

## **International Disability Alliance (IDA)**

Member Organizations:

Disabled Peoples' International, Down Syndrome International,  
Inclusion International, International Federation of Hard of Hearing People,  
World Blind Union, World Federation of the Deaf,  
World Federation of the DeafBlind,  
World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry,  
Arab Organization of Disabled People, European Disability Forum,  
Red Latinoamericana de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Personas con  
Discapacidad y sus familias (RIADIS), Pacific Disability Forum

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### **Suggestions for disability-relevant recommendations to be included in the Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 47th Session (14 November – 2 December 2011)**

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) has prepared the following suggestions for the Concluding Observations, based on references to persons with disabilities found in the CESCR Committee's 47th Session state report and list of issues.

#### **CAMEROON**

Cameroon has signed but not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol.

#### **State Report**

##### **Select references to persons with disabilities in the state report:**

120. The Government has signed the main international treaties and conventions on women's and children's rights. Although the Criminal Code does not specifically refer to it, FGM is punishable under various Criminal Code provisions. A draft Act on the repression of gender-based violence and discrimination which has been drawn up contains provisions prohibiting FGM.

##### Children

169. The studies undertaken on the situation of children in 2000 revealed the existence of specific categories of children having particular protection needs. According to the data of the social instrument panel (TBS II 2003), there were seven such categories, namely:

- Children with disabilities;
- Children living or working in the street;
- Children in conflict with the law;
- Exploited children;
- Children separated from their parents;
- Abused children;
- Orphans and other vulnerable children (OVCs) whose plight is due to HIV/AIDS.

##### Persons with disabilities

181. The number of disabled persons in Cameroon, estimated at 700,000 in 1993 (SDSS 2004), probably currently exceeds one million on the basis of the WHO estimate of the proportion of persons with disabilities (10 per cent of the population).

182. Cameroon has adopted an appropriate legal framework and created certain care structures in order to address the main problems faced by the group in question, namely difficulties related to physical, mental or sensory disability, access to formal education and vocational training, and socio-economic integration.

183. The following measures for persons with disabilities aim at ensuring their autonomy through training and socio-professional integration, the reinforcement of multiform support activities and the development of partnerships:

- At the legal level, Act No. 83/013 of 21 July 1983 on the protection of persons with disabilities is under review. The draft currently examined aims at ensuring that the needs of the disabled and their protection against any form of discrimination are better taken into consideration. The preamble of the draft calls for consistency in the relevant legal provisions with the stated principles of equal opportunities, autonomy and participation.
- At the institutional level, the National Committee for the Rehabilitation and Socio-economic Reintegration of Disabled Persons (CONRHA) was created in 1996. In 2003-2004, organisational and institutional audits of the National Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities (CNRH) in Yaoundé and of the Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind (RIB) in Buea were conducted by the NGO "Handicap International", with French Cooperation support, in order to improve the operation of these bodies.

184. Three partnership agreements, signed in 2004 with international agencies specialized in support and training for disabled persons aim at:

- Building a subregional treatment and reintegration centre for mental patients. The Government tries to accelerate the project's implementation, which has not yet begun.
- Building and equipping, as a donation, a rehabilitation centre at Maroua, and training in Italy 16 young Cameroonian who will work at the centre.
- Facilitating the access of persons with disabilities to ICTs.

185. A partnership agreement is being concluded with a Swiss organization with a view to building the capacities of disabled persons in general, and cleansed lepers in particular.

186. The tables in annex III present the initiatives undertaken by the State in support of disabled or indigent persons.

187. The cases in question do not include special in- or out-patient rehabilitation or assistance sessions, whose costs are not covered by social insurance.

188. In May 2005, a partnership agreement was concluded between MINAS and the African Information Technology Institute (IAI - Cameroon) regarding training for the disabled, thereby increasing their access to ICTs, for other target groups and for the personnel of MINAS.

189. With regard to the education of children with disabilities, MINAS and the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) issued on 14 August 2007 a circular referring to the identification of children with disabilities or born to poor disabled parents and specifying that "a report must be submitted on 15 October of every year, providing data on pupils attending examination classes and on any practical difficulties that they might encounter in connection with State examinations as a result of a deficiency". This survey, constituting a positive discrimination measure aimed at meeting the needs of disabled children, must be backed with adequate infrastructure and funds.

Protection of persons with disabilities - Improvement of the legal framework

414. At the international level, Cameroon participated, on 14-25 August 2006 in New York, in the preparation of a draft International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, which safeguards and promotes the economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights of the disabled and was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2006.

415. At the national level, the joint circular letter No. 34/06/LC signed on 2 August 2006 by the Ministers of Secondary Education and Social Affairs aims at facilitating the enrolment of children with disabilities or born to poor disabled persons in public secondary schools and

exempts these children from the payment of registration fees in such establishments, whether general or technical, and of parents' association (APE) fees.

416. This practical measure is based on the constitutional provisions on free elementary education. Moreover, the Government, in line with the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs and the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, gradually sets up integrated educational establishments conducive to promoting the disabled persons' right to education and their scholastic and social integration.

417. The well-being of persons with disabilities is further pursued through cooperation between the Government and various bodies on the basis of agreements and resolutions, as follows:

- On 22 March 2006, the Minister of Social Affairs and the Director of CNPS signed an agreement aimed at improving assistance to disabled persons and victims of industrial accidents. The agreement was actually also implemented within CNPS, which provided its disabled staff members with special vehicles to facilitate their transport to work;
- On 4 September 2006, a partnership agreement was signed between the Minister of Social Affairs and the National Director of FNE on facilitating the integration of vulnerable persons into training programmes and gainful employment in order to help persons with disabilities to economic and social independence;
- A meeting between the Ministers of Higher Education and Social Affairs on 13 March 2006 led to the signature of a joint circular letter aimed at improving the conditions encountered by disabled and vulnerable students by providing them with accommodations, integrating them into University "work-study programmes" and finding vacation internships for them;
- On 10 April 2006, a meeting was held between the Ministers of Social Affairs and Public Works in order to ensure the effective application of the 1983 Act on disabled persons' access to public buildings and of the related implementation Decree No. 90/1516 of 26 November 1990;
- A meeting between the Ministers of Social Affairs and Health on 20 October 2006 laid the basis for discussion on facilitating the access of vulnerable persons to medication and health care;
- On 29 October 2006, the participation of disabled persons in elections and their access to polling stations in order to vote were examined in a meeting between the Ministers of Social Affairs and Regional Administration and Decentralization .

#### Measures of support for persons with disabilities

418. The Government made the following efforts to improve the enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities:

- 26 disabled persons were trained in ICTs by IAI in the framework of a partnership agreement between MINAS and IAI-Cameroon;
- Sponsored by the Government, 20 persons with sight disabilities were enrolled in the Collège de la Retraite (9 and 11 persons in, respectively, school years 2005 2006 and 2006-2007);
- Financial, material and technical assistance was offered to schools for persons with disabilities in various parts of the country; and sewing machines and television sets were donated;
- In the framework of a partnership with MINAS, the Circle of Friends of Cameroon (CERAC) offered social and economic assistance to disabled women in Yaoundé and in the provinces of the Extrême-Nord, Nord and Adamaoua;
- The Government facilitated the issue of small shopkeeper's licenses to disabled persons;
- The Government encouraged solidarity gestures by the public towards persons with disabilities. As a result, two sewing machines were obtained and given out to disabled persons.

419. In order to enhance mobility for the disabled, circular No. 003/CAB/PM of 18 April 2008 on compliance with procurement and Government contract control rules stipulates

adopting the "disabilities approach" in the construction plans for buildings, public facilities and roads, particularly by providing for their accessibility to the disabled.

420. In that connection, disabled persons living in various provinces were provided with the following equipment:

- 63 crutches;
- 2 electric wheelchairs;
- 5 hearing aids.
- 45 tricycles;
- 4 mechanical wheelchairs and

421. The celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities offers an opportunity to sensitize the population to the rights of the disabled and to enable them to voice their complaints. In 2006, the topic of the event was "Access of persons with disabilities to ICTs: Stakes and challenges". Medical consultations were organized for the disabled and the elderly and the population was encouraged to assist them whenever necessary.

422. MINAS observed that the applications of certain persons with sight disabilities for admission to the École Normale Supérieure had been rejected, and opened a dialogue with the Ministry of Higher Education to find a solution to that problem.

603. In 2006, activities were carried out on the basis of a partnership among MINPROFF, UNICEF, FAO/WFP, UNFPA, MINEDUB and MINAS in order to eliminate disparities between boys and girls. Such activities vary among the formal, non-formal and specialized education system.

Measures taken in the non-formal education system focus on:

- Training for girls with disabilities in production centres and home workshops;
- Training for persons with disabilities in rehabilitation and reintegration centres;

604. The national conference on education had noted weaknesses that the State gradually tries to remedy. A study for an appropriate reform of secondary education was conducted in 2006 under the guidance of a committee set up by the Prime Minister. The Government has also supported positive discrimination in favour of the disabled, the protection children at school and the expansion of school infrastructure.

### List of Issues

1. Please provide an update on legislative and institutional developments relevant to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in the State party, including the status of the following draft laws mentioned in various parts of the State party report (E/C.12/CMR/2-3): (c) **The draft act on the protection of persons with disabilities;**

6. Please also provide detailed information on concrete results of measures taken by the institutions indicated in paragraph 417 of the State party report (E/C.12/CMR/2-3). Please provide information on results achieved in **improving physical access for persons with disabilities** in pursuance of the outcome of the consultation of 2006 between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Public Works.

18. Please inform the Committee of the impact of measures to combat domestic violence, including against **women and children with disabilities.**

31. Please provide information on the impact of measures taken by the State party following the annual reports on the situation of **children with disabilities** in school, including in terms of infrastructure, educational support and allocation of financial resources.

### IDA recommendations for Concluding Observations

- Collect adequate data on children and adults with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, and use disaggregated data and results of studies to develop policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for them in society.

- Take steps to ratify the CRPD and its Optional Protocol.

### **Articles 2 & 7**

- Adopt measures to ensure the elimination of discrimination of persons with disabilities in access to employment, both in private and public sectors, and to ensure that employees with disabilities in all forms of employment, including sheltered employment, enjoy rights under fair wage and labour laws on an equal basis with others. Ensure that the law provides for reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the workplace, and that its denial is recognised as disability-based discrimination within the law (Articles 2, 5(3), CRPD).

### **Article 10**

- Address the heightened risk for women and children with disabilities of becoming victims of domestic violence and abuse, including the practice of FGM on girls with disabilities, and adopt urgent measures to ensure that both services and information for victims are made accessible to children and women with disabilities.

### **Article 12**

- Adopt measures to ensure that all education, information, healthcare and services relating to sexual and reproductive health, HIV and STIs, are made accessible to children and adults with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, in age-appropriate formats and that they are respectful of the dignity and integrity of persons with disabilities based on the free and informed consent of the individual concerned, and that consensual treatment such as the administration of contraception, or fertility treatments are not denied, while all non-consensual treatment, including that for which consent is given by a third party, is not permitted by law

### **Articles 13 & 14**

- Adopt measures in the law to ensure the implementation of inclusive education of children with disabilities, such as the obligatory training of all teachers (beyond special education teachers), to require individual education plans for all students, ensure the availability of assistive devices and support in classrooms, educational materials and curricula, ensure the accessibility of physical school environments, encourage the teaching of sign language and disability culture, allocate budget for all of the above.

### **Article 15**

- Take steps to ensure the full exercise by persons with disabilities of their cultural rights and access to information by amending legislation to provide exceptions and limitations to copyright laws so that published books may be made available and accessible to persons with visual impairments and “print disabilities” beyond the provision of Braille.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cameroon’s copyright exception appears to be limited only to the production of Braille copies (Section 29(1)(g) of Law No. 2000/011 of 19 December 2000 on Copyright and Neighbouring Rights) thereby restricting access for those who require other formats such as large print, audio or Daisy (digital talking book).

Print disabled people are all those who, due to an impairment that may be physical, sensory or other, cannot read standard print. For example, a person without sight, a person whose sight is severely impaired, a person unable to hold or manipulate books or to focus or move his or her eyes.

Even in 2011, people living with a print disability still have very limited access to books and other published works. Only some 5% of published books are ever made accessible in richer countries, and less than 1% in poorer ones. The World Blind Union calls this a “book famine”. Increasingly, affordable and rapidly developing technology such as e-books is becoming accessible to print disabled people. This digital revolution ought to help end the book famine by allowing us to share accessible books worldwide. However, copyright law has not changed in line with the technology. Often copyright law prevents both the making of accessible books at national level and the sharing of them across national borders. Read more about the Right to Read Campaign <http://www.worldblindunion.org/en/our-work/campaigns/Pages/default.aspx>

