

Ban Ki-moon UNSG focuses in general on disability - people in need mentally retarded – Handicapped – Paralympics - Special Olympics

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IFRC delegation to the UN / UN Highlights July - September 2013

High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development

The High-level Meeting on Disability and Development was convened two months after the sixth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The theme of the meeting was “The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond,” and focused on “International and regional cooperation and partnerships for disability inclusive development,” and on “The post-2015 development agenda and inclusive development for persons with disabilities.”

It was widely acknowledged that the adoption in 2006 of the CRPD constituted a significant progress for the world’s largest minority, i.e. persons with disabilities, which comprise an estimated 15% of the world’s population, more than one billion, 80% of whom live in developing countries and experience discrimination, prejudice, and disproportionate rates of poverty. The encouraging number of countries (134) which have, to date, ratified or acceded to the Convention must now be followed by better implementation mechanisms. As noted in the adopted outcome document, States also agreed that this meeting was an excellent opportunity to encourage the international community “to seize every opportunity to include disability” in the global development agenda, and to give due consideration to disability in the emerging Post-2015 Development Agenda.



Stevie Wonder, UN Messenger of Peace, addresses the GA’s HLM on “The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.” Pictured behind him (seated at podium): UNSG Ban Ki-moon; John Ashe, President of the sixty-eighth session of the GA; and Tegegnework Gettu, Under-Secretary-General for GA and Conference Management (UN Photo/Amanda Voisard).

High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament

The UN held its first-ever High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM - a grouping of 120 countries). 74 speakers addressed the meeting, including 11 heads of State and Government and nearly three-dozen foreign ministers. ICRC’s intervention focused on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the difficulty in envisaging how their use could be

compatible with international humanitarian law. ICRC further highlighted the 2011 Council of Delegates resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Of note, several regional groupings and States raised the issue of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Norway held the first-ever meeting on this issue in March 2013, and Mexico will hold the Second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in February 2014.

States reiterated known positions on issues, such as 1) the abolition of nuclear weapons; 2) the dismantling of currently deployed weapons; 3) an end to modernization of existing arsenals; 4) the expansion of nuclear free zones, particularly to the Middle East; 5) calls for a fissile materials cut-off treaty; 6) the need for CTBT to enter into force; and 7) humanitarian consequences (for a complete analysis, please see Reaching Critical Will). In addition, the NAM announced its intention to bring a resolution to the UNGA with a roadmap calling for: 1) commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive convention banning nuclear weapons; 2) designating 26 September as an international day to renew resolve to eliminate nuclear weapons; and 3) a High-

Disasters and Disability

The need for inclusion of disability in the context of disasters stood prominently in two side events organized on the margins of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD, the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development, and the celebration of the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2013, which focused this year on persons with disabilities. SRSG for Disaster Risk Reduction Margareta Wahlstrom echoed many organizations when she stressed that all post-2015 processes must be disability-inclusive: the Hyogo Framework for Action 2015, the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the climate change negotiations. In addition, she noted that the process, culminating at the 3rd UN World Conference on DRR (March 2015 in Sendai, Japan), will require the strong engagement of all



Image source: <http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/the-case-for-a-ban-treaty/>

level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in 5 years to review progress. On the other side, a joint statement by France, UK and US called for continuing discussions within existing venues (i.e. the UN's First Committee, UN Disarmament Commission, and the long dead-locked multilateral Conference on Disarmament) and to favour a step-by-step process.

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The [High Level Meeting on the Sahel](#) highlighted improvements in the region: a better balance of emergency response with longer-term development planning, and better linking measures to relieve malnutrition with water, sanitation and health interventions. Communities and households are becoming more resilient; still, many obstacles remain, particularly the high levels of food insecurity. The UN Integrated Strategy announced by the Special Envoy for the Sahel Romano Prodi prioritizes governance, security and resilience, and aims to address humanitarian

imperatives and long-term structural needs. It focuses on collaboration with international financial institutions to promote regional initiatives that fall beyond the realm of traditional UN engagement. The UNSG also announced his plan to visit the Sahel region with the Presidents of the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and the Commissioner of the African Union. OCHA announced at a side briefing that the appeals (the next one on February 2014), will be shifted to a three-year timeframe.

UNSG Ban Ki-moon [officially launched](#) the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) to take place in Istanbul in early 2016. The UNSG first announced his intention to convene the Summit as part of his [five-year action agenda](#) (Jan 2012). OCHA has set out an ambitious [concept note](#) for the Summit which seems to suggest that WHS could

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During his visit to New York, IFRC SG Bekele Geleta participated as a panellist in a high-level event on African Humanitarian Champions and Partnerships. The opening statements at the event were delivered by ERC/USG Valerie Amos, SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura, and AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Aisha Abdullahi. Several donor States and high-level representatives were in attendance. The event served as an excellent platform to showcase the work of African National Societies and highlight their role as key stakeholders in the region. Bekele highlighted the importance of beneficiary engagement and community ownership, profiling RCRC volunteers as being ideally placed to work with their communities in designing and delivering solutions. He urged governments to support their respective National Societies and highlighted IFRC's partnerships with the AU, IGAD and African Development Bank. The First Lady of Tanzania, and representatives from IGAD, the OANDO Foundation, the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency and the World Bank also spoke.

essentially be a next step in humanitarian reform. The note explains that the Summit will take stock, discuss the changing humanitarian landscape and set a forward-looking humanitarian agenda with objectives for work beyond 2016. The Summit will focus on four themes: 1) humanitarian effectiveness; 2) reducing vulnerability and managing risk; 3) transformation through innovation; and 4) serving the needs of people in conflict. OCHA will lead on the preparations of the Summit, including the convening of regional consultations (starting early 2014), technical expert consultations and a global consultation in 2015, following which a UNSG report with recommendations will be produced in the lead-up to the Summit.

Twenty States took the floor at the launch event, including high-level speakers from Turkey, Denmark, Italy, US and the EU. AU, OIC and the League of Arab States also spoke. Reaction from Member States to the Summit has been mixed. The strongest support at the event came from Switzerland (who had contended with Turkey to host the Summit itself), Japan and Germany, who offered to hold preparatory conferences. Furthermore, Spain, Finland and the EU offered to provide support to the Summit secretariat, which will be built up within OCHA.

In their interventions, donor States underlined the need to improve humanitarian effectiveness, particularly in a time of shrinking national budgets. Donors also made references to the need to respect humanitarian principles and address access and protection issues, with several making reference to Syria. While all States speaking at the event indicated general support, behind closed doors many of the same States (including key donor States) have questioned the added value of the Summit alongside other humanitarian initiatives. The statement on behalf of various NGOs, many within [InterAction](#), noted the need for wide consultations and "to ensure that there is no duplication of consultations and efforts and that the Summit processes and agenda are fully engaged with and complementary to the wide range of ongoing humanitarian initiatives."

Now that the Summit has been officially launched, States are more likely to engage

and it will be imperative for humanitarian organizations, including National Societies and their Federation, to engage in and influence the preparations. We invite interested National Societies to reach out to the IFRC New York office in this regard.

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In an event hosted by UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and UN Special Representative of the SG on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura, a new 'Declaration of Commitment to end Sexual Violence in Conflict' was launched and endorsed by 119 States. Hague highlighted the Declaration's "four ground-breaking commitments": 1) agreed that rape and serious sexual violence in conflict constitute breaches of Geneva Convention and their first Protocol (which means that suspects can be apprehended throughout the world); 2) pledged that amnesties for sexual vio-



William Hague, Foreign Secretary of the UK, and Zainab Hawa Bangura, SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, brief correspondents after the meeting on ending sexual violence in conflict (UN Photo/Amanda Voisard).

lence will not be allowed in peace agreements; 3) promised to adopt a new International Protocol in 2014, to help ensure that evidence collected stands up in court and to protect victims; and 4) pledged to support and protect civil society organizations, including women's groups and human rights defenders, to improve monitoring and documentation of cases, and to empower victims to access justice. Hague also announced the convening of a major global conference in London in the first half of 2014, aimed at

building on the success of the Declaration. The UG highlighted its announcement of an additional US\$10 million for a new initiative "Safe from the Start," to improve the capacity of humanitarian actors, including UNHCR and ICRC, to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies. The initiative for the Declaration follows on the G8 Declaration made in April 2013 on the same issue; however this new Declaration significantly widens the circle of countries supporting the issue.

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