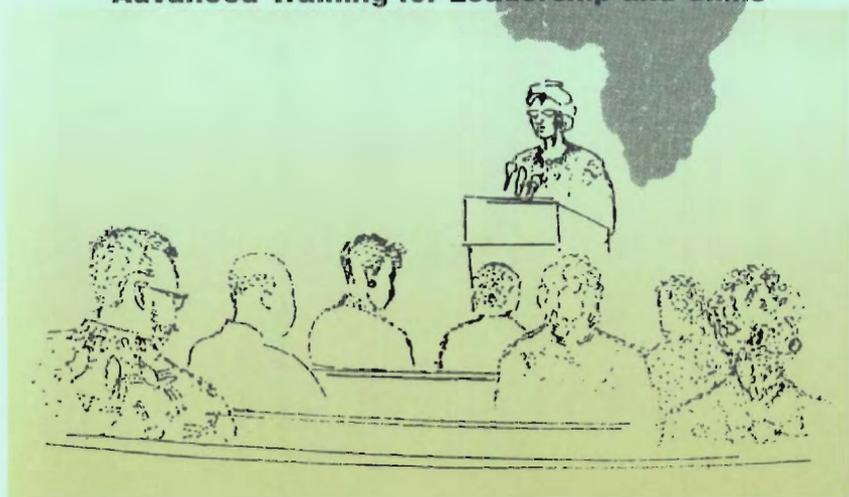


# A T L A S

Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR  
THE DISABLED: LEADERSHIP'S ROLE

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA  
SEPTEMBER 13-17, 1999

## **Executive Summary**

**Creating an Environment for the Disabled:  
Leadership's Role**

**September 13 -17,1999**

**Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

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**Conference Rapporteur:** Anne Bakilana  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**Keynote Speaker:** Hon. Mrs. Mary Karumuna  
Member of Parliament  
Government of Tanzania

**Conference Organizer:** Ms. Niamani Mutima  
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ATLAS/AAI

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The proceedings of the ATLAS conference on "Creating an Environment for the Disabled: Leadership's Role" have been summarized in this Executive Summary pending the Final Report. The sentiments expressed in these papers are not necessarily the views of USAID or AAI.

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## Background

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**A**TLAS is administered by the Africa-America Institute (AAI), and is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). ATLAS coordinates advanced degree and leadership training in the United States, and activities in Africa to promote professional development and networks among alumni of U.S. training programs. The goal of all of these activities is to improve the ability of African institutions and organizations to promote sustainable development on the continent.

ATLAS Enhancement and Field Service activities include conferences and workshops in Africa, grants to African-based professional associations, and publications. These activities are geared to promoting professional networks among those Africans trained in the U.S. who have returned home, and to strengthen their ability to contribute to the national development of their respective countries.

The conference on “Creating an Environment for the Disabled: Leadership’s Role” held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, September 13 - 17, 1999 was one in a series of these activities. Thirty-five delegates representing twelve African countries and the U.S. came together to examine the role of those in leadership positions in creating an enabling environment for the disabled. The conference focused on strategies that could be implemented on the local and national level to provide access to goods, services and opportunities for those with disabilities, and promote their participation in the workforce.

Discussion topics included:

- Equal Rights and Advocacy;
- Education and Workforce Development; and
- Technology Tools for the Disabled

The following is a summary of the week’s discussions and presentations. The full text of the presentations will be published in the Final Report.

## Opening Session

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**N**iamani Mutima, Chief of ATLAS Field Services, welcomed the delegates and guests from the United States and Africa. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss how partnerships can be formed to create an enabling environment for people with disabilities. Ms. Mutima expressed the hope that the conference would provide an opportunity not only for discussion and information sharing, but also for reflection and making new contacts. She expressed pleasure at the distinguished guests in attendance who included Stanley Baker, Acting Director of USAID in Tanzania; The Honorable Mrs. Mary Karumuna, Member of Parliament; Simon Mponji, Interim Chairman of the American Alumni Association of Tanzania (AAAT); and Dr. Wayne Patterson, Scholar-in-Residence of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and member of the ATLAS Deans Committee.

Mr. Baker welcomed the delegates and guests and talked about the role of USAID, and its partnership with AAI and the CGS through the African Graduates Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) and the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS) program. He commented on the importance of the conference, mentioning that there is a need to end the physical, social and cultural difficulties facing people with disabilities. He called on the delegates to identify ways of raising awareness of these issues and translating it into policy.

Following Mr. Baker, Dr. Wayne Patterson talked about the role CGS plays in the ATLAS program. He also spoke of his enriching experience participating in the selection of candidates during his visits to Africa, and working with them as students in the United States. He reiterated CGS's commitment to continue current programs, and to expand its activities working with education in Africa.

The next speaker, Mr. Mponji, gave a brief history of AAAT which was started in 1993 by USAID. The aim of AAAT is to organize individuals trained in the US under USAID sponsorship so that they can become involved in community work, and also to form networks among themselves. Mr. Mponji said that the conference topic touched on some of AAAT's concerns. The members looked forward to sharing ideas and engaging in discussions concerning the design and implementation of policies for people with disabilities.

The Hon. Mrs. Karumuna was the Keynote Speaker. She welcomed the delegates and guests and commended the USAID and AAI for sponsoring and organizing the conference, which provided a needed forum for discussion of issues concerning people with disabilities. She pointed out that while the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is being heralded as the century of science and technology, is

just around the corner, people in developing countries are bypassed by these developments; most are still facing problems of basic existence, and for the disabled, the situation is even worse. She challenged the delegates trained under the USAID's AFGRAD and ATLAS programs to share information with each other and to develop strategies to utilize their training to help people with disabilities.

## **Creating an Environment for People with Disabilities**

**O**n the first day of the conference the delegates discussed the three theme areas of the conference: technology tools, equal rights and advocacy, and education and workforce development. The definition of “disability” was raised along with the question of whether one who is marginalized should be categorized as disabled. An example was given of the pygmies, or the Twa people, who are often treated as disabled. The group agreed that for the purpose of this conference, the discussions would focus on people with physical and mental disabilities, not to exclude other forms of disabilities, but to keep the discussion focused on developing appropriate strategies. It was agreed that experiences working with people with disabilities would be shared irrespective of the category.

The session ended with a list of issues under each conference topic that the delegates agreed would form the core focus of the discussions for the remaining days of the conference. The issues included:

### **Technology Tools**

- Lack of manpower to manufacture and repair wheelchairs, hearing aids and braille machines, making these devices expensive to produce
- Problems of accessibility to buildings and lifts without braille buttons
- Training to make drivers aware of the significance of the white cane  
Traffic lights that do not cater to people with vision impairment.
- Technology advances that are not matched by income generating activities for people with disabilities
- Lack of hearing assisted technology for the deaf
- Formulation of policy without the involvement of people with disabilities
- Possibility of restructuring work places so that people with disabilities are given tasks within their capabilities

The point was made that the distinction between technology to assist people with disabilities, and technology adapted to help them work better is an important one, and both should be addressed. The delegates also expressed the need for a forum where information on technology for the disabled could be exchanged.

## **Equal rights and advocacy**

- The use of offensive terms to describe those with disabilities
- Discrimination in jobs selection
- Lack of awareness about disability issues as reflected in the attitudes and cultural practices directed at the disabled
- Failure to enforce laws against discrimination.
- Importance of involving those with disabilities when formulating policies affecting them
- Lack of access to health care and medical treatment
- Lack of transparency and accountability in working to alleviate problems faced by those living with disabilities
- Need for an institutional framework to deal with disability issues
- Peer education and sensitization to disability issues as a human rights issue
- Making donor aid conditional on fair treatment of the disabled
- Supporting NGO's dealing with the disabled

## **Education and Workforce Development**

- Lack of basic education and vocational training for people with disabilities
- Lack of access to training materials such as braille
- Training needs of professionals and community members
- The need to revise and update the curriculum for special schools
- The need for training in relevant skills for the work place
- The need for research on the best methods for educating people with disabilities
- Exploration of whether intergrated schools are more appropriate for certain types of disabilities, while the needs of students with other types of disabilities would be better met in special schools

## **Adaptive Technology: Making the Information Society Accessible to the Disabled**

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*Dr. Wayne Patterson*

*Dean in Residence*

*Council of Graduate Schools;*

*Professor of Computer Science*

*University of Charleston and Howard University*

**A**daptive technology or assistive technology is an area of technological development that provides ways for people who are paraplegic, visually impaired, hearing impaired, or have cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or similar disorders to have access to a full range of services and opportunities.

An example of how computer technology has been adopted to assist people with disabilities is the availability of different keyboards for persons with limited or no hand and finger movement. There are also smaller keyboards which can fit between the arms of a wheelchair, or used by people with one hand. It is also possible to modify the standard keyboard so that one finger can be used for combination strokes. This method involves the sticky key option which enables a user to execute two consecutive keys simultaneously.

For persons with limited movement, or who are fully paraplegic, pointing devices such as a touch pad, J-mouse, trackball or finger-point can replace the standard “mouse.” For persons who can not use a hand or a finger, pointing on the screen can be achieved through the movement of the head, either by using a headmaster or a head-mouse. It is also possible for people who can not operate switches to use a suck-puff tube that is capable of operating keys by a puff of breath.

Several options exist in video display technologies for the visually impaired including the zoom function and options to change the font size to create larger print on the screen, and to improve contrast and brightness.

Developments are needed in text-to-speech production or speech synthesis for the completely sightless. Although the human voice can translate text to speech, the quality of the computer-generated voice remains unsatisfactory, especially if one has to listen for a long time. Major improvements have been made in speech recognition, including software that will allow the user to dictate and edit text into Microsoft Word, and to switch to other applications. The quality of speech generated text depends on how accurately the computer can interpret the individual voice. A device that predates the computer era but still continues to be very expensive is braille. Many standard installations of Windows have a Braille font as part of the application, and it is possible to

have a printer that translates standard text into Braille.

The issue of the high costs of assisted computer technology does not apply only to Braille machines. Apart from the example of speech recognition software, most of the devices demonstrated during the presentation would not be affordable to poor people living in Africa. While it is possible to include people with disabilities in the “information society,” the costs will hinder its use by the majority of people with disabilities.

## **Education and Training for People with Disabilities**

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*Khalfan H. Khalfan*

*Executive Chairperson*

*Zanzibar Association of Disabled Persons*

Starting with a quote from Nelson Mandela, “It is a long walk to freedom”, Mr. Khalfan drew parallels between the people of South Africa who had suffered under apartheid and people with disabilities who are still denied their human rights. People with disabilities are still denied the right to education, a right that is explained in Rule 6 of the United Nations Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

Education for persons with disabilities remains inaccessible mainly because schools are not equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities. In Zanzibar, there is no policy to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same rights to education as non-disabled children, and there is no enforcement mechanism to enable children with disabilities to attend school. Such conditions have led to high levels of illiteracy among people with disabilities. A study that included interviews with officials of the Zanzibar Ministry of Education, found that the Zanzibar Education Act of 1982 did not consider the educational rights and needs of people with disabilities.

The following educational needs for people with disabilities should be addressed:

- Governments have to recognize the principles of equal educational rights and opportunities for people with disabilities and ensure that the education of people with disabilities is part of the existing educational system.
- The education of persons with disabilities should be part of the national educational planning, curriculum development and school organization.
- Adequate accessibility and support services designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities should be provided.
- Parents and organizations of people with disabilities should be involved in the education process at all levels.
- Governments must have a clear, well-understood policies accepted by both the school and the community, that addressed issues of curriculum, teaching materials and teacher training.

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- Consideration should be given to the education need of those who are deaf, and those who are both deaf and blind, and special schools or special units in mainstream schools provided to address them.

The Zanzibar Ministry of Education's Five Year Master Plan in education stipulates that needs be determined through a needs assessment. The emphasis has been placed on the development of a clear policy which is understood and accepted by all, with a curriculum suited to the needs of all.

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is one of the more effective strategies for the implementation of programs on the prevention, rehabilitation, integration and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. As a basic right, rehabilitation of persons with disabilities should be implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities themselves, their families, and communities, and with the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services.

The Zanzibar Association of the Disabled in Zanzibar, set up about ten years ago, is one example of CBR. It is entirely managed by the Association and has accomplished a lot in changing the community's attitudes towards disability. The community, including parent groups and community leaders, are fully involved in the program which is empowering children with disabilities. The staff is guiding family members in training children in all aspects of development. The program is also providing training to traditional birth attendants, traditional healers, schoolteachers, and the community. The program also includes socialization, education, sensitization, and leadership training.

## Special Education in Nigeria

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*Dr. Peter Mba  
Senior Lecturer  
University of Ibadan*

**A**lthough many countries in Africa spend as much as 40 percent of their budgets on education services, a small portion of that amount is spent on people with disabilities. The traditional denial of the right to education for disabled persons is exemplified in Nigeria, where, until a few years ago, in a population of over 100 million, fewer than 2000 children with disabilities were in school. Since that time, the Federal Government has declared the education of people with disabilities free, and many more schools with trained teachers have been established.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education in 1977 defined special education as the education of children and adults who have learning difficulties because of different sorts of disabilities. Such children need appropriate facilities, specialized materials, and teachers with specialized training for an effective education. It has been pointed out that emphasis on special education should shift from categorizing children with special needs, to determining how a given disability has affected the functioning for each child with a disability. Classification of children with difficulties tells nothing about what is done for the child with disabilities, which should be the primary concern of special education.

This point of view highlights the importance of individualized instruction as a cardinal principle of special education. A survey on special education needs in developing countries a few years ago found that priority needs basic to the survival of special education in developing countries included:

- Periodic identification of children with disabilities should be part of the public school program undertaken in conjunction with public health authorities.
- Governments should make education and medical care of children with disabilities free at all levels.
- A full spectrum of programs and services should be provided so that each child can benefit. Budgets should include expenses for educational services and administrative costs, as well as transportation, welfare services, research and adequate remuneration for all special education personnel.

- Increased training opportunities are needed for special education personnel including teachers, researchers, psychologists, audiologist, physical therapists, vocational counselors, and administrators.
- Negative public attitudes must change to positive understanding toward “differently-abled” people.
- Research in all areas of Special Education is needed including the psychological effects of each kind of disability, medical aspects, sociological adjustment, vocational and recreational needs, and demographic studies.

A study conducted by Dr. Mba on the prevailing negative attitudes about the education and rehabilitation of people with disabilities revealed that the majority of the general public still believed that education of the disabled was a bad investment. The popular conception is that people with disabilities rarely work as hard as their able-bodied peers, and constitute employment hazards such that insurance companies do not cover them.

## **Legal and Human Rights For Disabled Persons in Tanzania**

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*Johnson Jasson*

*Human Rights Center for Disabled persons (HRCDP)*

Tanzania participated in the United Nations sponsored program on the Decade of the Disabled (1983-1992), and ratified the 1983 International Labor Organization Convention No. 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons. Tanzania is also among those countries which are signatories to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Person of 1975. Two laws protect people with disabilities: the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act, No. 2 of 1982; and the Disabled Persons (Care and Maintenance) Act No. 3 of 1982.

Despite the existence of all these legal instruments, people with disabilities are still marginalized. Policy makers and government attitudes have been cited as the greatest factors affecting the rights of persons with disabilities in Tanzania. In education, employment, transport, communication, and housing, people with disabilities in Tanzania have no provisions that address their needs.

The disabled movement in Tanzania is still young and weak. There are five organizations of people with disabilities dealing with different categories of disabilities. There is the Tanzania Association of Disabled Persons (CHAWATA) which serves the physically disabled. The visually impaired are organized under two organizations: the Tanzania Society for the Blind and the Tanzania League for the Blind. Other organizations are the Tanzania Deaf Association and the Tanzania Albino Society.

Most of these organizations have managed to reach only a minute portion of persons with disabilities, as access to members is difficult, and for most disabled persons, the first and foremost issue is survival. Joining a special interest organization is a remote option. The weakness in most of the organizations of people with disabilities in Tanzania is attributed to unemployment, poor policy, and a lack of education among members. The lack of government guidance has resulted in each organization developing its own way of dealing with the problems of its members.

In an effort to address some of these problems, lawyers with disabilities established the Human Rights Center for Disabled persons (HRCDP). The Center has no affiliation to any political or religious body. It offers legal assistance to all categories of disabled persons and campaigns for the enforcement of human rights for disabled persons. It also works toward sensitizing the

general public to the plight of the members of the disabled community. HRCDP also offers counseling. Often, the problems are not strictly legal ones, and clients simply need to talk with someone who understands their problems. The center addresses itself to all issues concerning disabled persons and disability, and more specifically, to the legal aspect of their protection and upholding their dignity.

For the past two years the majority of HRCDP cases have involved labor disputes with former employees in the Civil Service. The legal clinic also helps disabled women, many of whom have been abandoned by able-bodied men after the man discovers the woman is pregnant. Through the application of the law of marriage, the women are usually advised to file civil suits in courts of law to compel the fathers to maintain their children. The clinic has also received numerous cases of disabled children abandoned by their parents and relatives.

In order to achieve equal rights for disabled persons, public education is of paramount importance. Affirmative action is needed to ensure that disabled persons can become self-reliant. They should be guaranteed a free education. In this respect, specialized schools and other institutions should be discouraged because they promote isolation from the able-bodied society. Educational services must be based on assessed needs mutually agreed upon by authorities, administrations, parents and disabled students leading to clearly stated curriculum goals. New measures must be designed to encourage private employers to employ more disabled people, with a suggestion that people with disabilities make up at least five percent of their workforce.

The Government should ensure that people with disabilities are involved in decisions affecting them. Election materials must be accessible and election manifestos and other campaigning materials should be printed in Braille for the blind. Sign language experts must be available during the campaign and on television. The constitution of Tanzania should guarantee free education, housing, medical services, employment and public transport.

In conclusion, the public must be educated to change its negative attitude toward people with disabilities. People must be informed of the potential of people with disabilities in if given the necessary support.

## **The Intellectually Challenged in Ghana: The Imperative of Prevention, Education and Rehabilitation**

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*Dr. Araba Sefa-Dedeh*

*Clinical Psychiatrist*

*University of Ghana Medical School*

**I**t is estimated that there are 1.5 million people with disabilities in Ghana, but it is impossible to estimate how many of these are intellectually challenged since many such children and adults do not use institutions like hospitals where their presence could be documented. Between 1980 and 1990, the Clinical Psychology Unit of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Ghana Medical School examined between 5 to 10 children a week for admission to schools for the mentally handicapped.

The majority of the children seen were diagnosed as epileptic, intellectually challenged, or both. The most common symptom was “convulsions,” usually as a result of post-natal viral and bacterial infections, or sometime as a result of pre-natal and congenital factors leading to poor brain development and brain injury. Attitudes towards the intellectually challenged vary, and while many Ghanaian communities accept the presence of the mentally handicapped, many retain their negative attitudes.

Disability is often perceived as a result of supernatural causes, usually as punishment for breaking taboos, or an attacks from malevolent others based on envy. In traditional society, communities that have felt unable to care for their disabled dispose of them at birth through rituals that result in the death of the babies. The fear and stigma that develops from such attitudes often result in disabled children being hidden, especially the intellectually challenged. Some of these negative attitudes persist in modern Ghanaian society, but there are also positive attitudes.

Obviously, intellectual handicap is a tragic consequence of the health problems in Ghana that affect children. This has major implications for health policy and disease prevention. It is important that maternal and child health care, and immunization policies and education highlight the implications for intellectual as well as physical development.

The first private school in Ghana for the mentally challenged was opened in 1972 by the mother of a mentally challenged girl. Currently, there are schools in Sekondi, Koforidua, Bator and Hohoe which teach rudimentary academics and simple vocational skills. Since the 1994 UNESCO conference in

Salamanca, Ghana has been working to make its public schools inclusive, and has had some successes in the education of the blind with the integration of the Wenchi and Okuapeman Secondary schools. For the physically disabled, inclusion has always been the policy. Efforts are being made in the training of mainstream teachers to work with children with special needs in ordinary classrooms where they have not received any educational services in the past. Problems of accessibility, isolation and stigmatization can then be better addressed.

However, there are practical problems in implementing the inclusion policy as many public schools have basic logistic problems. For example, over-crowded schools make it difficult for teachers to teach. Many teachers have problems with the teaching of English as a second language. As a result, many public school children are unable to read or write either English or their local language. Teacher supervision is poor because the lack of personnel, low wages, and poor working conditions contribute to low moral..

In Ghana, once school is over there are no services for the intellectually challenged. As a result, some schools find it impossible to graduate their students, and parents plead with schools to keep their wards a little longer. There is a great need for sheltered workshops in the community where the intellectually challenged could be involved in productive work. In lieu of, or in addition to this, individual craftsmen could train or employ intellectually disabled youth to work for them.

The Community Based Rehabilitative Program (CBRP) of Ghana has made some attempts at integrating the disabled into their communities. The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, Education, Health, and local Government collaborated to initiate a project with aims to:

- Raise awareness and mobilize resources at the village level thereby enabling parents to be more effective in helping their disabled children to attend school, learn skills and participate productively in family and community life.
- Establish links between service providers in health, education, community development, and social welfare at the district level.
- Strengthen the associations that serve people with disabilities to enable them to play a role in the mobilization of the community, implementation of village activities, and the management of CBRP.

## **Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

*Dr. Ahlonkoba Aquereburu*

*Head, Counseling and Diagnostic Unit*

*Togo National AIDS Program.*

**T**oo often the lives of people with disabilities are handicapped by physical and social barriers which hamper their full participation and debases them. Many disabilities could be prevented through measures taken against malnutrition, environmental pollution, poor hygiene, inadequate prenatal and postnatal care, and water-borne diseases and accidents. The international community could make a major breakthrough against disabilities caused by poliomyelitis, tetanus, whooping cough and diphtheria, and tuberculosis through worldwide expanded immunization programs. Government has the ultimate responsibility for remedying the conditions that lead to impairment, and improving life for people with disabilities. However, individuals, organizations, community members, and the disabled have a great role to play.

In developing countries as many as 80% of all people with disabilities live in isolated rural areas. In some of these countries, the disabled population is estimated to be as high as 20% and thus, if families and relatives are included, 50% of the population could be adversely affected by disability. Some factors that are responsible for the rising numbers of disabled people include:

- Wars;
- Populations with a high proportion of illiteracy and little awareness;
- Inadequate primary health care programs and services;
- Low priority in social and economic development for activities related to equalization of opportunities, disability prevention and rehabilitation;
- Misuse of therapeutic substances and the illicit use of drugs and stimulants.

For people with disabilities to achieve a standard of living equal to that of able bodied persons, there has to be an equalization of opportunities. It requires that all aspects of society, such as the physical and cultural environment, housing and transportation, social and health services, educational and work opportunities, and recreational facilities are made accessible to all people with disabilities.

Many countries have taken important steps to eliminate or reduce barriers for people with disabilities. In many cases, legislation has been enacted to guarantee people with disabilities the right to, and opportunities for, schooling, employment and access to community facilities. Governments must undertake the necessary measure to eliminate any discriminatory practices by:

- facilitating organizations of disabled persons where people with disabilities have power to make decisions related to their activities;
- providing health care and services needed to eliminate or reduce the disabling effects of impairment. This includes the provision of social, nutritional, health and vocational services needed to enable disabled individuals to reach their optimum levels of functioning;
- ensuring that disabled persons have the opportunity to utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of the community;
- adopting policies that recognize the rights of people with disabilities to education;
- encouraging a comprehensive public information program about the rights, contributions, and needs of people with disabilities that would reach all concerned;
- ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to obtain all forms of income, maintenance and social security; and
- increasing assistance to organizations working with people with disabilities and helping them to organize and advocate for their interests.

## **African Decade of Disabled People**

**M**r. Khalfan Khalfan spoke about the African Decade of Disabled People (2000-2009), and the Pan African Federation of the Disabled (PAFOD). The African Decade of Disabled people will be a follow-up to the 1983-1992 United Nations Decade of Disabled people which did not have the impact anticipated, especially in Africa. This is an initiative of people with disabilities in Africa to have a decade that will focus on an African approach to the problems of disability and thus, develop African solutions to the problems. To avoid the mistakes of the UN Decade, several international meetings have been held to discuss and support the efforts by PAFOD to organize the activities for the Decade. As a result, PAFOD has been given a mandate to coordinate activities for disabled people throughout Africa during the Decade.

Africa has been divided into five regions with regional Federations that will coordinate activities of the Decade within their region. These Federations are the:

- Southern African Federation of the Disabled;
- Eastern Africa Federation of the Disabled;
- West Africa Federation of the Disabled;
- North African Federation of the Disabled; and
- Central Africa Federation of the Disabled.

To ensure effectiveness of activities undertaken during the African Decade of Disabled Persons, regional meetings will convene every three years, and a committee will be formed before the launch of the Decade on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999 to work closely with PAFOD. Members of this committee will come from organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, Economic Commission for Africa, African Rehabilitation Institute, African Union of the Blind, and International Organization of the Deaf/Blind. To make this Decade a success, political will from governments is an absolute necessity. The world needs to understand that what people with disabilities are calling for is simply the recognition of their human rights.

As part of its activities, PAFOD urges the OAU to continue with peace initiatives, since war is one of the major causes of disability. The OAU is also being urged to ensure that gains made in the Africa Decade for Disabled People are not reversed, and that the advancement of disabled people remains a priority and responsibility of the OAU.

## Views from the Field

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This panel was an opportunity for the delegates to share information regarding the work they are doing with people with disabilities.

***Mzolisi Toni***, who is the Deputy Secretary-General of the Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), gave a brief history of his organization and its activities. The organization started in 1984 as an initiative to have people with disabilities deal with their own problems. Until 1991, its main activity was to mobilize people with disabilities from all over South Africa. In 1991 the organization received funding from the government through the Independent Development Trust which supported the establishment of offices, and more organized advocacy activities. Initially, they encountered resistance from professionals who traditionally were the providers of services to people with disabilities in South Africa, and who felt that their jobs were being taken.

Informed by what happened in Zimbabwe at independence, the Disabled People of South Africa seized the opportunity to influence the first elected government of South Africa. They recommended that the African National Congress support candidates with disabilities, and one of them was elected to parliament. DPSA has been successful in sensitizing the government to issues related to people with disabilities. They have produced a policy document and have convinced the government to establish a desk in the Deputy President's office that coordinates all ministerial departments that deal with issues of disabilities.

Despite their achievements, they have faced several challenges. For example, when they fought for the interests of children with disabilities to be included in the Education policy, they encountered resistance from teachers from "special schools" who felt they would lose their position if children with disabilities were included in mainstream schools. It was a challenge when the organization recommended that employers hire people with disabilities, but employers could not find qualified people. In some cases, in seeking qualified candidates, DPSA staff members were offered the jobs. This weakened its capability and effectiveness. DPSA still faces the major challenge of making an impact at the local government level. Currently, the organization is preparing candidates to stand for local elections next year. The other challenge is funding, and the organization hopes to have President Thabo Mbeki champion their cause.

***Humberto Brito***, a Hospital Administrator in Cape Verde, spoke on the strategies adopted in Cape Verde for the integration and promotion of people with disabilities. Two per cent of Cape Verdians are disabled, which is a significant number considering that the country has never had a war, and is

relatively free from many of the diseases that cause disabilities in other parts of Africa. The large proportions of people with disabilities have physical disabilities (39.5%), followed by people with mental disabilities (21%).

Until the 1980 International Year for the Disabled, the government of Cape Verde gave very little attention to people with disabilities. At most, it provided them with food, an allowance and equipment for personal use. There was little opportunity for people with disabilities to receive education, and access to buildings and transport was very limited. Cape Verde now has two associations for people with disabilities: the Association of Handicaps Support and the Cape Verde Blind Association. These associations have adopted strategies to become a strong voice for people with disabilities, and to sensitize the government and the society about disability issues.

The Constitution of Cape Verde recognizes the rights of people with disabilities, and the government has enacted laws that protect them. In addition to support for projects for people with disabilities, the government has started a Community Rehabilitation Program under the Ministry of Social Promotion. In 1984, the government created the National Committee for the Integration of Disabled Persons, which advises the government about how the government can define, coordinate and execute national policy on education, rehabilitation and social integration for people with disabilities.

***Himatlal D. Shah*** is the Director of ***Shah Industries***. His company employs people with disabilities. He first employed a person with a disability on a trial basis at the request of one of his employees; the person became a permanent employee. Since the hiring of that first employee, the business has employed a large number of people with disabilities, and they have been as productive as other employees. When Mr. Shah's father died in 1979, a small foundation to help the disabled was established in his name because he was instrumental in encouraging Mr. Shah to employ people with disabilities.

Shah Industries does not have problems related to the employment of people with disabilities, but it faces the same problems as other businesses in Africa such as exchange rate fluctuations. It has been encouraged by international organizations such as NORAD who assisted them during a glue shortage, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in training some of their workers. The government of Tanzania has not granted special exemptions to Shah Industries as an employer of people with disabilities. The harsh economic environment has meant that they had to reduce the number of people they employ, and as a consequence, those with disabilities have suffered considerably.

## Recommendations

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The conference concluded with the following recommendations adopted by the delegates. They agreed to take these recommendations back to their home country and institutions and use them as a framework for improving conditions for people with disabilities.

### Education and Workforce Development

- Those Governments, which have not ratified convention No. 159 of the International Labor Organization on Training and Employment of People with Disabilities, should immediately ratify and implement this convention.
- Governments and organizations of people with disabilities must work together to develop education curriculum that is relevant to different educational needs of people with disabilities and their environment.
- Governments and Trade Unions should give special consideration to those enterprises which employ people with disabilities by providing initiatives such as tax exemptions.
- Governments should ensure that people with disabilities receive training relevant to the workforce needs and their abilities.
- Governments should provide education to people with disabilities in the general school system, and where necessary, provide special schools.
- Governments, organizations of people with disabilities, and NGO's should develop strategies which will help to raise public awareness on disability issues.
- People with disabilities should be viewed as important and valued members of the population and should be given the proper training and education. As such, governments should formulate clear policies on education access for people with disabilities.
- ATLAS should support the capacity building and enhancement of the leadership role of people with disabilities.
- Governments should refer to Rule No. 6 and 19 of the United Nations Standard Rules on equalization of opportunities.

## **Advocacy and Human Rights**

- Government and all its specialized branches should collect census data on people with disabilities.
- Normal data collection by Government agencies at all levels should include information concerning people with disabilities.
- Situation surveys should be carried out periodically to discover the needs vis-à-vis the real situation of people with disabilities.
- Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) should develop an appropriate terminology and make it widely known and used.
- DPOs should work with the media to help change attitudes and educate communities.
- DPOs should develop a culture of positive attitude towards themselves.
- DPOs, in collaboration with the media and interested institutions, should create a comprehensive awareness and lobbying mechanism.
- Government should implement the provisions of the United Nations Standard Rules (UNSR) Rule No 1 regarding awareness of people with disabilities.
- Institutions related to human rights of persons with disabilities, and other organizations of people with disabilities, should be strengthened by government support to carry out advocacy and lobbying.
- Parliament, Government, DPOs and all relevant institutions should insure that the rights of people with disabilities are enshrined within the Constitution.
- Government should develop a clear policy regarding people with disabilities.
- UNSR Nos. 14 & 15 on Policy Making and Legislation should be implemented and governments should establish an independent monitoring body with adequate representation of relevant stakeholders in order to insure implementation.

- Government must ensure that public buildings and other facilities and services are accessible to people with disabilities.
- UNSR No. 5 should be implemented by governments and relevant organizations.
- Government, NGOs and Donors should reinforce prevention campaigns for children and other vulnerable groups in order to reduce disabilities.

## **Technology and Tools**

- Governments, DPO's and donors should make appropriate tools and devices available to people with disabilities.
- Government and policy makers should ensure that all devices and equipment for people with disabilities are tax free or subsidized.
- Governments, donors and the manufacturing industry should ensure that training should be available for the disabled in the maintenance of technology tools for the disabled.
- The Pan African Federation for the Disabled (PAFOD), governments, research institutions and alumni should do an inventory of devices, and manufacturing origin for people with disabilities in countries in Africa.
- Research institutions, private sector, government, and NGO's should develop the capacity in Africa to manufacture devices for people with disabilities.
- Governments and relevant organizations should implement UNSR No. 4.
- PAFOD should conduct a survey of all useful devices and equipment for all types of disabilities available abroad that can be adapted to the African environment.
- ATLAS, PAFOD and alumni should spearhead an African forum and network for training and exchanging information on technology tools for people with disabilities.

## Agenda

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### Monday, September 13, 1999

- 9:00 am      Opening Session  
*Stanley Baker (USAID/Tanzania)*  
*Hon. Mrs. Mary Karumuna, Member of Parliament*
- 10:30        Break
- 11:00        Ice Breaker Exercise and Introductions  
*Dr. Hilda Sinkonde*
- 12:30-2:00   Lunch
- 2:00         Discussion: Creating an Environment for the Disabled
- 3:30         Break
- 4:00         Discussion

### Tuesday, September 14, 1999

- 9:00 am      Topic: Technology Tools for the Disabled  
*Dr. Wayne Patterson (United States)*
- 10:30        Break
- 11:00        Topic: Education and Workforce Development  
*Khalfan Khalfan (Zanibar)*  
*Dr. Peter Mba (Nigeria)*  
*Dr. Araba Sefa-Dedeh (Ghana)*
- 12:30-2:30   LUNCH
- 2:30         Topic: Equal Rights and Advocacy  
*Dr. Johnson Jasson (Tanzania)*  
*Dr. Ahlonkoba Aquereburu (Togo)*
- 3:30         Break

4:00 Questions/Discussion

**Wednesday, September 15, 1999**

9:00 am Field Trip

**Thursday, September 16, 1999**

9:00 am The African Decade for the Disabled  
*Khalfan Khalfan (Zanzibar)*

10:30 Break

11:00 Panel: Views From the Field:  
*Mzolisi Toni (South Africa)*  
*Humberto Brito (Cape Verde)*  
*Hamatlal Shah (Tanzania)*

12-2:00 Lunch

2-5:00 Working Group Sessions

**Friday, September 17, 1999**

9:00am Presentation by Working Groups

10:30 Break

11:00 Discussion/Synthesis of Recommendations

12:00pm Closing

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