUN 6: CREATE!

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WHO

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REDUCING THE BARRIERS AGAINST PHYSICAL  
DISABILITY  
CHAIR REPORT

MINJU LEE  
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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

Greetings Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to GECMUN 6 conference! We are Minju Lee, Serena Jeon, and Riley Park from Korea International School Jeju. It is our honor and privilege to serve all of you as chairs of the World Health Organization committee for the GECMUN 6 conference. It is our second time participating in GECMUN and we are extremely delighted to share wonderful experiences and memories with you here on Jeju island. Our WHO committee will deal particularly with health-related issues through fruitful discussions in which we will be examining the status quo and then seeking to form new policies in order to improve the physical health conditions of the world. Completing some research on the solutions made in the past and investigations about your country's stance will prepare you well for this meeting. As delegates in the past, we fully understand the pressure that you may feel, but we wish to reassure you that this will be a wonderful opportunity to learn if you are prepared, open-minded, willing to ask questions, and think quickly on your feet. With your passionate participation, it will definitely be a truly memorable experience! As your chairs, we will also promise you that we will put in our best effort to make this conference encouraging, inclusive, and enjoyable. Once again, thank you for your interest in MUN and the WHO committee. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time via email; we, the chairs, are always here to help you out!

Sincerely,

**Minju Lee, Serena Jeon, and Riley Park**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

People around the globe with physical disabilities live in a society with various barriers that impede daily life. It is reported to WHO in 2017 that more than half of 1 billion patients worldwide are not cared for adequately due to the lack of adequate health facilities as well as the high expense of treatment. According to the WHO 2017 Report, disabled children are 60% less likely to attend school in countries like Indonesia and Malawi; at African countries including Zambia, more than 39% of children with disabilities have never received public education. The lack of treatment for people with physical disabilities is currently building social barriers in various fields including education, career choices, and basic living standards. Under this agenda, the WHO committee will be discussing new realistic long-term and short-term policies and modifying present policies to ameliorate the health conditions of the world.

## KEY TERMS

### **Ableism**

Discrimination by attitudes and actions against people with disabilities; belief that people with developmental, emotional, physical or psychiatric disabilities are inferior.

### **Access Barriers**

Any obstruction that prevents people with disabilities from using standard facilities, equipment, and resources.

### **Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR)**

A development strategy that has the goal of providing rehabilitation, reducing poverty, giving equal opportunities, and pursuing the inclusive societies.

### **Mobility Impairment**

A disability that affects movement ranging from gross motor skills such as walking, to fine motor movement involving manipulation of objects by hand.

### **Peripheral Neuropathy**

A condition caused by damage to the nerves in the peripheral nervous system which includes nerves that run from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body.

### **Physical Disability**

A limitation on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity, or stamina.

### **Physical or mental impairment**

Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting body systems such as neurological, musculoskeletal, and sense organs.

## **AGENDA INFORMATION**

### **CAUSES AND TYPES OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

There are numerous causes of physical disability, but there are usually two categories: hereditary (congenital) and acquired. According to a report from NDA in 2004, about 85 percent of the working-age population with a disability became disabled throughout their lives, which is 6,200,997,150 people. A hereditary and congenital physical disability is the kind in which the person is born with a disability or has developed it because of inherited genetic problems. Examples of congenital disabilities include cystic fibrosis, a fatal degenerative disease that is present at birth, and cerebral palsy, a neurological abnormality impacting mobility, cognitive function, and common birth defects like club foot, spina bifida, Down's Syndrome.

An acquired physical disability is the kind in which the person acquires a disability due to some kind of an accident, infection, disease, or an effect of a medical condition. There are two kinds of acquired causes: accident-related injuries and illnesses and health-related injuries. For accident-related injuries, examples include head trauma, spinal injuries, loss of vision, loss of hearing, loss of limbs, etc. For illness and health-related injuries, examples include post-stroke, post-traumatic stress, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, motor neuron disease, mental illness, stress, etc. The causes of physical disability can be differentiated by the time of the occurrence: before the child's birth (prenatal etiology), during the birth process (perinatal etiology), and after the child's birth (postnatal etiology).

### **TYPES OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

Because there are a variety of causes of physical disability (genetic mutation, physical injury, disease, etc.), many types of physical disabilities exist in the world today. Musculoskeletal Disability (MSD) and Neuro Musculo Disability (NMD) are the two major categories to classify these disabilities. MSD and NMD categories both contain physical disabilities that cause an inability to perform physical activities that require the movement of body parts. However, patients with MSD are specifically disabled by a certain body part or parts, which is mostly caused by degeneration, disease, or muscular damage. Some of the common MSD are deformity of limbs (damage in appendages: arms and legs), osteogenesis imperfecta (damage in connective tissue that holds bones together), and muscular dystrophy (loss of muscle groups). Additionally, patients with NMD face difficulties in performing controlled movements signalled by the nervous system. Since NMD is caused by degeneration, disease, or a disorder that affects the nervous system, the exact cause of these disabilities are harder to detect, which can impede treatment. Among these diverse disabilities, the most common ones are cerebral palsy, spina bifida, poliomyelitis, stroke, head injury, and paraplegia.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **ENHANCEMENT OF EDUCATION**

Many people with disabilities have not been able to access educational opportunities. There are institutions such as schools specialized for people with disabilities, but those systems do not serve every individual. Education about disability for all children around the world, on the other hand, may be vital since they need to be aware of the topic as the next generation to lead the society.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

In order for all countries to take any actions, money would be needed. Therefore, it might be vital to support especially developing countries financially. However, as for this issue, whose money would be used for the support? One possible solution for this issue may be raising funds. Identify how the funds are being used in different nations. Are they receiving fiscal aid from outer NGOs? Are there sufficient amount of monitoring system like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that assures that the funds are being used in the right place? It is important to investigate the route of the money in order to prevent the funds from being misused.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF EXISTING NGOS**

Try reaching out for the NGOs all around the world that already exist for the same issue. It is easier to develop on an already ongoing processes than to create a totally new one. Research about which NGOs are putting on efforts and if any of them seems to match with your country's stance, try reaching out for collaboration and elaborate upon its current efforts.

## **THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD)**

The CRPD is one solution to bring the convention up and strengthen or adjust a portion. As this is a worldwide issue, solutions should be able to embrace different conditions of all members of the United Nations.

## **PAST ACTIONS**

The World Health Organization has a role of improving every person's quality of life, rights, and dignity. The WHO especially aims to reduce the barriers against people with a physical disability. Along with other UN agencies, published the guidelines for Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), which is a development strategy that pursues equal opportunities, reduction of poverty, and inclusive societies.

Beyond WHO, the United Nation itself has also been working on it for a long period, and developed treatments for enhancement. For instance, the UN declared the year 1981 as the year of the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) to increase the awareness and equal rights for people with disabilities. Furthermore, on December 3, 1982, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, a global strategy to enhance disability prevention, rehabilitation, and equalization of opportunities, which pertains to the full participation of persons with disabilities in social life and development. In the late 2000s, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was drafted and finally became effective in 2008.

Other organizations beside the UN have put worked to reduce the barriers to provide services for people with disabilities. The UN Agencies have cooperated with many NGOs around the world that work for people with disabilities. Caritas, Save the Children Sweden, and others are but a few examples of some organizations in specific UNHCR operations.

Despite these efforts, physical and social obstacles still impact people with disabilities today. Buildings and other public structures have a tendency to not consider people with disabilities, which inhibit them from performing various activities. Ableism, which excludes and belittles people with a disability to create an unwelcoming society, exists as well.

## **MAJOR MEMBER STATE STANCES**

### **ARGENTINA**

According to a 2018 national survey, 1 out of 10 Argentines have a physical disability such as an impairment in their hearing, sight, or mobility. The citizens formed the Argentine Federation of Institutions for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a civil association to support the disabled and help them train for and then access work. The country approved the Argentine Personal Data Protection Law in order to encourage the equal rights of people with disabilities and lessen the burden of the physically disabled.

## **AUSTRALIA**

There are about 4 million Australians with disability, and about 83.9% of them are facing physical disability. Furthermore, as an aging society, the Australian government predicts that the disability rate will be increasing. Currently, the Council of Australian Government has set up a ten-year program called the National Disabled Strategy to present improved living conditions of disabled people, which includes employment, community activities, and access to further information about the society.

## **BOLIVIA**

More than 15% of Bolivia's total population has a disability; this is about 1.5 million people. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the economic gap between the disabled and not disabled has been a problem in Bolivia. As an evidence the employment of non disabled people were about 75%, while the employment for disabled was only 44%. Because of the expensive cost of treatment, only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the disabled people are being treated. Decreasing this economic gap still remains as a big task for the Bolivian government.

## **BRAZIL**

Brazil is one of the countries with the harshest conditions for the disabled. About 24% of the Brazilian population face disability, which is 43 million people. Above all the problems, children is Brazil is the upcoming issue for Brazil because instead of proper treatment and community activities, the disabled children are locked away in institutions with no education and community activities. Human Rights Watch researchers and previous conferences of the UN Human Rights community, UNESCO, and UNICEF has concluded that the Brazilian government has to take immediate actions to grant access to education to disabled children.

## **CANADA**

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) has reported that about 6.2 million people in Canada are limited from daily activities because of a disability. According to the CHRC's statistics, the Canadian government has suggested that 90% of the disabled children are receiving a proper education. While the children are taken care of, 40% of the disabled adults of Canada are facing employment difficulty. To address this problem, the Canadian government has set up an Accommodation Policy that allows the physically disabled to easily adapt to working life by offering facilities for disabled people and creating a working culture where disabled and non-disabled people can collaborate without barriers.

## **CHINA**

China currently has 83 million people with a disability. Poverty among the disabled has been a serious problem in China. To address this, the Chinese government has set higher Employer Legal Requirement which mandates 1.5% of the laborers to be a disabled person, along with a consequence of levying a fee should companies fail to meet it. Still, companies prefer to pay rather than to hire disabled laborers. This is a growing concern for the Chinese government.

## **FRANCE**

With about 12 million people affected by disability among 65 million French citizens, the French government has created strict laws that allow easily accessible employment and public activity for those with a disability. For example, the Disability Act of 11 February 2005 enforced Compulsory Employment for Disabled Workers (DOETH) requires that at least 6% of a company's employees to be disabled for any employer with at least 20 laborers. Furthermore, the French government has eased public activity by requiring public housing or transport stations to extend access to those with a disability.

## **GERMANY**

The Federal Statistic Office of Germany has reported that about 7.6 million people among 81 million people are experiencing a disability. Currently, Germany's greatest problem is the lack of employment opportunities for disabled adults. Statistics from the German government show that 18% of disabled adults are unemployed. To address this problem, the German government restricted employers with more than 20 laborers to keep at least 5% of the laborers as those with a disability.

## **HUNGARY**

24.8% of Hungary's population aged 15 or over is reported to have a disability which is 156,750,830 people; this is the highest rate among the European Union member states. Hungary has the highest gap in employment rates between people with and without disability among the EU states as well; while 61% of people without disabilities are employed, only 24% are for people with disabilities. In Hungary, 43.3% of people with a disability have at most pre-primary, primary or lower secondary education.

## **IRAQ**

Due to the long period of war, Iraq's disability population has reached 2 million people out of 38 million people. Along with the WHO, the Iraqi government has been increasing disability registration programs to better serve patients and give medical support. Currently, the Iraqi government is cooperating with the World Bank and NGOs to bring back the basic rights of the disabled patients in Iraq, including employment, financial aid, community contacts, and education.

## **ITALY**

About 5% of Italy's population, which is 60,590,000 people, is currently faced with a disability. According to Expatfocus, the disabled are getting proper education until high school level and more chances of employment because they now have privilege which is mandatory handicapped employment. For example, in larger companies in Italy, a company must demonstrate that they are consistently hiring disabled people, if they have at least 7% of their laborers with some form of a disability, the Italian government supports the initiative through a lower required Social Security Contribution that is granted to the company.

## **INDIA**

India has the highest disability rate among the OECD countries (about 80 million people). Furthermore, due to the aging society and the increase of public accidents, the rate is expected to increase over the years. Along with these problems, the Indian government is also facing problems with unemployment, poverty, and lack of education for the disabled. Furthermore, the Indian government is also considering the increase of health institutions to properly cure the disabled ones by increasing funding to build more hospitals and clinics.

## **INDONESIA**

Indonesia currently has 37 million people with a disability. Because of the lack of a thorough educational system and because so many disabled people live in poverty, the Indonesian government's greatest challenge is providing an education system for the disabled. This problem has also caused an employment issue for disabled people because most of them have barely received primary level education, which means that they are not prepared for employment.

## **JAPAN**

Japan currently has 2.5 million people who are physically disabled among 127 million citizens. Due to the aging society, Japan's disability rate has been slowly increasing ever since 1999. To improve the social conditions of the disabled, the Japanese government created The Fundamental Law for Disabled Persons, which states how employment support, medical care, and free institutions should be built to improve the living conditions of them.

## **MEXICO**

Mexico has approximately 9.17 million people who are disabled, which is about 7.5% of the total population. As a participant of the U.N Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Mexico's employment rate is improving over the years. (Global Disability Rights). However, with only 15% of disabled children getting secondary education and over 45% of the disabled adults facing extreme poverty, the Mexican government is still working on improving the living conditions for all.

## **NORWAY**

Norway has about 790,000 people who are disabled, which is approximately 15% of the Norwegian population. As a member of the United Nations, Norway has ratified the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) in 2013. Specifically, The Discrimination and Accessibility Act allows disabled Norwegians to be particularly supported according to their status with equal opportunities to education and public transportations. Furthermore, the IA Agreement with 70% of the employers in Norway has decreased the discrimination against physically disabled people. (Bufdir)

## **PARAGUAY**

About 19% of the total disabled people (728,000) in Paraguay suffers from physical difficulties. The rate of disabled people has been constantly increasing due to the lack of disability prevention. Currently, Paraguay's government is not participating in any kind of plan to reduce the disabled population. Due to the lack of governmental support, disabled people in Paraguay are below the basic needs satisfaction level as they lack primary school education, sufficient supply of facilities for disabled people, and national awareness about physical disability.

## **PHILIPPINES**

About 1.57% of the population of the Philippines are faced with disability; this is about 1.443 million people. Although 22.1% of the aged people (65 or older) are physically disabled, chronic diseases and accidents seem to be the major causes of physical disability since 59% of the working group are disabled (15-64 years old) in the Philippines. In the past, the mandate of DOH has been to establish institutes for the disabled and recently, the government of the Philippines is working towards the goals of the Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021.

## **POLAND**

According to the National Census of Population and Housing 2011, 12.2% of the Polish population, or about 4.7 million people, are disabled. The Polish government has reported that they are currently funding 220,000 disabled families along with Accessibility Plus Program to support more people with disabilities. However, the amendment in this program also restricts the voting rights of the disabled ones; this is thought to be the next issue for the Polish government.

## **REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

The National Survey on Persons With Disabilities shows that about 2.6 million people in South Korea is experiencing a disability. Since more than 50% of the disabled ones suffer from physical disability, the South Korean government has focused on expanding physiatrists that could treat the patients as well as rehabilitation services. Still, as an aging society, South Korea's disability rate is predicted to increase.

## **RUSSIA**

According to the Russian government, at least 9% of the Russian population has a disability. Russia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and has given equal opportunity for employment and public activities. However, the Human Rights Watch suggested that Russia has lack of public systems such as marks or the disabled ones. Currently, Russia's greatest challenge seems to be the employment rate of the disabled ones, which is only 20%.

## **SPAIN**

The Survey on Disability, Independence, and Dependency Situations shows that approximately 8.5% of the Spanish population has a disability, which is about 3.8 million. Among them, only 35% are in employment. One of the factors is that Spanish labor law exists and consists of protection and benefits, but it is not enforced in reality. The Spanish National Council of Disabled Representatives is one of the major national organizations for people with disabilities.

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

The Statistics South Africa presents that the national disability rate of South Africa is around 7.5%, approximately 2.9 million. Various population groups have differences in school attendance rate. For instance, 45.2% of people with difficulty in walking from the colored population group were not attending school, while 35% from the black African population group, 24.6% and 29.1% from the Indian/Asian and white population group. People from white population group generally had more access to assistive devices than black Africans.

## **SWEDEN**

According to the Sweden Statistics, around 20% of the citizens are living with a disability. The country has two main policies to support people with disabilities: universal disability pension program and earnings-related disability benefit. To promote the equality between disabled and able-bodied, the country offers practical policies like Educational Act or Social Service Act. Sweden, though considered disability as a minor issue in the past, is now legislating laws to protect the rights of the disabled.

## **SWITZERLAND**

More than 1.8 million people in Switzerland lives with a disability. To prevent the discrimination and disadvantages toward the disabled, the country enforced a Disability Equality Act in 2002 whose goal is to prevent, reduce and eliminate the discrimination against people with disability. According to the Federal Statistical Office, 72% of people with disabilities are participating in the workforce and the country is constantly supporting the disabled ones to enjoy equal rights with persons without disabilities.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

The Disability Information and Advice Line (DIAL UK) presents that around 21% of the UK population has a disability; among them, more than half are mobility-related. Discrimination is quite an issue; in a 2017 survey, approximately 75% of respondents with Autism or Asperger syndrome claimed that they were bullied and physical disability had 70%. Improvements had been made overtime; however, while 76.4% of non-disable people are in employment, only 46.3% for disabled people.

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

The United States of America is also one of the countries with a high disability rate which is 26% of the whole population. Despite employment and education problems, The United States of America's greatest challenge is the lack of treatment that the disabled patients are getting. Only 33 to 40% of the disabled ones are actually being treated. The government is currently working on Americans with Disability Act (ADA) which consists of plans to improve employment, public actions, and also rehabilitation.

## **UZBEKISTAN**

According to official estimates, disabled population in Uzbekistan is about 330 thousand people, which is 1.33% of Uzbekistan's population. Uzbekistan has been spending 15% of their budget on social security which includes the protection of the disabled patients by providing pensions, orthopaedic free, medical appliance free, and exempting tax. Furthermore, Uzbekistan has created state-run education institutions since 2002, which allowed about 18 thousand disabled children to receive proper education.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

The World Health Organization presents that 11% of the UAE citizens have a disability. In order to prevent them from facing barriers because of the disabilities they have, the nation offers free education and health care for the children and passed the UAE Disability Act that would protect the rights of the disabled. However, as the enforcement was quite recent, the country lacks schools that accept children with disabilities and is in the beginning of popularizing the attention for the disabled.

## VIETNAM

15.3% of Vietnam's population has one or multiple disabilities. Compared to 78.3% of the total population receiving a secondary education, only 52% of the disabled population is receiving a secondary education. The most common disability type is cognitive disability which comprises 25.3% of the disability population, about 0.82 million people. The country passed a National Disability Law in 2010 and activated a National Action Plan to Support People with Disabilities in the year 2012.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is the major cause of physical disability in your nation?
- Is there any current action being taken to lessen the burden of citizens with a physical disability? If so, can it be applied to other countries; how?
- Is requesting help from international organizations or legislating national laws for support more constructive in reducing the barriers against physical disability? Are there any other approaches which the international committee can take?
- Are there some historical precedents like The World Programme of Action, which could be a solution for this situation? How could those past initiatives be adapted to best fit with the needs of today?
- How can WHO solve the financial or legal obstacles when reducing the barriers against physical disability?

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