

The continuous participation of officials at the working level is necessary to implement any strategy successfully, but unlike deputy ministers, officers at this level cannot make decisions stick.

Currently, although co-ordination is flawed, the more important issue of accountability appears to have been lost in the shuffle. In the Committee's view, officials at the working level cannot be held accountable at the political level for the success or failure of a strategy.

Clearly, any comprehensive policy framework in the area of disability—including Aboriginal disability—remains incomplete if it does not include some measure of accountability as well as some monitoring mechanism. Citizens should know that their concerns are being appropriately considered and integrated into the overall policy and program development of all government departments. They also have a right to know how the money that is spent, either through normal government programming or through the National Strategy, is providing direct benefits to them. Disabled people across the country—including Aboriginal people with disabilities—too often hear of grandiose schemes being launched in Ottawa, only to find that by the time the program or service actually reaches the local level, there is not enough money left to make it worthwhile.

Since the federal government has not yet put into place an accountability mechanism, this Standing Committee will attempt to fill the gap temporarily. Therefore, we propose that the Minister Responsible for the Status of Disabled Persons, and all other ministers involved in the National