

Rules" or were drafting new policies in accordance with them; (b) in many countries the Rules had been translated into the national language and, in some cases, local languages; (c) many countries had established national coordination committees and, in others, such bodies were being created; (d) countries placed a strong emphasis on active participation by organizations of persons with disabilities in developing policies and programmes in the disability field; (e) some countries had adopted or were in the process of drafting legislation or other measures using the principles in the Rules; and (f) in some countries the Rules were used in awareness-raising campaigns.

The results of a second round of correspondence indicated that, while it is acknowledged that an officially recognized disability policy is essential to attain equality of opportunity, in some countries such a policy is not expressed in law but rather in guidelines and/or policy documents; in such policies the highest importance is placed on rehabilitation and prevention (a welfare approach) with less emphasis given to accessibility and anti-discrimination law; and, measures taken to implement and publicize official policy have included translation and wide dissemination of the Rules, media programmes conveying the message of full participation, and support for research projects.

In terms of legislation the responses indicated: governments have tended to use both special and general legislation to protect the rights of persons with disabilities; in most countries the most common measure to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is legal remedy through the courts and the most common non-judicial measure is through a government body (administrative); more than one-quarter of the responses from governments indicated that persons with disabilities are not considered to be full-fledged citizens under general legislation (e.g., with the right to vote, right to property, right to privacy); in some countries persons with disabilities are not guaranteed by law the rights to education, employment, marriage, parenthood/family, health care and services, social security, rehabilitation, and access to courts of law; in 14 of the countries responding, persons with disabilities have no political rights; in 34 countries, the right to participate in decision-making is not guaranteed by law.

On the issue of accessibility, responses showed that: in most countries there are standards to ensure access to public places but in practice such access is limited in the absence of transportation for persons with disabilities; governments cited three main obstacles to ensuring access — economic/budgetary factors, attitudinal factors and lack of enforcement mechanisms, with attitudinal factors being a major obstacle; in the majority of responding countries no disability awareness component has been incorporated into the training of planners, architects and/or construction engineers; approximately half of the responding governments indicated that no measures had been taken to encourage the media or other public service providers to make their services accessible; and, services to blind and visually impaired

persons receive the most attention while services to the deaf and persons with mental disabilities are more limited.

With regard to organizations of persons with disabilities, in most responding countries a national umbrella organization existed and in some cases there are legal provisions mandating representatives of such organizations to participate in policy-making and work with governmental institutions. In the majority of countries where national organizations exist, governments provide them with financial support; however, in others only organizational or logistical support is given; and, in still others, no support is given. In general, persons with disabilities participate to a very limited extent in government, legislatures and judicial areas. On coordination, the SR noted that approximately one-quarter of the responding countries did not have a national coordinating committee or similar body to address issues related to persons with disabilities.

With regard to education, responses indicated that: in a number of countries general legislation applied to children with special educational needs, but in 34 countries children with severe disabilities were excluded from education, some by law and others because of non-legal factors; reasons for exclusion include the severity of disability, lack of facilities and trained staff, long distances to schools and the fact that regular schools do not accept pupils with special educational needs; in 10 countries no legislation on special education exists; in some countries parents' involvement in decision-making and their right to choose placement in special education is severely limited; in general, schooling for children with disabilities is still predominantly provided in a segregated educational system in which the rate of school attendance is very low.

And, with regard to employment, 54 of the responding countries had ratified ILO Convention No. 159 on vocational rehabilitation, promotion of employment opportunities and equal treatment of "disabled" women and men. Within the states that have ratified the Convention, the measures that are least implemented relate to vocational rehabilitation in rural areas, cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities and availability of qualified staff in vocational rehabilitation. The anti-discrimination measure related to employment is the one that is most implemented.

Based on these and other points the report recommends, *inter alia*, that:

- ♦ the role of the focal point within the UN for implementation of the Standard Rules be further developed, cooperation between the Secretariat and specialized agencies be better coordinated, and an inter-agency mechanism be established to facilitate this;
- ♦ states that have not yet done so ratify ILO Convention No. 159 and states that have ratified make further efforts to reflect the Convention's provisions in national law and practice;