

DISABILITY FRONTLINE

Newsletter for the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD)



UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

SAFOD - *A PROMISING FUTURE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES*

SAFOD Vision, Mission & Core values

VISION: A new society where all people, including disabled people, women, and workers, men and children are treated with dignity, respect and on the basis of equality.

MISSION: To strengthen Disabled People's Organisations in SAFOD member countries through training, research, coordination, information sharing, promotion of human rights and adoption of appropriate strategies for stimulating people with disabilities to enhance their economic, political and social development.

CORE VALUES:

- Participatory and Involvement;
- Transparency;
- Accountability;
- Commitment;
- Gender Sensitivity;
- Empowerment.

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Disability FrontLine

is the quarterly newsletter of the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD).

Disability FrontLine is a Disabled People's Organisation's newsletter to own it and built unity among SAFOD Members by distributing information and announcing events.

Contributions are welcome from disabled people and their organisations in the region and beyond. The magazine is distributed free of charge to disabled people and their organisations.



Publisher: Alexander M. Phiri
Editor: Monika Scheffler
Layout & Design: Prosperity Sibanda

Editorial Committee:
Monika Scheffler - Chairperson
Robert Mkozho
Moses Chanda
Mussa Chiwaula
Dorothy Mapulanga
Prosperity Sibanda

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Dear Readers,

A few weeks ago, as I was flipping through some of my collection of in-flight magazines, I came across an article on Walter Sisulu and what he fought for in the course of his life, that is, the right for people to be people regardless of race or colour, the right to simple, warm humanity. The article is a story about three people who shared a seat on a morning flight from Durban to Johannesburg in 2003. One man was white, the other one black and the third man was an Indian Muslim. The three got talking and laughing and seriously engaging with each other until they landed at the International Airport in Joburg; they exchanged business cards and made promises to make further contact as they bid each other farewell. The story goes on to say that this type of engagement was not possible during the apartheid era when whites and blacks would not sit next to each other on a plane. Today, ordinary South Africans have become so comfortable in their own skins and have formed what is now sometimes known as the rainbow nation.

This story reminds me of our own struggle as people with disabilities. The discrimination we experience from time – to – time on the grounds of disability is similar to apartheid which separated people from each other because of the difference in terms of the colour of their skin. Disability discrimination is perhaps the last form of apartheid on this mother earth that needs to be tackled through a concerted effort by the people with disabilities themselves. Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and other courageous leaders of their time did not find it easy to fight apartheid.

This is also true of disability discrimination. It is not easy because it is a political problem; a political problem because people with disabilities face systemic barriers which limit their opportunities for equality and full participation. It is a political problem because in all countries, moreso in developing countries, people with disabilities as a group are worse off than the general population in terms of education, work opportunities, income and standard of living. Yes, as a disenfranchised group we are in the same situation as other minorities such as underprivileged ethnic and racial groups. Disability is a political problem because different priorities and a different allocation of existing resources could eliminate most of these barriers.

Disability is a political problem because people with disabilities the world over are struggling to gain self-determination and the right to speak for themselves on all issues which are important to them.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13th, 2006, presents a unique opportunity to guarantee people with disabilities equal rights to education, employment and access to community facilities, to remove cultural and physical barriers and to proscribe discrimination against persons with disabilities. It is the first international treaty to comprehensively address the needs of people with disabilities, and it sets the global standard on disability rights. However, the CRPD will remain a paper tiger for as long as our countries do not see the wisdom of implementing it through ratification.

Through our own organisations, we need to develop our own Sisulus, Mandelas and leaders who will consistently lobby for ratification and implementation of such instruments as the CRPD so that the promises of our national political leaders are translated into action and nothing else. Through our organisations, we need to pinpoint discrimination when and where it occurs and demand for recognition of our rights.

The Disability Frontline is a platform and / or medium through which we, the people with disabilities and our partners, share our own experiences and stories.

Enjoy your reading!

Alexander M. Phiri
SAFOD Director General

So much about the Convention but very little Action

Governments must be urged to sign, ratify, and domesticate the Convention before the end of 2010

The widely talked about UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006, and on 30 March 2007 it opened for signature in New York. I can remember the amount of excitement that most of us in the disability movement felt at that time. We were even more excited when the Convention came into force on 3 May, 2008 after it was ratified by more than twenty member states.

In fact, by December 2007, one hundred and seventeen states, including the EU Commission, had signed the Convention and eleven countries had ratified it. This obviously was a clear show of the huge amount of interest around this Convention. There was such a tremendous amount of euphoria about what the new Convention would contribute to the living conditions of people with disabilities in the world.

It was not that the new Convention was about new rights but rather this was a new global instrument to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same human rights as everyone else. What actually is found to be unique about this Convention is that it is a wonderful instrument that is set to be used to engage countries in the promotion of human rights issues for everyone, including people with disabilities.

The Convention has its roots in the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities of 1993.

Although the Standard Rules do not bind UN member states to implement them, they encouraged some countries to come up with wonderful policies for equalizing opportunities for people with disabilities.

But all prior treaties were not as specific, exciting and, perhaps, more relevant as the CRPD; hence the thumbs up and world-wide support that was given to the new human rights instrument when it was adopted by the UN.

Four years later, in 2010, a question that needs to be raised by the disability movement is, after so much talk, ululation, and excitement about our Convention, what action has been done or is being taken by UN member states to ensure its implementation? What happened to that euphoria about this beautiful and promising human rights instrument?

Why has there been little action taken in terms of its signing, ratification and implementation by our countries?



Realizing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Southern Africa, is one of the SAFOD's main objective for next year.

Signing the Convention by UN member states is an indication that they have started the process required by their governments for ratification. In signing, they are also agreeing to refrain from acts that would be contrary to the objectives of the Convention. When a member state ratifies a convention, it shows its intention to comply with the specific provisions and obligations of the instrument; thus, it takes on the responsibility to see to it that its national laws are in agreement with the Convention. The ratifying government is obliged to report regularly to the administrative body that is created by the convention on how it is implementing the convention. In terms of the CRPD, countries that ratified the new Convention were supposed to provide their first progress reports to the Committee on People with Disabilities (CPD) within two years of ratification and then every four years thereafter (Article 35 of the Convention). For example Spain which we understand submitted its report in May 2010.

In SAFOD member countries, the following countries signed and ratified the Convention: Lesotho (2 December 2008); Malawi (27 December 2009); Namibia (4 December 2007); South Africa (30 November 2007); Zambia (1 February 2010); those that signed but have not ratified are Mozambique and Swaziland; and countries that have not signed are Angola, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

We urge our member countries in Southern Africa that have not signed and/or ratified the Convention to do so by December 2010.

We further urge our member organizations and activists to engage their governments to sign up, ratify and



Alexander M. Phiri

domesticate the Convention before the end of the year (2010). There should be a continual education of people

with disabilities and the public to understand and appreciate the Convention, and monitor government implementation of this human rights instrument. The idea is to move with speed from CRPD to action; and I am sure it is possible for our governments in Africa in general and Southern Africa in particular to translate the Convention into action! □

By Alexander M. Phiri
Director General of SAFOD

What is the Content of the UN Convention

This column will continue to explain what the convention is about in the next two issues of the Disability Frontline. Here we present the first ten of 50 Articles of the Convention:

The Preamble explains why the Convention is needed and lists other human rights instruments that helped forming the basis for this Convention.

Article 1-4 describe the purpose, definitions, general principles and obligations of the convention.

Article 5 (Equality and Non-Discrimination) confirms that People with Disabilities (PwDs) must be treated equally and be protected by the law from any discrimination. It obliges countries to take special actions to ensure that a PwD is able to enjoy his/her rights.

Article 6 (Women with Disabilities) particularly highlights that women and girls are subject to multiple discrimination. Moreover signing countries agree that they will take action to support the growth and empowerment of women and guarantee that women with disabilities enjoy their rights.

Article 7 (Children with Disabilities) highlights that countries must always prioritize what is best for the disabled child. They have to ensure the right of children with disabilities and that their opinion is taken into account.

Article 8 (Awareness Raising) demands that countries raise awareness on disability rights in society and fight against stereotypes and prejudices about PwDs. Signing countries even agreed to make public campaigns about the rights of people with disabilities, e.g. to ensure that schools teach respect for disability rights and to encourage media to promote the rights of people with disabilities.

Article 9 (Accessibility) obliges countries to make rules to eliminate barriers that PwDs face in buildings, the outdoors, transport, information, communication and services, in both cities and the countryside. Countries must also make sure that private businesses and organizations that are open to the public are accessible for PwDs; e.g. have Braille signs and easy to read and understand information and provide help, such sign language interpreters.

Article 10 (Right to Life) claims that countries take action to ensure that PwDs can use the right to life. □

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

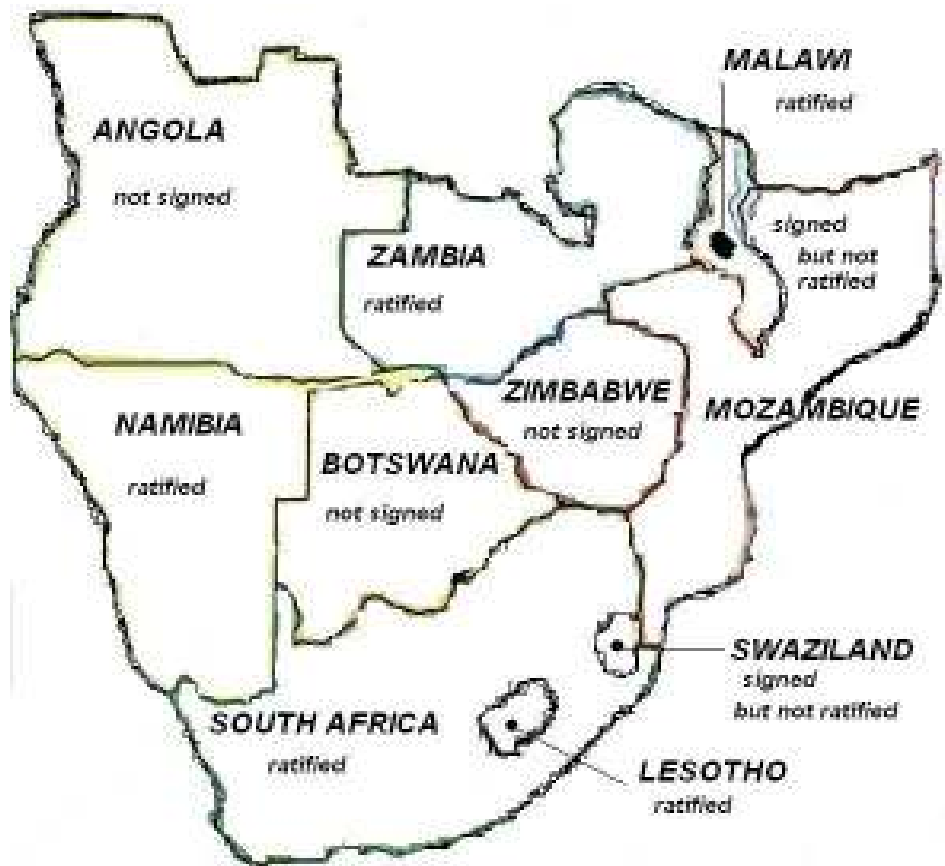
SAFOD Member Countries vary greatly in realizing Disabled Peoples' Human Rights

When Zambia recently ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) the 20th African and the 5th Southern African State joined the treaty. Hence half of the ten SAFOD Member countries commit themselves to realize disabled peoples' human rights. Two others have signed the Convention but have not ratified it yet. But up to now three SAFOD neighbour countries have not even signed the treaty, i.e. Angola, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

But altogether SAFOD Member countries performed well in comparison to other African Regions. Southern Africa is not far behind the global average of 60% ratifications. Worldwide 86 states out of 144 signatories have ratified the CRPD up to now.

Among those who have not yet ratified are the majority of the so called developed countries, like the United States of America, which only signed the convention in 2009 but has not ratified it yet. South Africa and Namibia, the first Southern African states which committed themselves to the realization of the CRPD, ratified it in 2007, followed by Lesotho in 2008, Malawi in 2009 and Zambia in 2010.

The role of non-governmental organizations, especially those of persons with disabilities, is crucial for the success of the CRPD. But what can be done by Disabled People's Organizations to convince the three reluctant governments to finally sign the convention? And what is to be done to secure the two missing ratifications? Moreover Disabled People's Organizations in countries who already have ratified can not afford to relax; they have to monitor if all the good commandments of the treaty are translated into practice for the benefit of disabled people.



It is never too late to sign the Convention!

We all think that the new disability Convention is a very good idea, but however, governments will need to be convinced why they should sign this treaty. In other words, DPOs may need to help them understand why it is in their best interests to sign the new Convention.

Why Angola, Botswana, and Zimbabwe should join the CRPD? The following are some of the reasons, why it is important to sign up and ratify:

■ To be a respected country in the world today you need to protect and uphold human rights for all members of society – ratifying this Convention sends a clear message to the world that your country is serious about human rights for persons with disabilities;

■ We all want to live in successful societies – no society can be fully productive if persons with disabilities are excluded and forced to be a burden instead of being contributing members of society. This Convention provides guidance on how to be inclusive of persons with disabilities in society;

■ Signing this Convention provides access to a network of mechanisms and activities, such as international cooperation, that can help countries in their work to uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities;

■ The Convention will help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, to which all countries have committed themselves.

DPO's should try to discuss these issues with government representatives, with members of parliaments as well as with other civil society organizations to build an alliance of Convention supporters.

How to speed up the ratification process

It is worthwhile to consider in some detail how to work with governments and other stakeholders if DPOs want to ensure that the Convention is ratified by Mozambique and Swaziland. There are five areas Disabled People need to focus on to ensure a successful campaign:

■ You need community support, so it will be important to work through the media and other stakeholders to get the larger community to support the Convention;

■ You have to build up strong relations with key decision makers, so you have to identify the political and community leaders and get their support;

■ Alliances with other Human Rights groups will be needed as well. Similarly, alliances may be sought with others who could benefit from a new treaty like parent group, rehabilitation professionals, senior citizens, etc;

■ You will need to have a strong membership base and to be on alert to mobilize people if support is not readily forthcoming.

All these recommendations are applicable for a campaign to convince governments to sign and ratify the Convention.

Monitoring the Convention Implementation

Article 33 of the CRPD explains that States must set up some sort of independent monitoring mechanisms – which usually take the form of an independent national human rights institution. The full participation of civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations is essential in the national monitoring and implementation process. DPOs should ask their governments to be included in their monitoring systems.

Moreover governments have committed themselves by ratifying the Convention to provide reports to the United Nations two years after its entry into force and its ratification. These reports should provide a comprehensive explanation on the progress made towards implementation of the Convention. South Africa, Namibia, and Lesotho are already due to submit their reports.

The reports must include:

■ A comprehensive review of the measures governments have taken to harmonize national law and policy with the provisions of the relevant international human rights treaties to which they are a party;

■ A review on progress made in promoting the enjoyment of the rights set forth in the treaties in the context of the promotion of human rights in general;

■ Identify problems and shortcomings in governments' approach to the implementation of the treaties;

■ A plan and appropriate policies to achieve these goals.

Furthermore, States Parties are obliged by guidelines that they should encourage and facilitate the involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in the preparation of reports. The United Nations guidelines are saying: *“Such constructive engagement on the part of these organizations will enhance the quality of reports as well as promote the enjoyment by all of the rights protected by the Convention. The reports should contain an explanation of the procedure used to consult with civil society and in particular with representative organisations of persons with disabilities and the measures taken to ensure that this process is fully accessible.”*

DPOs should offer their help to read the reports and comment on it from a civil society perspective.

Progress made so far

Some African Countries have already reported about their efforts towards realizing the Convention. For example Egypt amended laws and ministerial decisions in line with the Convention with regard to equal rights, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, children with disabilities, community-based rehabilitation, education and training, employment, transportation and access to buildings and outdoor spaces. Togo reported that the Directorate for Persons with Disabilities developed national strategies for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities and the implementation of its new legislation. So, do not wait for others! Let's support progress in Southern Africa. Realize the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Southern Africa! □

By Monika Scheffler
DFL Editor

FEDOMA fought Tooth and Nail for the Ratification of the Convention

We learnt with glee when Malawi finally ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on August 27 in 2009. We were somewhat amazed that this was done without any hype or fanfare. This marked a milestone and FEDOMA which had fought with tooth and nail for the ratification of this historic Disability Convention can claim a huge dividend for it.

By the way, the Federation of the Disability Organisations in Malawi (FEDOMA), formed in 1999, comprises of nine disability organisations representing a diversity of disabilities and is the focal point and a 'voice' for Persons with Disabilities in Malawi. It is playing a pivotal role in changing the disability landscape in its fight for a just and inclusive Malawi.

To reach this far, FEDOMA used every opportunity such as campaigns, media briefings and the commemoration of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities to lobby Government to ratify the Convention. A huge advantage was the presence of Rachel Kachaje in the Board of Disabled People's International (DPI) which is the global umbrella organization of all Disabled People's Organizations. She supplied FEDOMA with all the developments taking place in the United Nations regarding the Convention. Armed with this vital information, we could plan our advocacy strategies.

FEDOMA also drummed up support of the Diplomatic Missions in Malawi. The British High Commission was particularly helpful and arranged a Cocktail Party which was attended by

Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Diplomatic Corp and Civil Society Organisations. Both FEDOMA and the British High Commissioner utilized the event to call upon the Government to ratify the UN Convention.

The ratification of the UN Convention by Malawi means that the country joins a community of nations that have made a commitment in ensuring that all policies, implementation strategies and practice take into account the rights of persons with disabilities. All sectors of society have a role to play in the implementation of the Convention. Especially this broad approach will lead to the improvement of the quality of life of disabled people.

Certainly the ratification of the UN Convention is one of the greatest things that have happened in the history of disability in Malawi. It is a major boost towards the empowerment of persons with disabilities in the country. At least 10 % of the population will benefit from it. These 1.3 million citizens are today among the poorest of the poor. Malawi's ratification of the Convention is meant to "promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity". The approach of the Convention is developmental and rights based.

FEDOMA feels that it is very crucial that the policy and legal framework in Malawi is in tune with the provisions of the UN Convention. All the obligations, the government signed have to be implemented now. In this respect, FEDOMA has also spearheaded the



Mussa Chiwaula

drafting of the Disability Bill which is now waiting to be presented to Parliament for enactment. The ratification of the UN Convention has greatly assisted in galvanising this process and FEDOMA is hopeful that the Bill will be enacted by the end of this year into law.

The ratification of the UN Convention also means that as a nation, Malawi is obligated to live by the letter and spirit of the Convention. FEDOMA is now working towards ensuring that the Convention will be domesticated. First it has to be put in the language that is easily understood by all citizens. We will continue to lobby government to ensure that the political will that has been demonstrated by the ratification of the UN Convention should also be expressed through the thorough implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

It is only when this is done that the UN Convention can be brought to fruition and be meaningful in the lives of persons with disabilities in an inclusive Malawi! □

By Mussa Chiwaula
FEDOMA Executive Director

Making it Work - From Good Practice to Good Policy

In most countries, there are significant gaps between the high standards set by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the standards of national policies. But between the CRPD and the reality on the ground for people with disabilities there is a chasm. The Making it Work-Initiative is ambitious enough to try to bridge the enormous gap.

In 2008, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was brought into force. This major piece of international law represents a significant step towards addressing the poverty and social exclusion experienced by people with disabilities. In due course, signatory states will have a legal obligation to take affirmative actions toward the inclusion of the rights of people with disabilities in all laws, policies, services, and practices. But few Governments have access to information on how to develop policies that can have a meaningful impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

To address this, some projects choose to report violations of disabled people's rights and campaign to hold the Government to account. Other projects take a top-down approach and focus on national level policy with the view that this will eventually 'trickle down' to impact on people's lives.

Making it Work (MiW) adopts a different, more "bottom up" approach by collecting examples of local, innovative practices that have impacted positively on disabled people's lives.

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MiW believes that it is possible to make positive, concrete recommendations to Government about how to develop inclusive policies. The aim then, is to develop MiW projects that can make a direct connection between the CRPD and disabled people's lives.

This means finding out what has worked on the ground – then to replicate and scale up: from Good Practice to Good Policy.

Making it Work Projects

MiW Projects will usually focus on one disability rights issue (for example education or livelihoods) on a regional, national, or local level. They are independent projects, with their own governance and funding. All MiW projects share four common objectives:

- To collect information on key disability issues and practices that:-
(a) uphold the principles of the CRPD ;
(b) impact positively on disabled people's lives;
- To document this information on good practices and produce thematic MiW reports with recommendations for policies;
- To plan and carry out advocacy activities based on MiW report recommendations;
- To monitor the implementation of the MiW report recommendations and any subsequent changes in policy;

Guideline for developing Making it Work Projects

Guideline for developing MiW projects is published and be downloaded from : www.makingitwork-crpd.org. It is designed to help implement the projects. These are research and advocacy projects aimed to promote the rights of people with disabilities.

MiW projects can be effective at local, national, or regional levels.

The Guideline is aimed at Civil Society, in particular Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs). However, it can be used by anyone with an interest in promoting the CRPD.

Who is behind Making it Work

Making it Work is a multi-stakeholder initiative, which includes Handicap International, Disabled Peoples' International, Inclusion International; CBM; Leonard Cheshire Centre for Inclusive Development; Mobility International USA and the Inter-American Institute on Disability and Development.

The aim is to share experiences of work to implement the CRPD and avoid working in isolation. The initiative also wants to facilitate South-to-South exchange, identify shared funding opportunities, and strengthen advocacy efforts.

The headquarter of Making it Work is hosted by Handicap International in the United States of America. The MiW International Team can be contacted for all inquiries. It offers general information and technical support as well as detailed advice on budgeting, funding and finalizing MiW Action Plans. □

Address:
Handicap International, USA
Phone: +001 (301) 891-2138
Fax: + 001 (301) 891-9193
E: info@makingitwork-crpd.org
W: www.makingitwork-crpd.org

What's new in SAFOD's Programmes?

Not all what is happening in SAFOD's programmes can be mentioned here – otherwise the report will never come to an end. The ongoing projects, especially the SAFOD Research Project (SRP), are busy as usual. The second issue of the Disability Frontline – which will be published in September 2010 – will focus on the SRP. Here there are only two new developments within the SAFOD programmes:



Participants posing for a photo in Gweru, Zimbabwe.

SAFOD empowers DPOs in Zimbabwe

Twenty representatives from ten different Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) in Zimbabwe met in Gweru, the Midlands Capital City from the 3rd to the 5th of June 2010 to participate in a "Needs Assessment and Participatory Planning Workshop". SAFOD, with funding support from the African Development Foundation (ADF), organised a workshop where the ten DPOs, affiliated to Zimbabwe Federation of Persons with Disabilities (FODPZ), discussed, and identified their priority needs and programmes. The programmes focussed on required development assistance for agriculture, food security, and livelihoods.

The participants also received and discussed a report on the survey of the DPOs and assessment on their current capacity and potential to make a

difference for PWDs in Zimbabwe. This project has been developed because of the inability of civil society welfare organizations (including DPOs) in Zimbabwe to provide support and services to their members-which has been dramatically reduced in recent years due to government policies and a reduction in donor funding.

The workshop was conducted by an experienced consultant contracted from Rostan Development Company (PVT) LTD. For the economic empowerment of DPOs, through agriculture related projects to succeed, the delegates felt that FODPZ needs to be capacitated to be able to: timely dissemination information to its members; link with DPOs, NGOs and other regional bodies such as SAFOD etc. And also building coalitions with other organizations; raise alarm on issues coming from its

member organizations; capacitate its DPOs; save database of its member organizations and produce best practices.

However, FODPZ needs to have office space and this is being arranged with the help of SAFOD. It will always be willing to assist DPOs in its member countries through their umbrella bodies to fulfil its mission of strengthening DPOs through training, research, coordination, information sharing, promotion of human rights and adoption of appropriate strategies for stimulating people with disabilities to enhance their economic, political and social development.

Living Conditions Study in Lesotho & Swaziland

A national representative household survey among people with disabilities is currently being carried out in Lesotho and Swaziland. This is a collaboration project between the National Federations of People with Disabilities in Lesotho and Swaziland and SINTEF. The studies are funded through the Norwegian Federation of Disabled People (FFO). Both research projects are supported by SAFOD. These studies follow similar surveys in Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia. They are part of an effort to establish a regional database on the situation of disabled people in Southern Africa. The next Living Condition Study will be carried out in Botswana in 2011, and Angola in 2012. □

By Robert Mkozho
Regional Programmes Officer
of SAFOD

Spain first country to submit report to the United Nations

In May 2010 Spain submitted its initial report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All countries that ratified the new Convention were supposed to provide their first progress reports to the Committee within two years of ratification and then every four years thereafter (Article 35 of the Convention). Spain is the first country to submit a report to the Committee on how the rights of persons with disabilities are being implemented. For Southern Africa Namibia and South Africa are overdue to submit their reports. □

Mary Ennis left DPI in May 2010

Mary Ennis left DPI due to health issues. The Executive Director of Disabled People's International (DPI) began working at DPI in 2005. She was the first community representative to the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She soon persuaded the Canadian Government to support a stand-alone article on the rights of women with disabilities in the Convention.

We will never forget her particular dedication to women with disabilities. Her tireless effort was to fight against the continued marginalization and victimization of women and girls with disabilities. Rachel Kachaje from Malawi, DPI Deputy Chairperson for Development and Under-Represented Groups states that Mary helped her "to carry the banner for women in Africa."

Indeed Mary supported the development of Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) which is generously hosted now by SAFOD. DIWA and SAFOD want to thank Mary Ennis for her support and friendship. □



Mary Ennis

Shuaib Chalken named UN Rapporteur on Disability

Shuaib Chalken of South Africa has been appointed the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development for the period 2009-2011. He is the Director of The SAFOD Research Programme. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur is to monitor the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, and to advance the status of persons with disabilities throughout the world. □

Epilepsy Support Foundation of Zimbabwe

The Epilepsy Support Foundation of Zimbabwe is a registered voluntary welfare organization founded in 1990 to improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy through mobilisation of

charitable and development resources for research, training, treatment, awareness, advocacy and empowerment. It has an active membership of 2000 members.

A research recently undertaken in the Zvimba district, Mashonaland, to assess the impact of primary health care worker training also recommended the need for research into the prevalence of epilepsy at baseline level. There is urgent need to scale up advocacy on knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices particularly in rural settings. The Epilepsy Support Foundation seeks funds to conduct baseline researches and to build human capacity.

For more details, please contact epilepsyzimbabwe@gmail.com □

Human Rights Course in Finland

The Institute for Human Rights is offering an Intensive Course on the Role of Human Rights in Development: Impact and Responsibility, in Turku, Finland, 8-12 November 2010. This one-week course offers participants an opportunity to acquire specialist-level knowledge in the field of human rights and development. For information, go to <http://web.abo.fi/institut/imr/courses.htm>

A limited number of scholarships is available participants from Africa. Applicants from Africa without the financial ability to pay for the course should use a separate Scholarship Application form: <http://web.abo.fi/institut/imr/scholarship.application.form.Development10.doc> □

Publications & Events

Disability Rights Convention Campaign Handbook

This handbook will certainly be of help for anybody who is advocating for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The book does not only offer valuable knowledge about the Convention but is an effective advocate for ratification of the Convention. It explains in detail how to mobilize support with various partners and how to engage media to publicize and get public support for the ratification.

The Handbook contains three sections. Each section includes easy-to-read and easy-to-use information, including removable samples and handouts in each section. These sample advocacy tools can be modified or edited according to your specific needs. The first section of the book provides knowledge necessary to conduct advocacy activities for the ratification of the Convention. It gives general background information about what a human rights convention is and answers to some frequently asked questions. The second section contains hands-on tools that will help to effectively plan and implement a ratification campaign. It contains planning tools, sample letters, and other materials. Here there is information on the ratification process provided. The third and final section offers media tools. Media advocacy is a key to gather support from the general public. The tools will help to get journalists interested, to organize a press conference, and to prepare press releases. All documents can also be found on the Survivor Corps website and can be downloaded for free: www.survivorcorps.org □

“Able-bodied: scenes from a curious life” by Leslie Swartz

Prof Leslie Swartz, who is well known by the Disability Movement in Southern Africa and who currently lectures disabled peoples representatives within the SAFOD research Project in research skills, has recently published his first non-scientific book. “Able-bodied: scenes from a curious life”, was launched on the 1st June 2010 in Cape Town. Prof Swartz is a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at Stellenbosch University. He is one of South Africa’s foremost scholars in disability studies, and an internationally recognised researcher and author. He has written and contributed many books and articles on psychology, mental health, and disability.



Professor Leslie Swartz

Able-Bodied is a unique account of how being the son of a disabled man brought Leslie Swartz to a professional life working with disability issues. Swartz is telling this story with wit, compassion, and frankness. Able-Bodied is a fascinating blend of personal narrative, anecdote, and reflection on society, medicine and ethics. The book is published by Zebra Press: www.zebra-press.co.zw □

Up-coming Events

SAFOD Corporate Governance and Gender Sensatization Workshop

In cooperation with the Norwegian Federation of the Disabled (FFO), SAFOD will hold a corporate governance and gender sensitization workshop from 6-10 September, 2010, in Cape Town, SA. Corporate Governance means to ensure the accountability of individuals or organizations through mechanisms that try to eliminate the principal problems. □

SAFOD Research Programme (SRP)

Database Management Training Workshop:

The Database Management Training Workshop will take place from 13 to 17 September 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia. Participants will participate in the design of a common database structure which can be used for recording purposes of research projects conducted by disabled people and organisations affiliated to SAFOD. □

Generic Training Workshop

The Generic Training Workshop will be held from 25 to 29 October 2010 prospectively in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Generic Research Training Workshop is being organised to help build the capacity of people with disabilities and their organisations to undertake research. □