

Disability Negotiations Bulletin

Today's Weather

Mostly Sunny

High: 92° F

Low: 72° F

Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Today's Schedule

10 AM — 1 PM

Informal consultations

3 PM—6 PM

Informal consultations

“Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.”

Helen Keller

“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

Winston Churchill

“Sports has the power to change the world. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.”

Nelson Mandela

Three Days ... and Counting

As we begin the eighth day of this, the second session of the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, NGOs welcome the revised draft decision produced late yesterday afternoon on the establishment of a Working Group. The speed with which this revision was issued is a clear sign that delegates are engaged in the process with a strong desire to see an effective mechanism to support the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Moreover, NGOs are especially pleased with the unusual step taken to open up the informal discussions to NGO observers. While we are aware that this process is not uncommon in other UN processes, we are equally aware that it is extremely unusual within the context of the General Assembly. We welcome this as a sign of the progressive evolution of the partnership between NGOs and delegations. We note with interest that discussions in the open informals were focused on a number of important issues that will be essential to the effective functioning of the Working Group.

With three days left to go, we would like to share with delegates our vision of the key points to be resolved to ensure an effective outcome on the construction of the Working Group.

- Working Group Terms of Reference agreed upon with clear provision for the participation of NGOs; we would like to once again note the NGO suggestion that this number be at least 12
- Working Group first intersessional meeting within three months
- Working Group meeting(s) fully accessible for people with a wide range of disabilities
- Working Group resourced to meet at least three times, for a total of 15 working days
- Working Group draft text available at least two months before the next Ad Hoc Committee meeting
- Working Group draft text translated into all official UN languages at least two months before the next Ad Hoc Committee meeting
- Working Group draft text available in alternate formats to facilitate access of people with disabilities at least two months before the next Ad Hoc Committee meeting

Again, NGOs see this discussion as an extremely positive step in the process and we look forward to continued consultations on these and other important issues today.

Disability, Recreation and Sports

Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Rule 11. Recreation and sports

States will take measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities for recreation and sports.

1. States should initiate measures to make places for recreation and sports, hotels, beaches, sports arenas, gym halls, etc., accessible to persons with disabilities. Such measures should encompass support for staff in recreation and sports programmes, including projects to develop methods of accessibility, and participation, information and training programmes.
2. Tourist authorities, travel agencies, hotels, voluntary organizations and others involved in organizing recreational activities or travel opportunities should offer their services to all, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities. Suitable training should be provided to assist that process.
3. Sports organizations should be encouraged to develop opportunities for participation by persons with disabilities in sports activities. In some cases, accessibility measures could be enough to open up opportunities for participation. In other cases, special arrangements or special games would be needed. States should support the participation of persons with disabilities in national and international events.
4. Persons with disabilities participating in sports activities should have access to instruction and training of the same quality as other participants.
5. Organizers of sports and recreation should consult with organizations of persons with disabilities when developing their services for persons with disabilities.

Human Rights of People with Disabilities in Sports and Recreation

Drafted by Disability in Sport Initiative, Center for the Study of Sport in Society

People with disabilities have fundamental human rights with respect to sports and recreation. These human rights must not be overlooked.

- Right to not be excluded; Right to be included; Right to sport and recreation opportunities
- Right to affordable sport and recreation opportunities
- Right to equal services and programs; Quality of integration
- Right to choose, right to decide if can or cannot participate
- Right to determine ones own ability and comfort with sport
- Right to be treated equally and with respect as individuals participating in sport and as athletes
- Right to sport as organized by sport and by ability and not by disability
- Right to equal recognition for sport success and accomplishments
- Right to equal access to sports and recreation facilities and institutions
- Right to equal sports coaching and athletic training and sports science
- Right to financial support from sport and recreation organizations and institutions
- Right to value participation and commitment from all persons at all levels in sport and recreation
- Right to the awareness and understanding of the equal ability of individuals with disabilities in sport
- Right to enforce the above sporting rights

“I have to believe that there is still more to come in a world that is continually changing, and that we can make a difference in educating people—disability sports... are an avenue for people with a dream who are driven to achieve no matter what disability they have.”

—Jayne Craike, New Zealand, from *Raising the Bar: New Horizons in Disability Sport* by Artemis Joukowsky & Larry Rothstein

Using Sport as a Muscle for Integration: The Legal Rights of Athletes with Disabilities to Participate in Recreational and Sporting Opportunities

The Disability in Sport Initiative within Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society recently examined the need to create legally enforceable rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in sport across the world. Many may ask why focus on sport?

Sport is a vehicle for integration. And because this vehicle is so pervasive in societies throughout the world, it is a powerful vehicle. Sport has traditionally been a socialization process where individuals assimilate or adopt the values of a given society, largely because sport is a "cultural phenom' that is often viewed as a product and reflection of society". Sport is also a means of gaining acceptance. When individuals with disabilities are allowed to participate in sport, they are put into an arena that changes the focus from "disability" to "ability". We focus on the ability of an athlete to score a goal or his or her ability to block a shot. Further, because of the enormous visibility of sport, inclusion of people with disabilities in sport can pave the way for opportunities in other realms of life. The athletic realm gives a tool to athletes with disabilities to change the attitudes not only of society but also of themselves from a perception of frailness to that of being physically and mentally capable.

The lack of legal instruments at the international, as well as national levels, ensuring disabled individuals the right to sporting opportunities, demonstrates a need for the United Nations to recognize the power of sport and to include legally binding sporting provisions in their international treaty for people with disabilities. A legally binding international treaty will enable the powerful integration tool of sport to come into play.

Karen DePauw and Susan Gavron, "Disability and Sport", Human Kinetics, at 10 (1995).

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For more information or to obtain copies of the research paper, contact: the Northeastern Center for the Study of Sport in Society, Northeastern University, 716 Columbus Avenue, Suite 161 CP, Boston, MA, USA 02115-5000. Phone: 617-373-8936. Web address:

Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Sports

by Hans Lindström, Amputee swimmer & Sports Administrator, Sweden

Human Rights are based on that each person in the world is born free and equal in value to all others. The Human Rights include all persons, also persons with disabilities. The Rights concern every part in life including sports.

UN Declaration on Rights of Disabled Persons states that "*disabled persons shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this declaration*". One of these is to "*have the same fundamental rights as their fellow-citizens of the same age, which implies first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life, as normal and full as possible.*" No one would oppose the statement that sport is included in "a normal and full life", whether on recreational or competitive levels.

Opportunities for persons with disabilities are limited in comparison to able bodied, therefore the paramount key to enjoy a normal and full life is the equalisation of opportunities.

Given that engagement in sports is a human right and that persons with disabilities shall have equal opportunities to able bodied fellow citizens the following should, in addition to already included in relevant UN documents today, be taken into account concerning persons with disabilities in sports.

Persons with disabilities shall be given opportunity to engage in sports on the level of their own choice, from recreational to elite levels.

Sports on any level must not cost more for persons with disabilities than for others.

Message:

**Equal rights and opportunities for all sporting persons,
able bodied and persons with disabilities!**

"From your perspective, what are the human rights of people and athletes with a disability in sports and recreation?"

Kjartan N. Haugen, Paralympic Athlete, Norway

As an introduction it is important to remember that throughout the world, people with disabilities live under very different social conditions. It is however, my experience that within the sphere of sport we all share the same passions and desires, both disabled and non-disabled athletes.

One of the driving forces within all sports is the desire to explore physiological limits. For people with physical limitations it becomes important to explore and push these limits. It can be to participate in a marathon in a wheelchair, or to be able to run after your grandson with your new leg prosthesis. It should be a human right to be allowed to explore these limits.

'The right to play'- what is necessary to be part of the game? Unfortunately most activities for disabled sporting men and women require equipment. Not only sport specific, but also disability specific equipment. Wheelchairs, prosthesis and other aids are expensive and for many unattainable luxury articles. It should be a human right to have access to the equipment needed not only to function in daily activity, but to fully live life with sport and recreational activities.

As many segregated societies in the past have used infrastructure to separate groups of people, there is still today a separation between disabled and non-disabled athletes. In many sport facilities around the world, disabled athletes are denied access because of limited accessibility. Stairs and other obstacles effectively exclude groups of disabled athletes. It should be a human right not to be excluded from sports because of limited accessibility.

Disability in Sport Initiative, Center for the Study of Sport in Society, Northeastern University

Eli Wolff, Project Director (e.wolff@neu.edu)

The aim of the Disability in Sport Initiative is to engage in research, education, advocacy, and programming activities related to athletes with a disability in sport. The Initiative works to create more access, equality, inclusion, respect, and legitimacy for athletes with a disability in the sporting environment.

The mission of Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society is to increase awareness of sport and its relation to society, and to develop programs that identify problems, offer solutions and promote the benefits of sport.

"I have learned that sport can be and still is a relevant vehicle for education, awareness raising, and changing understanding—sport for some is a vehicle for the rest of their life."

—Hamish MacDonald, Paralympic Athlete, Australia

"It should be a human right to be accepted for who you are, and what you have accomplished based on your limitations and possibilities. It should not be judged on how far you are behind your able bodied peer."

—Kjartan N. Haugen, Paralympic Athlete, Norway

Supporting Organizations

American Association of People with Disabilities
American Council of the Blind
Center for International Rehabilitation
Center for the Study of Sport in Society
China Disabled Persons' Federation
Communication Coordination Committee for the UN (CCC/UN)
Council of Canadians with Disabilities
Disabled Peoples' International
European Disability Forum
Handicap International
Inclusion International
Information Habitat: Where Information Lives
International Federation of Persons with Physical Disability

Inter-American Institute on Disability
Landmine Survivors Network
Mental Disability Rights International
National Disability Party
People Who
Rehabilitation International
Support Coalition International
United States International Council on Disabilities
World Blind Union
World Federation of the Deaf
World Federation of the Deafblind
World Institute on Disability
World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry
World Union for Progressive Judaism