

Ukraine on the way towards implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Kyiv, 18 March 2010: A round-table meeting “The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: international commitments and social-legal responsibility of the State” took place at the Institute of Legislation under the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

The event was organised by the Institute of Legislation under the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in cooperation with the Committee on the Matters of Pensioners, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities; the Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities through Access to Employment Project of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the State Employment Centre (SES); and the National Assembly of Disabled Persons of Ukraine (NADU).

The meeting involved people’s deputies of Ukraine, representatives of the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, ministries, Kyiv City State Administration, international organisations, public associations, and academia.

The participants discussed matters related to compliance with norms of the Convention and measures required to implement its provisions.

A welcome address was delivered by **Ulyana Mostipan**, people’s deputy of Ukraine, chairperson of the subcommittee for legislative support for social protection and rehabilitation of disabled persons, the Verkhovna Rada Committee on the Matters of Pensioners, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities. She informed, in particular, that “more than 650 million people, or about 10% of the world population, live with disabilities, and there are more than 2.6 million of them in Ukraine”.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006 and entered into force on 3 May 2008. Ukraine signed the Convention and its Optional Protocol on 24 September 2008, ratified them on 16 December 2009, and the Convention entered into force in Ukraine on 6 March of the current year.

“The Convention guarantees that persons with disabilities shall enjoy the same rights as all other people have. That is, the Convention implements the slogan: all are different but all are equal. National legislation on social protection of persons with disabilities is rather progressive, but its practical implementation faces certain difficulties both on the central and local levels. Hence, a top-priority task both for core ministries and for the Verkhovna Rada Committee consists of amending regulatory legal instruments as well as putting this document into practice in the professional way”, Ms. Mostipan emphasised.

“Enjoyment of all human rights by all society members – including full participation of persons with disabilities in the life and development of society – is the UN’s central mission, which found its reflection in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, **Kateryna Rybalchenko**, Senior Programme Manager at UNDP Ukraine, stressed. “That Ukraine is one of the countries that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a fact worthy of appreciation. This is just the first step, however. We should work

towards policies and programmes that will put the Convention provisions into practice resulting in actual life improvement for people with disabilities and securing equal opportunities for them”.

Vasyl Kostrytsya, ILO National Coordinator in Ukraine, underlined the importance of implementation of the ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) (No. 159) as well as other ILO Conventions and Recommendations to secure people’s rights to decent work without any discrimination. One of the most important tasks now in Ukraine consists of establishing a modern system of vocational rehabilitation, Mr. Kostrytsia supposed.

Oksana Polyakovva, Head, Department for Disabled Persons, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Ukraine, informed on the amendments prepared by the Ministry to the Law of Ukraine on the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Disabled Persons in Ukraine and the Law of Ukraine on the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Ukraine. The amendments deal with bringing definitions of terms into conformity with the Convention, the sign language status as well as implementation of norms to secure unhindered access for disabled persons.

The discussion involved representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction. Issues such as problems of accessibility, health care, observance of the right to education, and employment were raised. In particular, results of the studies on the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities to employment, conducted within the UNDP/ILO/SES Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities through Access to Employment Project, were highlighted by Project Manager **Olena Ivanova**. The meeting was informed that the Project, based on the studies conducted, had developed a new Model of the Job Placement and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and the Model is currently under testing in pilot regions.

Nataliya Skrypka, NADU Executive Director, briefed the meeting on results of public monitoring of compliance with the rights of persons with disabilities. Representatives of other public organisations stressed some problematic aspects of securing the rights of persons with disabilities that still remain unsolved.

Based on results of the round-table meeting, the Institute of Legislation will prepare analytical materials for people’s deputies.