

*“Advancing the Rights of Women and Children with Disabilities: Building Bridges
Between and Across Human Rights Communities”*

Asia Regional Platform of Action Adopted by the Asia Cause Lawyer Network

at a seminar organized by the Asia Cause Lawyer Network’s Secretariat (a program of the Lawyers Collective, India) and the Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College

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Strategies for Mainstreaming Disability Rights within the Agenda of the Women’s Rights Movement:

- Strengthen the relationship between women and disability organizations and mainstream women’s rights organizations.
- Mobilize women’s organizations in the Asian region to take up disability rights as an important gender issue.
- Acknowledge that a major part of the disability rights work done by civil society organizations takes place in a patriarchal framework. Patriarchy needs to be combated for securing and advancing the rights of women with disabilities.
- Include disability rights on the agenda of the national conferences of the women’s movement and the annual conference of the Indian Association of Women’s Studies.
- Include ‘women with disabilities’ in the curriculum of women’s studies courses and legal and medical education curricula.
- Maintain credible data on women with disabilities.
- Address the social, psychological and financial needs of the caregivers, who are mostly women.

Advancing the rights of Women and Children with Disabilities in Law Reform and Litigation:

- All laws affecting women and children and persons with disabilities must reference the triple pillars of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women 1979 (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Children, 1989 (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2007, (CRPD).
- Recognize the universal legal capacity of all persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities.
- Women with disabilities must participate in all gender based and disability rights based law reform initiatives.
- The rights of women with disabilities must be integrated into all areas of the laws affecting women.
- Broaden the definition of disability in the Indian Persons with Disabilities Act beyond the named categories.
- Mention ‘equality of men and women’ in the preamble of the Persons with Disabilities Act and also include a separate chapter on women with disabilities.
- Address the rights of women with disabilities in laws in the Asian region dealing with violence against women.
- Classify forced hysterectomy performed on women with disability as “violence against women”.
- Effect changes in the abortion laws in line with the CRPD.
- Litigation on women and children with disabilities should invoke the values of all three Conventions (CEDAW, CRC and CRPD) as relevant.

Awareness of the Conventions and Reporting under them:

- Acknowledge the complementarities between the CEDAW, the CRC and the CRPD in law, policy, reporting and programming on women and children with disabilities.
- Promote greater awareness about the CRPD in the civil society, especially in the rural areas. Initiate capacity building at all levels of the society.

- Map the ongoing work of the disability rights field and link it with the CRPD. This would give greater legitimacy to the work being done by the civil society actors.
- Coordinate with women's and child rights organizations to include chapters on disability rights in the shadow reports presented to the human rights treaty bodies.
- Encourage the reports on disability rights to be authored by the persons with disabilities themselves.
- Ensure that a gender and child rights perspective is brought to bear on the shadow reports submitted to the CRPD Committee.
- Coordinate with State agencies to include gender and disability segregated data in the State reports submitted to the treaty bodies.
- Initiate training for disability rights organizations to collate information and write shadow reports to be submitted to the new CRPD committee.
- Strengthen the movement in the Asian region for the ratification of the CRPD (by governments that have not done so) by mobilizing human rights groups in the region to join the movement.
- All human rights organizations must join in partnership with the disability rights organizations to implement the CRPD in countries that have ratified the treaty. .

Follow up Work Plan:

- The Platform of Action adopted by the ACLN will be disseminated among domestic and regional human rights (including women's children's and disability rights organizations) in India and in the Asian region
- The ACLN Secretariat will develop a webpage dedicated to advancing the aims and goals of the conference.
- The webpage will act as a clearing house of information and contain relevant databases on laws, cases, law reform proposals, international conventions, procedure for reporting to human rights treaty bodies, civil society charters of

demand and important reports on the rights of women and children with disabilities in the Asian region.