

**GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISCUSSION No. 58

**PROMOTING INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN FOOD SECURITY  
AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES**

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***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

I.	GENERAL INFORMATION .....	2
II.	INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC .....	3
III.	LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS .....	4
	Contribution by George A. Akalemwa from University of Roma TRE, Italy.....	4
	Contribution by Kanchan Lama from WOCAN, Nepal .....	5
	Contribution by Majid Turmusani from Recherche et Développement O'Bois International, Canada.....	6
	Contribution by Rachel Zedeck from Backpack Farm Agriculture Program, Kenya.....	7
	Contribution by Simonetta Capobianco from Italy .....	7
	Contribution by David Lewis from CBM, Australia .....	7
	Contribution by Paulien Bruijn-Rietveld from Dark & Light, The Netherlands .....	8
	Contribution by Stefan Hagelueken from World Vision Deutschland, Germany .....	8
	Contribution by David Lewis from CBM, Australia .....	10
	Contribution by Julius Caesar Ssemyalo from Mount Elgon Arabica Project, Uganda .....	11
	Contribution by Wim Polman from FAO, Italy .....	12
	Contribution by Peter Steele from FAO, Italy.....	13
	Contribution by Joyce Lambuli from Uganda.....	13
	Contribution by Kudakwashe Dube from SADPD, South Africa .....	15
	Contribution by Renu Lohani from Disabled People's Organisation Denmark, Nepal .....	17
	Contribution by Kudakwashe Dube from SADPD, South Africa .....	18
	Contribution by Paul von Hartmann from the USA .....	18
	Contribution by Lizzy Igbine from the Nigerian Women Farmers Association (NIWFA), Nigeria .....	19
	Contribution by Moisés Gómez Porchini from Mexico .....	19

Concluding remarks by James Edge, topic raiser .....	21
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## **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

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Duration:                      from 08.07.2010 to 28.07.2010

Number of Contributions:      20

## II. INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC

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Dear Forum Members,

For decades the international disability movement has been saying that disability is a cause of poverty, that poverty often leads to disability and that disabled people are among the poorest of the poor in any country. Estimates by the World Bank suggest that 1 in 10 of the world's population has a disability, with 80 per cent being in developing countries.

'Mainstreaming disability into development cooperation is the process of assessing the implications for disabled people of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making disabled people's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that disabled people benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve disability equality.' Carol Miller and Bill Albert, **Mainstreaming disability in development: lessons from gender mainstreaming** (March 2005).

I would add that the mainstreaming of disability goes beyond disability equality, but also benefits the poorest of the poor and society as a whole.

I have been working with disabled people's organizations over the last ten years, as a researcher and communications specialist. I have become increasingly interested in disability in the context of development, and am constantly surprised by how little effort is put in to making all development programmes relevant to all stakeholders, including those with disabilities.

**- What efforts, if any, are being taken in your region, country, or institutions to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities into policies and programmes related to food security and nutrition?**

**- How can policy-makers be convinced that without the involvement of Disabled People's Organisations and the mainstreaming of disability issues on the MDGs and Right to Food agenda that these goals and rights will not be realized?**

Thank you for your thoughts and inputs on this topic. I hope that some of your responses can help guide future work in the area of disability and agricultural development.

James Edge  
Communications Officer  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Rome, Italy

### III. LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS

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#### **Contribution by George A. Akalemwa from University of Roma TRE, Italy**

Dear James and Forum members,

Thank so much James for raising such an important topic on the Forum. As you have rightly observed, surely poverty and disability can be said to be synonymous. Disability is the cause of poverty and poverty can be visible seen in many of the disabled people. However, for now I would be comfortable to call them the 'Disadvantaged people in our communities', if we recall the World Bank's "World Development Reports", of 2000 where it states "Attacking Poverty", and another one "Making Services Work for Poor People" in 2004. Both papers slightly gave a clear map of the disadvantaged people on how they can cope with poverty and be on the course of development. However, many challenges have still dodged the many unsolved issues of the extent of poverty in many of our disadvantaged people. When we broadly look at the terms of 'poverty' and 'disability' the two terms are placed together and what arises in our minds is "Disadvantaged People are the Poorest of the Poor" to discourage careful thinking. Most people will agree that poverty and 'disability' are often linked; but most people do not have slight ideas of them being 'disadvantaged', and it can also be true then to say many 'disadvantaged' people are not poor in some cases. For many years, a lot of international 'disadvantaged' organizations have been singing in corridors of the rich that being 'disadvantaged' is the one of the main causes of poverty and that poverty actually leads a person being 'disadvantaged'. So help us be somewhere like able bodied people. Our imperfect world today, if serious considerations are taken, can actually involve many of the 'disadvantaged' people in our communities in food security and agricultural development programmes and policies in areas such as:

- **Decision Making and Planning:** 'Disadvantaged' persons or Persons with disabilities are rarely represented at many national and local forum including Parliament, Councils, Political Parties and mainstream Civil Society organizations of many developing countries today. I am not sure in high income countries.
- **Legislation & Policy:** Take for example in Zambia a country in sub Saharan Africa, to my knowledge, there is only one piece of legislation on 'disadvantaged' (disability) namely the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 33 of 1996 which was only enacted to usher in an organization called the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Nothing more. Now with only one such kind of legislation on paper which talks less on how these people should be protected and included in many food security developmental projects, how then can we expect these people to contribute to food security of any country if they are so marginalized. However, in any case, since its enactment and enforcement its violations are rarely recognized due to mainly ignorance, among the various stakeholders, of what it entails.
- **Economic Policy:** Disability issues are mainly not explicitly taken into account in the national and local government budgets including development agencies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Not until these policy can be more inclusive to the extent that these people can be encouraged to participate fully, can we see the contribution of the 'disadvantaged' people in any form of production of any kind.
- **Disadvantaged Peoples Organizations:** Most disadvantaged organizations to my little knowledge in most developing countries (I may be corrected), don't have infrastructure of their own as their operating premises. They also lack equipment, skilled manpower, proper record systems, and funding as well as sustainable projects. As a result most national Disadvantaged Peoples Organizations lack the capacity to deliver their services to the grassroots' membership and are subsequently absent at the grassroots level hence little or no production of any kind visible. The list is endless.

•  
In 2000, when the world agreed to the UN's Millennium Development goals (MDGs) which were signed by the many countries, one may have thought that the prioritization of poverty reduction in developing countries as goal 1, should have also outlined or included means and ways of hearing the voices of the 'disadvantaged' but alas!!!! there was little or no platform which was created for

the inclusion of the 'disadvantaged' in most if not all the MDGs. I cannot remember of any of the eight MDGs or some aid of some kind which clearly states the uplifting of these people's lives through agricultural development programmes in many developing countries. Yes, successful cases may be there but they are countable and I will be happy to know and where. Unfortunately all this has been left in the poor hands of the Disadvantaged People's organizations (DPOs) to make their cases known to the world on poverty platforms. Not until we appreciate that these people can actually contribute to the improvement of food security in our communities by involving them more and more on the few and many more stated points, I am afraid they will still continue hanging on the thin line of poverty.

George A. Akalemwa.

Student Masters Human Development and Food Security, Roma TRE. Roma. Italy

**I commit myself to fighting hunger and food insecurity in our communities**

### **Contribution by Kanchan Lama from WOCAN, Nepal**

Dear Moderator,

First of all thanks a lot to James for raising this touching issue. I do not have experience in this but am interested to participate in the process, to learn and express my opinions

#### **1. Efforts for inclusion of specially able people**

In Nepal, we describe as "specially able", as they have lots of potential and capacity on their own style. Yes, in Nepal, there are few efforts to include the specially able s in every discussion implying on policy formulation on land right, food right, etc. which is however insignificant and depend on the interest of the organizers.

I wish to share one case of private sector initiative in Kathmandu: One chain restaurant, namely, "Nanglo" employs deaf and dumb youths (male/female) as restaurant waiters, gives them skills and puts signs in the restaurants for customers to cooperate with them by sign language. They are motivated and happily do the work. We very much appreciate this example and look forward to others, government sectors to follow "inclusion policy" for these friends in a visible way.

However there is no specific program or policy to ensure inclusion of the specially able in policy discussion, except inviting one or two representatives from them to attend the meetings or workshops through their organized federation. Anyway, policy is there for inclusion, but due to practical problems this is not yet happening well

#### **2. Convincing policy makers**

I think the issue can be profiled heavily through this network and the network of the specially able and document cases of real life issues of the special able in regard to food insecurity and nutritional conditions as an impact of negligence towards the specially able within family, community and public policies. Discrimination starts at home, and so home environment cannot be underestimated for building confidence of the specially able. The State also has the responsibility to address their needs differently. So we need case documentation (and dissemination) to present to the policy makers....not cases only of suffering BUT cases of how some governments are doing the best...so that the specially able know what to claim for. And how change happened! Then dialogues needs to be continued between the groups and policy makers...and they need planned investment without which they cannot do it. Who will do it? The specially able themselves, as this is their agenda. Others cooperate.

MDG monitoring system must include indicators of specially able inclusion in poverty reduction, - "mortality rate" and "literacy rate" indicators only do not help the issue. There needs to be an indicator for number of "how many specially able people have accessed food"...nutrition

services" ... "what is the rate of literacy among this group"? Food access needs to be ensured for men and women in this group. So indicators need to be gender disaggregated.

Can your office monitor and report on what percentage of specially able people participated in the global policy forums on food security and nutrition? The organizers need to arrange for travel, translators (if needed), accommodation , etc. for representatives from the food deficit countries of the world in global policy discussions, so that the specially able could articulate the importance of inclusion by themselves and do some innovative organizing efforts in their country.

The representatives can voice the cases from own countries and through a collective strategy influence the policy dialogue on food security, MDGs, etc.

Thanking you  
Regards  
Kanchan Lama  
WOCAN Coordnator (Nepal)

**Contribution by Majid Turmusani from Recherche et Développement O'Bois International, Canada**

Dear All,

I wonder if you could help in this survey!

We are carrying out research on Employability of Disabled People in Enterprises specialized in Training & Skills Development in both rural and urban settings including for example, those involved in disability related food production programs. A survey has been designed for this purpose as below. Link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MMG89HY>  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=8m\\_2fwflll1Flf7PUXGZNKtw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=8m_2fwflll1Flf7PUXGZNKtw_3d_3d)

The research aims at identifying barriers that hinder the integration of disabled people in the labor market and suggest strategies for improving their employability. Despite the fact that this survey targets training enterprises in general, the focus remains on the employability of disabled people, their needs and their aspirations.

This survey is part of a larger situational analysis of disabled people's employability. There will be focus group discussions and also interviews with disabled service users, managers of services and planners in public, private and NGO's sector in provincial and federal level (Quebec, Canada). However, the bulk of data for the international perspective comes from your participation. At the end of this research, a copy of main results and recommendations will be sent to you.

It would be appreciated if you could kindly fill out this survey before end of July 2010.

For technical comments, please contact Majid Turmusani at:  
[Obois\\_rech\\_devel@cegepoutaouais.qc.ca](mailto:Obois_rech_devel@cegepoutaouais.qc.ca) until July 2010 and afterwards at:  
[mturmusani@yahoo.ca](mailto:mturmusani@yahoo.ca)

Thanks for your cooperation and your participation and views are much appreciated.

Majid Turmusani  
Recherche et Développement  
O'Bois International  
Gatineau (Québec)

### **Contribution by Rachel Zedeck from Backpack Farm Agriculture Program, Kenya**

I can only approach this question from a practical perspective.

First, how are we defining "disabilities?" Either way, whether these be mental or physical challenges, "inclusion" becomes a challenging task.

Don't forget that subsistence farming models are hard work. We seem to disregard the physical commitment needed to put plants in the ground and then pull them out again before they even reach the marketplace. So is this really the ideal environment for the physically challenged and do we border on "abuse" of the mentally challenged as a resource for manual labor. So maybe we need to expand the specific scope of how we develop capacity within the disabled.

In an effort to expand the technical capacity of rural smallholder farmers, we face the challenge of establishing skilled and dedicated technical trainers. Ideally, they are working within specific communities at a grassroots level with an understanding of local language and mindset. In my mind, this is the perfect opportunity for community members with disabilities to contribute while limiting the manual labor that may be physically prohibited.

When defining new policy initiatives, we need to remember the cultural role that agriculture plays. Food is the primary product of agriculture, but is only one of multiple benefits. Farming can help to establish equality while offering a tangible benefit.

Rachel Zedeck  
Managing Director  
Backpack Farm Agriculture Program  
Nairobi, Kenya

### **Contribution by Simonetta Capobianco from Italy**

Dear All

With regards to mainstreaming disability, in 2006 the European Commission co-financed 12 European NGOs in implementing a Project titled "**making development inclusive**". The project has just been reapproved (20110-2011) and it will be implemented by the International Disability and Development Consortium [www.iddcconsortium.net](http://www.iddcconsortium.net).

The project developed quite a number of interesting documents and tools on mainstreaming. They're all posted on the specific website:  
[www.make-development-inclusive.org](http://www.make-development-inclusive.org).

Hope this is helpful.

Regards,  
Simonetta Capobianco  
Rome, Italy

### **Contribution by David Lewis from CBM, Australia**

Dear All,

People with disabilities are actively engaged in agriculture, gardening, growing fruit trees and livestock keeping in countries throughout Asia, the Pacific, Africa and the Americas.

In fact, is there a country of the world where people with disabilities are not actively engaged?

The participation of people with disabilities in their own food security, and that of their families is of huge significance throughout the world.

Since the end of 1989, I have had the privilege of working together with people with disabilities in programmes incorporating food security, through their own participation in agriculture.

The CBM (*Christian Blind mission, Ed.*) supported programmes I worked with in Sierra Leone, Niger and countries of West Africa, had a key objective to encourage rural people with disabilities, into all manner of agriculture.

People actively participating had visual, hearing, physical, intellectual and neurological impairments, many of them severe.

The positive outcomes of these programmes, and of many similar programmes which remain active around the world are remarkable.

I will attach case studies relating to these over the next few days.

With an estimate that 60% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2030, I would be grateful to see gardening, fruit tree growing and livestock keeping ideas for people with disabilities in urban environments. Including ways to secure produce during production.

Warm regards,

David L. Lewis  
Director - Strategic Programmes  
cbm Australia  
[www.cbm.org.au](http://www.cbm.org.au)

**Contribution by Paulien Bruijn-Rietveld from Dark & Light, The Netherlands**

Dear all,

In 2009, seven Bangladeshi organisations in cooperation with 3 Dutch NGOs (ICCO, The Leprosy Mission and Dark & Light) started the Food Security Programme for Ultra Poor Women in Gaibandha, Bangladesh. This 5 year programme, supported by the European Union, aims to reach 40.000 ultra poor households. Dark & Light and the Leprosy Mission joined the consortium to make sure that persons with disabilities and/or Leprosy are included in the Food Security Programme. The local organisations Center for Disability and Development and Leprosy Mission Bangladesh provide training to the project staff on how to include persons with disabilities in the income generating and agricultural activities. A lot of awareness raising needs to be done in this regard. Besides that, persons with disabilities receive the necessary rehabilitation services. So far the results are promising: during the first year 9% of the households included in the programme have a disabled family member. We expect this percentage will raise in the years to come. Women with a disability or with a disabled family member get priority in the selection process.

The Local delegation of the European Union was very enthusiastic about this new approach, it surely contributed towards approval of the proposal. Very recently the European Union adopted disability as a cross cutting issue, so there are plenty of opportunities to include persons with a disability in a regular Food Security programme.

With kind regards,

Paulien Bruijn-Rietveld  
Programme Coordinator  
Dark & Light  
For inclusion of persons with disabilities  
For eradication of avoidable blindness  
The Netherlands  
[www.darkandlight.org](http://www.darkandlight.org)

**Contribution by Stefan Hagelueken from World Vision Deutschland, Germany**

Dear James and Forum Members,



Yes, Rachel is right, the inclusion of people with disabilities might well be a challenge, regardless if we think of physical or mental disabilities. Kanchan very rightly mentions "specially able". In this sense I would like to provide some input:

Some years ago I used to collaborate for a smaller German NGO (Terra Tech) with a center for children with disabilities )and youth (both, with physical and mental impairments, some multiply) in Tver / Russian Federation.

My translator in that project always spoke of "children with restricted abilities". Over the years, I more and more started to appreciate this terminology, well meaning that they HAVE abilities! The contrary I also experienced in the wording, since many Russian doctors talked about "Defectology".

Please allow me to tell you a little more about that center in Tver and my experience with them - especially about the youth, hoping to give some ideas on opportunities in the sector of inclusion of people with disabilities, and probably also providing David Lewis with some example concerning "gardening".

The (translated) name of the center was "Island of Hope", and it really was for many children and youth with disabilities. We (Terra Tech) got in contact with that center in 1996, some years after they started as an initiative of parents which by that time for several reasons was not easy in Russia. Thanks to the EC's TACIS-LIEN-programme we were able to enter into a partnership - programme, initially with a duration of 2 years, basically regarding training of Russian staff and implementing vocational training in wood and metal processing for a group of youth with different disabilities. The main experiences of this vocational training were:

1. It was not easy, but due to the huge and dedicated engagement of the center's director, it was possible to convince the town's administration and the "Regional Chamber of Industry and Commerce" about the feasibility of such a pilot. The Chamber of Commerce approved the curricula before the training started and sent representatives to the final theoretical and practical examination.
2. Each and every trainee completed the training successfully, of course with varying degrees and concrete skills obtained - depending on the specific disability. One of them was a real professional in "sanding" wood - he was doing it with great patience and care, and none of the others was able to "beat him" in this skill! In the end he even got a job in a local fabric, where he was employed especially for this kind of work. Also quite a number of the other trainees could be transferred to some employment after the completion of the training, most not earning a lot, but having an income and enabling them to contribute to the survival of their family for the first time in their life.
3. Most of the trainees spend many "extra-hours" in the workshops, producing objects of decoration or for practical use (like chairs or benches) for their home.
4. You would not believe, how happy and proud they all were, when we officially handed over the certificates after the final examination!

After this successful "pilot experience", we started to train more vocational trainees with funds from other (private) donors (2 German foundations) - one in sewing and one in gardening in a green house, which had been constructed. The gardening tools as well as chairs and desks for the center's rooms were produced in the metal and wood workshops. In the green house a group of about 10 youth with disabilities were trained in all aspects of gardening (especially in growing vegetables like tomatoes and cucumber, salad, herbage, and some flowers). The products enriched the diet for all children in the center. Many of the youth started planting and growing vegetables at home in their families's "dacha" or on their balconies.

Why did I tell this story? To stress the fact of abilities of "people with disabilities". Yes, as David says, We can well primarily look at DIS-abilities; or look for ABILITIES - INCLUSION, we think, should especially look for and strengthen the ABILITIES. I consider it to be clear without saying, that this entire (very positive) experience would not have been possible without the admirable dedication and the wonderful ideas coming from our local partners (the "local community").

Stefan Hagelueken  
WFP/FA/FS-Coordinator

World Vision Deutschland  
Germany  
<http://www.worldvision.de>

### **Contribution by David Lewis from CBM, Australia**

Dear All,  
Many thanks for the helpful contributions and suggestions. Please find following a case study from Niger:

Case Study: Working with persons with disabilities to improve their food security and overall quality of life in the Sahel Zone of West Africa.

### **The "Survival Yard" Programme in Niger.**

**Principle partners : PRAHN, Niger / Union Nationale des Aveugles du Niger / CBM.  
Case study prepared by Paul Caswell, CBM, Nigeria and David Lewis, CBM Australia.**

Inclusion of persons with disabilities is essential if food security is to be achieved for any population.

Their inclusion is also essential if all parts of the population are to benefit from the Millennium Development Goals.

Niger is ranked as the bottom country of the 2009 UN Human Development Index (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>). Forty percent of children under five years are malnourished ([http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/ner\\_aag.pdf](http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/ner_aag.pdf) ).

Many rural people are trapped in the cycle of poverty and disability. (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/disabilitypovertydevelopment.pdf> p. 7.)

Closely linked to their chronic shortage of nutritious food, is their lack of access to clean water and sanitation; food for livestock; firewood; access to education, immunisation, health and rehabilitation services and to wider employment opportunities.

Climate appears to be changing, with the growing season for crops becoming shorter, prompting many people to leave rural Niger. They travel to the capital Niamey, or to the West African coast seeking employment or opportunities to beg.

### **Survival Yards**

"Survival Yards" is an innovative programme working together with persons with disabilities, their families and communities.

Careful selection and training of clients and families, is a key to encouraging innovation in developing a 25mx25m "survival yard", with well and simple watering canals.

A strong fence is essential to protect the yard from livestock.

Just inside the fence, a border of productive bushy trees is used to create a micro-climate against harsh winds off the Sahara.

Gardening and trees (fruit and other), provide vegetables, fruit to eat and sell, fodder for livestock and firewood..... AND therefore the means and incentive for people with disabilities and their families to stay in their communities.

### **Activities built into the programme include:**

- Promotion of locally grown produce to improve nutrition

- Community education on disability inclusion, nutrition, health (including HIV prevention), clean water, sanitation and hygiene
- Improving access to immunisation, health care , pre and post natal care
- Improving access to rehabilitation (including eye and orthopaedic surgery)
- Promotion of the SAFE strategy (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial cleanliness, Environmental improvement) against trachoma, and reduced risks of infant mortality or blindness due to Vitamin A deficiency (due to improved nutrition / Vitamin A capsules given at immunisation)
- Promoting use of treated mosquito nets against malaria
- Improving access to schooling for children
- Construction of latrines
- Construction and use of fuel efficient stoves to reduce firewood consumption (this also frees up time for women / girls to produce and prepare food, due to reduced time collecting firewood)
- Cleaning of compounds and use of compost heaps
- Secure stabling of animals (to reduce manure close to living quarters)
- Creating access to markets
- Promoting improved storage of produce
- Loans for donkey carts (income generation through transport of goods)

The programme benefits from highly committed local staff, ongoing monitoring & evaluation with adjustments to keep it on track.

It also promotes all the principals and domains of the WHO Community Based Rehabilitation matrix.

It is an extremely encouraging example of creating food security, of promoting MDG7 and empowerment, and creation of links with all other MDGs.

An updated version of this project (only in French) can be found here:  
[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fsn/docs/Le\\_Jardin\\_de\\_survie\\_au\\_Niger\\_CBM.doc](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Le_Jardin_de_survie_au_Niger_CBM.doc)

### **Contribution by Julius Caesar Ssemyalo from Mount Elgon Arabica Project, Uganda**

Dear All,

Differently abled people are able to participate in meaningful agricultural activities as evidenced by "Kawule Disabled Persons and their Families Association" found in Masaka. I worked with this Association from 1999 - 2005 as their field extension worker on organic farming and livestock production projects with funding from Send a Cow Uganda. A baseline survey and appraisal preceded the focused and main streamed skills development, capacity building and placement of improved livestock (poultry, dairy goats, meat goats and grade dairy in calf heifers). The able bodied members of the families/guardians and guide helpers would duly attend the training so that they can support the beneficiaries in managing the enterprises depending on the severity as established on a case by case basis.

These farmer partners would also carry out improved backyard, kitchen or key hole gardening. Replication has been possible and other projects that have adapted this model include Buseta, Bugiri, Bukiyi, Nampanga People with disability projects in Eastern Uganda. This is a family and or community integration as opposed to the Institutional approach for supporting the differently abled members in society. Non Governmental agencies like Send a Cow Uganda can offer learning insights on their practical model if asked or partnered with.

Best regards,

Julius Caesar Ssemyalo  
 Producer organisation trainer/Internal certification inspector  
 Mount Elgon Arabica project.

## **Contribution by Wim Polman from FAO, Italy**

Dear All

I find the observations made by Rachel Zedeck (*previous contributor, Ed.*) very important. Having in mind that alone in the rural sector in Asia more than 200 million small farmers/rural workers are mentally or physically disabled and dependent for their livelihoods and inclusion upon family and community. Family always comes in first place for support. Often the constraints are social-cultural, they are often the hidden people in the village. FAO started in Asia around 1998 a unique technical project approach towards empowerment of disabled farmers as self employed food producers (not welfare dependent not wage labour dependent). A training program was set up in collaboration with government in Thailand based upon village level identification of potential candidates. They were first given an intense training focused on building self respect and enjoying to be part of a group of motivated people to learn new skills. FAO was able to recruit excellent private sector consultants. The introductory training was followed by a technical program focused on mushroom production complementary to daily (rice/cattle) farm activities. Mushroom production was selected because of its less demanding and flexible production process, yet set up fully professional aimed at production for the local market. Female and male mentally and physically disabled became successful mushroom producers and entrepreneurs. A regional mushroom training centre was built up staffed by disabled farmers as trainers. Many trainees found happiness becoming locally respected agro entrepreneurs. Several trainees married and built a joint business. Some were so successful they could build a house for their parents many others provided employment for their able sisters and brothers. The Government played a leading role but the chosen market drive was basis for the project success. Yet here comes the crunch public sector agencies often cannot handle the supervision of private enterprise ventures they are responsible for, as a result hard earned income by the regional training centre managed by disabled themselves was diverted and investment capital lost. Yet in the field mushroom production activities led to improved household food security and income generation. Many mushroom enterprises continued on their own beyond project duration. A group of disabled producers established an informal school for mushroom training everyone could come, even unemployed able persons with a PHD in the pocket!

In FAO collaboration between crop, agro industrial and rural development specialists worked together as a multidisciplinary project team, I had the pleasure to coordinate this project for several years. FAO produced two training manuals which are still today best sellers (see downloadable publications list below).

Two videos were made to show what really happened and what were the results. This self employed market oriented approach towards empowerment of disabled farmers was replicated by ILO in Cambodia and by FAO in Sierra Leone after the civil war.

At UN level the FAO emphasized the need for focusing on capacity building on self employment by disabled farmers no dependency approach. This was recognized several years ago in UN adoption of a new International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For more info see also UNESCAP website on this topic. Governments and UN agencies should work with specialized NGO's to overcome food insecurity among disabled farmers and their families by creating opportunities for self employment for persons with disabilities in rural areas.

Please find the link to the FAO publication “**A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development**” in [Word](#) and in [PDF](#).

Other relevant publications can be found at:  
[http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/publication\\_browse\\_detail.asp?divisionID=67&categoryid=311](http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/publication_browse_detail.asp?divisionID=67&categoryid=311)

Wim Polman  
Natural Resources Officer  
Climate Change and Bioenergy Unit (NRCB)  
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UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)  
<http://www.fao.org/bioenergy/en/>  
[http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/susdev\\_rural\\_devt.asp](http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/susdev_rural_devt.asp)

**Contribution by Peter Steele from FAO, Italy**

Greetings from Rome everyone,

**There are all kinds of people in agriculture and agro-industries.** Great subject for debate; more challenging to actually do something about it in the real world - but many good people try. 'People with disabilities/different capabilities' or simply 'disabled people' (*which is how the sector used to be termed in the development industries, and in everyday life too but, fortunately, society at large has become a deal more aware of the many complex issues involved*) make up more than ten percent of humanity - and substantially more if you widen the many definitions involved. Worldwide all manner of national and international effort is involved with making a difference but the reality becomes one of never having sufficient resources to go round. For many years I shared a 'working group' with similar like-minded people within FAO with objectives that were pitched at raising awareness amongst colleagues and clients alike. In recent years, the agency even had a dedicated post allocated to 'disabled people' (and had a physically challenged Technical Officer on post). But there is always competition for budgets and, with shifting priorities, the incumbent was not replaced following retirement, and the repository of the work undertaken in recent years has been compiled into a scoping document seeking to explore what has been done, and to project into the next period of what may be possible. A summary of this work/document is shown below.

*Look forward to following the debate.*

Please find the link to the FAO Document (extracts) "**Enhancing Opportunities in Agriculture for Disabled People. Guidelines for Getting People Involved**" [here](#).

Salute.  
Peter Steele  
Rome

**Contribution by Joyce Lambuli from Uganda**

Dear all,  
These are some of the lessons learnt from working with PWDs (*People With Disabilities, Ed.*) in Uganda.  
thanks,  
Joyce

**Promoting inclusion of PWDs or differently abled people in food security and agricultural development programmes and policies.**

Differed abled people are the world's untapped potential. Poverty is a state of powerlessness. Most people with disability remain poor because of lack of opportunities. We work with PWDs in eastern Uganda under a programme of sustainable agriculture for people with disabilities (SAPWD) in Pallisa and Sironko districts in Uganda reaching 333 direct beneficiaries.

We promote sustainable organic agriculture and improved animal management coupled with training on social development aspects. It is amazing how this programme has transformed the lives of PWDs and made them integrate in the community without self, family or community stigma. We identify a group of PWDs, develop their capacity through training and farm visits. We encourage household members to participate in the trainings are very supportive in implementation of the project activities.

After training, we provide the PWD with livestock; exotic cow, local cows or dairy goats or local goats and poultry. The PWDS have a right to choose the kind of livestock they can manage to take care of with support of family members. It is amazing how ownership of property has added value to PWDs. They feel respected in the community; have developed a sense of high self esteem and self confidence. The inclusion of PWDS evolves automatically with the empowerment process. The PWDs reached strongly believe that disability is not inability. When working with PWDS, they do not like you volunteering to help them move or do certain activities. They do it themselves and surprisingly they are able to fend for themselves given opportunity.

The PWDs have developed positive attitudes towards education of their children. Under Universal Primary Education (UPE), in Uganda, Ministry of education has a policy of all inclusive. All children study together regardless of disability. Our role is to train the parents on advocacy and lobby so that the builders of school class rooms make them accessible to children with disabilities by not making steps at the entrance.

Children with special learning needs like the blind and deaf have opportunities to study using Braille and sign language. The children in such schools are excelling in their studies. They participate in athletics and are superb, leading all the time.

The constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) Article 35 (i) on rights of persons with disabilities states that persons with disabilities have a right to respect and human dignity and the state and society shall take appropriate measures to ensure that they realize their full mental and physical potential.

Section (ii) states that Parliament shall enact laws appropriate for the protection of persons with disabilities. There is inclusion of PWDs in all levels of governance from Local council I to V and have representation in parliament. We as an NGO complement government efforts in inclusion of PWDs.

From our experience of working with PWDs, we have success stories of how PWDS participate in sustainable agriculture and integrated animal management. They grow a variety of food crops and vegetables using composite manure from the livestock and their productivity has greatly increased making them food secure and their nutrition improved. Some become strong with consumption of a balanced diet.

PWD reached are no longer beggars on streets. They have settled down and developed their households. The family members and community develop a positive attitude towards them as they access, control and own properties like the cow, land and a house. With training they have become very resourceful people in their communities and interact freely without stigma. After an evaluation of the groups we work with, 70% of PWDS noted that they should be integrated with normal people in society without isolation. It is possible to include PWDs in food production and development given opportunities through capacity building. Knowledge is power. Some insights I have learnt from working with PWDs are as follows:

1. **Type of disability:** Type of disability differs from one person to another. It may be physical, mental or otherwise. Some disabilities are correctable after treatment like surgery while others may be permanent like polio survivors. Disability is not a disease and NOT all PWDs are patients. Some of them are survivors with scars or disability but have a potential to work like producing food. So the type of disability greatly determines one's ability to work and break the vicious circle of poverty. Many are ignored by society,

stigmatized and left powerless and poor especially children with disabilities. The children are very vulnerable due to lack of knowledge and some are killed or neglected by the parents or caregivers.

2. **Negative cultural practices:** Many PWDs suffer because of negative cultural practices. Disability is looked at as a bad omen to the family and they become neglected. For inclusion of PWDs such negative cultural practices should be dealt with.
3. **Attitude:** Attitude is powerful in personal development. Apart from family, and community stigma, PWDs also suffer from self stigma. There is need to fight self, family and community stigma through lifeskills like self esteem, self awareness, self confidence and self competence. Knowledge on the types of disabilities is very important in affecting attitudes towards PWDs. For instance invisible disabilities like asthma cases which are common yet we look at the visible like the physically challenged as the only disabled.
4. **Education:** Is a quick transforming tool. Reaching parents and adults with disabilities with education and training has greatly quickened their transformation. Thereafter the education of their children with disabilities is a priority not an option. Practical skills in vocational training can be given to adult PWDs who missed formal education to make them self sustaining.
5. **Supportive environment:** Involvement of family members has geared success in involving PWDs in food production. Where a PWD has multiple disabilities and is unable to work can be supported by family members. This was the case with PWD like those affected by cerebral palsy. Government policy has provided a conducive environment in protecting the rights and property of PWDs.
6. **Every one is a possible candidate for disability:** through interaction with PWDs I discovered that some people were not born with disability but incur it at a later stage in life like through accidents, child birth etc. Therefore there is need for resilience among the PWDs and the change agents as well. We should not pity PWDs but involve them as people with full dignity who became vulnerable due to certain factors beyond their control. Therefore all PWDs are not poor and it is possible to include them in food production and policy. It is very important to consider the least.
7. **Peer support:** PWDs are very good advocates and lobbyist of issues affecting them. It is important to involve them in decision making on pertinent issues concerning them and use them to reach out to others with disabilities that are still vulnerable, poor and powerless through taskforce teams or committees.

### **Contribution by Kudakwashe Dube from SADPD, South Africa**

Dear all,

The mission of the Secretariat of the Africa Decade of Persons with Disabilities (SADPD) is that of an African knowledge-based organisation that works in partnership with the AU, African governments, CSOs and DPOs to promote inclusive development and human rights for people with disabilities.

The organisation has strategic objectives, which relate to:

- i. Forging Partnerships and Expanding Networks
- ii. Lobbying and Advocacy
- iii. Awareness Creation
- iv. Evidence-Based Knowledge

The Secretariat advocates for inclusion of disability and people with disabilities into development plans and programmes as well as for self-determination of people with disabilities. We strive to achieve inclusion in issues linked with environment, climate and natural resources. To realise this inclusion we see the need for developing partnership between FAO, Governments that we work with and DPOs/stakeholders and the Secretariat. As a regional organisation with strong political influence, we could plan and facilitate implementation of programmes within countries, linking this all up to our 'Ambassadorial Country' (see attached brochure) and other advocacy initiatives. We can use Article 32 (Development Cooperation) on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities to promote shifting of development resources to disability/agricultural programmes and through FAO raise significant and meaningful resources (internationally and within countries) to support our joint programmes. Working at regional level, we could use our access authority to the Pan African Parliament, regional parliaments and monetary unions in Africa to implement our programmes with a focus on long term sustainability, partly through government budgetary support and implementation of viable, replicable projects.

Kudakwashe Dube  
Chief Executive Officer  
Secretariat of the Africa Decade of Persons with Disabilities  
Cape Town, South Africa  
Website: [www.africandecade.org.za](http://www.africandecade.org.za)

Please find below the executive summary of our Strategy

This strategic plan by the SADPD comes after five years of its operation in which remarkable strides have been made in disability work by the organisation. Renewal of the Decade and the coming into force of the UN convention of the rights of people with disabilities (UNCRPD) present opportunities to consolidate the gains made and lessons learned.

Three overarching principles underline the work of SADPD namely disability, development and Human rights. Disability and people with disabilities are central to the organisation. The Secretariat believes that people with disabilities are not given equal opportunities in society, that they are discriminated/ excluded in development and lack access to services/ rights.

The Secretariat advocates for inclusion of disability and people with disabilities into development plans and programmes as well as for self-determination of people with disabilities. At the same time people with disabilities have the same rights to which all human beings are entitled. Equal rights and inclusion in the development of people with disabilities can be achieved through mainstreaming of disability in society as well as empowering disabled persons for self-representation and articulation of issues as they affect them.

To effectively achieve these triple goals in disability, development, and human rights work, SADPD works with governments, development partners and CSOs and DPOs on the various fronts of policy influencing, awareness creation and development of capacity and knowledge.

Thematic areas were selected to focus these activities namely children, youth, women and the elderly. The themes represent groups that are vulnerable and which are largely the most marginalised in society. As a result, persons with disabilities within these groups experience even more marginalisation.

Mainstreaming and inclusion need to happen in all sectors of society. However, the SADPD realised that it is not possible to give attention to all different sectors and has decided to highlight some sectors. Prioritised areas are education, work/employment, health/rehabilitation, social protection, HIV/AIDS, policy and legislation, UNCRPD, PRSPs and accessibility. The organisation contributes to efforts to prevent disability by participating in initiatives to build peace/security, promoting economic empowerment and maintenance of practices that promote the environment and sustainable use of natural resources.

The new vision of the organisation is an African continent where people with disabilities enjoy their human rights.

The mission of the SADPD is that of an African knowledge-based organisation that works in partnership with the AU, African governments, CSOs and DPOs to promote inclusive development and human rights for people with disabilities

The organisation has seven strategic objectives, which include four programmatic objectives and three internal organisational development objectives. These two broad areas covered by the objectives complement each other and specific strategic objectives within each broad area complement each other as well. The Programmatic Strategic Objectives relate to:

I. Forging Partnerships and Expanding Networks

II. Lobbying and Advocacy



### III. Awareness Creation

### IV. Evidence-Based Knowledge

The Organisational Development Strategic Objectives relate to:

#### I. Resource Development

#### II. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

#### III. Branding, Public Relations (PR) and Communication

As a learning organisation SADPD seeks to be an authoritative knowledge reservoir on disability in the African continent. The organisation will create awareness about disability; achieve development and human rights for people with disabilities and partner with others on joint activities to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities, and the inclusion of disability and people with disability in development activities.

Using the Strategic Plan as a guide, specific programmes and projects will be designed. Annual action plans and budgets will be prepared to guide the process of implementing this Strategy. The work of the Secretariat is guided by a number of policies that are used to manage human and financial resources, implementation of programmes, procurement, staff development and management of volunteers. The organisation has formal and well-established practices such as external auditing, and reporting.

### **Contribution by Renu Lohani from Disabled People's Organisation Denmark, Nepal**

Hi!

I am Renu Lohani working in Nepal for Disabled People's Organisation Denmark. We are working with the Organisation of the People with disability, DPOS in partnership program. So far I have not seen any of the DPOS nor the development organisations, WFP or the National Government ever trying to address the issue of the Food Security or the access to Food for People with disabilities in their policies nor the program.

In Nepal about 15 million people or 41% of the total population are said to be living below the poverty line showing them to be suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition. Where does this scenario lead to the quality of Life?

A significant proportion of people with disabilities have to go hungry and malnourished. In the food deficit regions of Nepal mainly in the mid west and far western regions, about 75% of the population are found to be mal-nourished retarding their physical and mental development. This is an irony.

In the Nepalese culture it is the women folk who suffer the most from the poverty and food deficit. They are the first one to lower their food intake when there is food deficit and then their female children. This sort of discrimination in the society leads more females to go hungry.

To achieve development and human rights for people with disabilities and the inclusion of people with disability in development activities, food should be made available to all needy disable person community/family so that they do not go hungry and malnourished which makes the food security urgent.

The government has not been doing enough for irrigation facilities, in order to boost agriculture production it would be necessary to lay stress on irrigation facilities, providing fertilizers to farmers, program targeted to women farmers would make a lot of difference in producing food. Empowering women farmers would help reduce poverty. Necessary infrastructures and access to food for persons with disability should be the ultimate goal to be considered by the International Food Aid program to meet the Millennium Development goal MDG.

Renu Lohani

**Contribution by Kudakwashe Dube from SADPD, South Africa**

It seems to me that it is possible to develop a sustainable programme that enables persons with disabilities to undertake sustainable agricultural projects. Our experience of designing the RURAL (Rural Utilisation of Resources in Agriculture and Livestock) Programme shows that:

1. holistic approaches to planning are essential, including provisions for mentorship by experienced farmers, micro-credit and other funding mechanisms and linkage of farming projects to the broader surrounding rural communities, careers in agriculture, etc
2. we now have on the African continent, persons with disabilities with experience and skills in agricultural/ horticultural planning, production, marketing and quality control of products and services (e.g. the persons with disabilities in central Uganda have an international market for bananas, and the group is experienced in the growing of banana plantations and marketing in the main cities and internationally). This expertise forms an essential base upon which to build when designing agricultural/ horticultural projects that are viable and sustainable.
3. it is important to create partnerships, again with the leadership and facilitation of FAO, viable programmes can be started in different countries.
4. emphasis should be on the full value chain of agricultural produce (i.e. to incorporate in the strategy resources for production, processing, packaging, value-adding and distribution of finished products)
5. government has a role to play in developing policies that support and facilitate a good supportive, incentive-driven environment for agricultural projects that are run and managed by persons with disabilities and their families. Policy measures can be introduced in the areas of financing, marketing, business development services, funded learning exchanges, support to the creation of industry entities (e.g. banana producers' associations, etc), favourable taxation policies, affirmative procurement strategies to enable producers to supply state sector/institutions, provision of agricultural extension, production, management, and other services etc.
6. water management strategies are essential (e.g. irrigation schemes and boreholes)

Both subsistence and commercial agriculture has a role in the improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

Kudakwashe Dube  
Chief Executive Officer  
Secretariat of the Africa Decade of Persons with Disabilities  
Cape Town, South Africa  
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**Contribution by Paul von Hartmann from the USA**

This is a beautifully empowering idea, worth sharing with every community.

Lazy Susan garden for the wheelchair-bound  
L.A. at Home  
DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE, GARDENS,  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LIVING

June 29, 2009 |

[http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/home\\_blog/2009/06/lazysusan-garden-universal-design-wheelchair-bound-gardener.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/home_blog/2009/06/lazysusan-garden-universal-design-wheelchair-bound-gardener.html)

"Pasadena designer Laramée Haynes has come up with a wonderful idea for those who are wheelchair-bound or simply not able to get down on their hands and knees to tend their gardens. Dubbed the "accessible edible garden," Haynes' creation amounts to a giant Lazy Susan: a truck axle combined with a sturdy metal base to support an 8-foot-diameter redwood top. Garden beds raised to table height enable wheelchair users to reach their plants with ease. (Haynes, shown above, is not wheelchair-bound but used one to test out his universal design.)"

Regards

Paul von Hartmann

**Contribution by Lizzy Igbiné from the Nigerian Women Farmers Association (NIWFA), Nigeria**

Dear All,

People with disabilities are also human beings like we are. They form part of the population and are counted in every country's census.

People with disabilities have their abilities which we do not see. They have families which they take care of and there is no tax rebate or exceptions for them.

Government also do not pay disability allowance to them. If this is the issue, this group of people face same challenges as we do and should be included in the food security programme.

Their inclusion will give them access to inputs, and they are entitled to hiring or renting of tractors and labour for farm work.

Government can reconsider giving this group priority in input distribution and also in agriculture grants to encourage this group of people.

People with disabilities own farm and they do processing of agric products especially grinding and drying of cassava into Garri as we experience in Nigeria. They also assist as farm hands in harvesting crops.

My personal experience with persons with disabilities comes from presiding over my members in Nigerian Women Farmers Association. I have come across a disabled woman farmer and to her, she is as able as most of us. She does not fail in her responsibilities. She runs a poultry farm and it gives her enough money to run her family with the support of her husband and children. She has a successful farm. She is rich because of her dedication.

Her experience has shown me that we would be losing a lot if this group is not included and if their produce is lost to non inclusion. To me people with disability play a vital role in food security sustainability and should be included in food security programme.

Mrs Lizzy Igbiné

President of Nigerian Women Farmers Association (NIWFA)

**Contribution by Moisés Gómez Porchini from Mexico**

Dear James Edge and dear all:

The topic you raise about how to incorporate disabled persons to rural development and food security certainly lends itself to a profound reflexion and, in my case, there are personal reasons for this approach.

I have two daughters who are 20 and 16 years old; both of them are beautiful and intelligent and the younger one is, at the same time, disabled. She has hydrocephaly and myelomeningocele after-effects, with an injury by the fourth lumbar vertebra.

Since the moment we knew -before her birth- that she had problems, her mother and myself have been compelled to make well-reasoned decisions about what might be convenient for her. One of our first decisions was moving to the United States, in search of the best medical assistance. It was crucial for her being today in an excellent condition.

Another important decision was related to her education. Taking into account that her disability is physical, we are convinced that she will make up for her limitations insofar it is her mental ability, and not the physical one, that influences her work. Physically she will always be at a disadvantage, mentally she will be better prepared thanks to her education.

However, as she was born in the United States, she is an US citizen and, as we are Mexican, I can provide our personal experience about being disabled in Mexico and the United States.

In the United States, medical assistance and rehabilitation expenses are guaranteed free of charge for disabled persons. An invalidity benefit is also provided and there are many facilities for their education, including university studies. In a few words, they aim to make up for the disadvantages of being disabled and the Government assumes the responsibility, regardless the economic or cultural level of parents.

In Mexico, no authority is responsible for looking after the disabled persons. Adequate medical assistance depends on the family capacity to pay or to get it. At all Government levels, disabled persons are only considered on paper and in the speeches. Although they exist in theory, their rights are not respected; even their exclusive parking places are disregarded. So, regarding your question about the efforts to incorporate disabled persons to rural development and food security programs, I can honestly say that, if there is no respect for their basic rights of adequate medical assistance and education, they are not included at all in rural development programs or taken into account when analyzing food security concerns. In fact, in rural development programs, gender issues and ethnic and marginal areas assistance are considered, but have never seen any mention to the inclusion of disabled persons.

However, regarding your other approach about how to persuade policy makers of the necessity of taking into account the disabled persons, I am convinced that social pressure in any possible form might change their minds and turn real attention to the disabled into a top priority of their agenda. As this is something that involves expenses, if they are not forced, they will hardly make any changes.

Finally, in Mexico there are certainly several associations which have succeeded in looking after the disabled. However, they are the exception to the rule, as most of the disabled persons share the same fate; lacking adequate medical assistance and education that could help them to make up for their limitations.

As long as their assistance and education will depend on the willing to help of any institution, the situation will remain unchanged; it will only change when the laws shall force the Government to look after them regardless of the cost. We should concentrate our efforts in this direction.

Best regards from Mexico,  
Moisés Gómez Porchini

### **[Spanish original]**

Estimado James Edge y todos:

El tema que planteas, acerca de cómo incorporar a los discapacitados al desarrollo rural y a la seguridad alimentaria, es sin duda un tema que se presta a una profunda reflexión, y en mi caso, tengo razones muy personales para que sea de esta manera.

Yo soy padre de dos hijas, una de 20 años y la otra de 16; las dos son hermosas e inteligentes y la menor, además, es discapacitada. Ella tiene hidrocefalia y secuelas de mielomeningocele, con la lesión a la altura de la cuarta vértebra lumbar.

Desde el momento en que supimos, antes de su nacimiento, que presentaba problemas, nos hemos visto obligados, su madre y yo, a tomar decisiones bien razonadas acerca de lo que conviene para ella. La primera de estas decisiones fue trasladarnos a los Estados Unidos

buscando la mejor atención médica posible, lo cual fue decisivo para que ella se encuentre hoy en excelentes condiciones.

Otra decisión fundamental fue en cuanto a su preparación, pues considerando que su discapacidad es física, estamos convencidos que podrá compensar sus desventajas en la medida en que sea su habilidad mental, no la física, la que influya en su trabajo. Físicamente siempre estará en desventaja, mentalmente su preparación le dará la ventaja.

Ahora bien, como resultado de que ella nació en los Estados Unidos, es ciudadana americana, siendo nosotros sus padres, ciudadanos mexicanos, por lo cual puedo hablar desde nuestra propia experiencia acerca de lo que significa ser discapacitado en México y en los Estados Unidos.

En los Estados Unidos, la atención médica y los gastos de rehabilitación están garantizados en forma gratuita por el hecho de ser discapacitado, así como también se proporciona una pensión y existen amplias facilidades para que los discapacitados cursen estudios, incluyendo los superiores. En pocas palabras, se busca compensar las desventajas que conlleva el ser discapacitado y el estado se encarga de ello, independientemente del nivel cultural o patrimonial de los padres.

En México, ninguna autoridad se hace responsable de la atención a los discapacitados. La atención médica oportuna depende de la capacidad de los padres para pagarla o conseguirla. Para los diferentes niveles de gobierno, los discapacitados solo existen en el papel y en las declaraciones. Aunque en teoría existen, no se respetan los derechos de los discapacitados; no se respetan siquiera los lugares exclusivos destinados para que ellos se estacionen, de tal manera que a tu pregunta acerca de ¿qué esfuerzos se hacen para incorporar a los discapacitados a los programas de Desarrollo Rural y a la seguridad alimentaria?, si quiero contestarla con honestidad, tengo que decir que si no se respetan sus derechos básicos a tener atención médica oportuna y educación adecuada, menos se les incluye de alguna manera en los programas de Desarrollo Rural o se piensa en garantizarles su seguridad alimentaria. De hecho, en los programas de desarrollo rural, se considera la inclusión de la cuestión de género así como la atención a las etnias o a las zonas marginadas, pero no he visto que en algún programa se mencione la inclusión de los discapacitados dentro de las cuestiones a evaluar.

Ahora bien, en cuanto a tu otro planteamiento, acerca de cómo podemos convencer a los encargados de hacer la políticas de que es necesario incluir a los discapacitados, yo estoy convencido de que es la presión de la sociedad en todas las formas posibles lo que puede llevar a los políticos a poner en su agenda la atención real a los discapacitados como algo prioritario, pues siendo como es, algo que implica gastos, es difícil que decidan hacerlo si no se ven obligados a ello.

Finalmente, en México sin duda existen casos de asociaciones que tienen éxito de alguna manera en la atención a los discapacitados, pero son la excepción, no la regla, lo que significa que todo el resto de las personas con discapacidad comparten el mismo destino, sin atención médica oportuna y sin una preparación adecuada que les ayude a compensar sus desventajas.

Mientras su atención y su preparación dependan de la voluntad para ayudarles de cualquier institución, la situación seguirá siendo la misma; solo cambiará cuando sea la ley la que obligue al estado a atenderlos sin regateos. Hacia ahí es a donde deben dirigirse nuestros esfuerzos.

Saludos cordiales desde México  
Moisés Gómez Porchini

### **Concluding remarks by James Edge, topic raiser**

Dear Forum Members,

Thank you to everyone who took part in the discussion on disability and food security. In what is clearly an important, contentious and often controversial issue, what is most apparent is that the human rights of people with disabilities are often neglected and overlooked in agricultural development programmes and policies. However, we have also seen some excellent examples of progress being made, and a focus on the fundamental human rights of people with disabilities across the world.

**Defining disability.** This is an issue that will continue to cause debate for any disability related discussions, whether concerning the provision of services or inclusive policies. Some important points about disability need to be remembered, one is that how we classify disability, or what is considered disabling, differs from place to place and across time. The nature of how we classify disability depends on how the culture defines it in terms of a medical model, social model or charity model. The UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities deliberately does not specifically define disability in order not to be exclusive in terms of who is and who is not considered disabled. This also recognises that the nature of disability changes over time.

**Human Rights.** We can see a much faster move towards a human rights based approach to disability – particularly following the UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities that came into force in 2008. This was the first Convention that specifically addresses the human rights of people with disabilities and received the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day. It marks a paradigm shift in how disability is viewed, from people with disabilities as objects of charity or medical intervention, to people with rights and control over their own lives, decisions and futures. Let's hope the momentum continues to see some real changes.

**Involvement.** No programmes or policy developments will be successful if they do not involve people with disabilities themselves. The mantra of Disabled People's Organisations is 'nothing about us, without us'. Let us not forget that people who know most about being disabled are disabled people themselves.

James Edge  
Communications Officer  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Rome, Italy