



**High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the  
Final Review of the Implementation of the  
Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012  
Incheon, Republic of Korea**

**Senior Officials Segment Opening  
29 October 2012**

**Welcome Statement  
by  
Mr. Shun-ichi Murata  
Deputy Executive Secretary  
ESCAP**

Your Excellency, Mr. Park Yong Hyun, Assistant Minister of Health and Welfare, Government of the Republic of Korea,

Senator Monthian Buntan, newly-elected member of the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Mr. Song Young Wook, Chairman of the Korean Foundation for Persons with Disabilities,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the Disability Community,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to the Senior Officials Segment of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

ESCAP is deeply grateful to the Government of the Republic of Korea for its generous hosting of this historic meeting.

Permit me, Mr. Park, to convey through you, ESCAP's warm appreciation of the hard work and wonderful cooperation of all colleagues in the Ministry of Health and Welfare throughout these past two years in preparations for this meeting.

I warmly thank civil society stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, for your active engagement in the preparatory process from June 2010 onwards.

I also thank our sister agencies in the United Nations system for contributing technical expertise to the substantive preparations.

Looking back over the past 20 years, we see that the Asian and Pacific region has demonstrated significant leadership in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Twenty years ago in Beijing, your predecessors in their wisdom, launched the world's first regional decade of disabled persons, from 1993 to 2002, with the theme of full participation and equality.

Ten years ago on the shores of Lake Biwa in Japan, member States launched in Otsu the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, from 2003 to 2012.

At Otsu, our member States enshrined the rights-based approach to disability issues in the Biwako Millennium Framework.

This paved the way for the 2004 "Bangkok Draft" which was the substantive Asia-Pacific foundation for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you can see, the Asia-Pacific region has been a trail blazer on disability rights and development.

Yet, despite such progress, we still face daunting challenges.

One major challenge is the region's large number of persons with disabilities living in poverty.

Another challenge is the region's unprecedented pace of population ageing, with its serious implications for disability prevalence.

Such challenges require us to translate into action the spirit and content of the Convention.

Therefore, our governments have proclaimed the new Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, from next year to 2022.

Member States and civil society stakeholders engaged in an inclusive consultation process that drew lessons from two Decades to yield the draft outcome document for this meeting, the draft ministerial declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon strategy to “make the right real” for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

The value of this outcome document lies in its emphasis on generating evidence and measuring progress to support governments in designing and implementing policies and programmes that respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with diverse disabilities.

The Incheon Strategy will give the world its first set of disability-inclusive development goals.

Ten goals, for 10 years.

Each goal will have targets and indicators for tracking progress.

This outcome will be a substantive contribution from the Asia-Pacific region to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities, to be held next September.

We count on you, as the vanguard for the new Decade, to reach consensus on the way forward.

Let us be worthy of the hopes of 650 million persons with disabilities.

Let us make the right real!

Thank you

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