



**2012 Asia and the Pacific Disability Conference
Asia-Pacific DPI Assembly**

Incheon, Republic of Korea

**24 October 2012, 10:00 hrs
Opening session**

**Message from
Ms. Nanda Krairiksh
Director, Social Development Division
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Your Excellency, Mr. Rim Chemin, Minister of Health and Welfare,
Government of the Republic of Korea,

Mr. Javed Abidi, Chairperson of DPI

Mr. Shoji Nakanishi, Chairperson of DPI Asia-Pacific

Mr. Kim Dae-Sung, President of DPI Korea

Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly gratifying to be in the presence of so many leaders and members of the disability movement who have made such significant contributions towards the achievement of the rights of persons with disabilities.

It is my privilege to convey a message to you all from the Director, Social Development Division, of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

I quote:

“Your Excellency, Mr. Rim Chemin, Minister of Health and Welfare,
Government of the Republic of Korea,

On behalf of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, I am pleased to send you all my heartfelt greetings, as you meet in Incheon for a series of important meetings to welcome the new Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013 - 2022.

I should like to underscore ESCAP's gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea, through its Ministry of Health and Welfare, for generous support of the Incheon International Disability Conference.

I should also like to express our warm appreciation to the Incheon Metropolitan City.

As we stand together at the historic starting line for the new Decade, I congratulate DPI Asia-Pacific and DPI Korea for jointly launching the Incheon International Conference on Disability through convening three important, interrelated meetings.

Permit me to recognize the support for this Conference extended by the Korea Foundation for Persons with Disabilities, the ABILIS Foundation of Finland, as also the Korea Federation of Organizations of the Disabled and the Korean Federation of Centers for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities.

DPI Asia-Pacific and ESCAP share a special bond forged through over two decades of close collaboration in transcending barriers to the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities. ESCAP values this enduring partnership.

Indeed, DPI Asia-Pacific has played a key role in shaping ESCAP's disability programme. This began soon after DPI itself was founded in Singapore in 1981, till today. We at ESCAP embraced from the outset the DPI principle of "Nothing about us without us".

With the active leadership of our member States, and the valued partnership with DPI and other stakeholders, it has been possible for ESCAP to facilitate five achievements:

- ✓ One, in 1992, the world's first regional decade of disabled persons was launched in Beijing, focusing on full participation and equality of persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Two, in the year 2002, the second regional decade of disabled persons, was launched in Otsu, Japan, focusing on a rights-based approach to removing barriers to full accessibility.
- ✓ Three, in 2004, "the Bangkok Draft", served as the substantive Asia-Pacific foundation for the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- ✓ Four, in 2010, the "Make the Right Real!" campaign was launched at ESCAP, in conjunction with the second session of the intergovernmental Committee on Social Development, aimed at accelerating the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

- ✓ Five, this year, the 62-government membership of the Commission unanimously proclaimed a new Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, spanning the period 2013 to 2022.

And, between 2010 and 2012, a strategy for the new Decade has been drafted with the active engagement of key stakeholders, including DPI Asia Pacific.

In fact, the very idea of having a new Decade came from your leadership, following the DPI Asia Pacific meeting held at ESCAP's UN House for Asia Pacific, right before the June 2010 stakeholder consultation.

Like the 2004 "Bangkok Draft", the Incheon Strategy will be a major Asia-Pacific contribution to promoting disability-inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda.

Upon the endorsement of the Commission in its 2013 session, the ministerial declaration and Incheon Strategy shall be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, to be held in September 2013.

As you may be aware, an international jury panel recently selected 10 Asia-Pacific Champions of Disability Rights and seven Promoters for the new Decade.

With the high level of engagement of DPI Asia-Pacific leaders, it is little wonder that among the Champions and Promoters are several who are closely linked with DPI Asia-Pacific.

Let us all reflect on some insights gained.

Much space has opened up for the participation of persons with disabilities in decision making and the development process. It is now especially important that DPI Asia Pacific members strengthen their own technical skills, expertise and experience on all areas covered by the Convention. With that, persons with disabilities will be able to play an even more effective role in the harmonization of the Convention with domestic legislation.

One important and frequently overlooked aspect concerns the skills required for building long-term partnerships, and pursuing negotiations with diverse parties on disability inclusion. Those parties are in government, civil society, the private sector and international organizations working at all levels.

This is a very long-term process requiring strategic vision, persistence and a clear focus on making a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities. In all

our striving for equality, let us be inspired by persons with disabilities who are struggling to emerge from poverty.

ESCAP stands ready to further strengthen its 30-year partnership with DPI Asia Pacific for accelerating the ratification and implementation of the CRPD in the new Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

I wish you successful deliberations in your three meetings this week.

Together, let us "Make the Right Real!"

Ladies and Gentlemen,

That concludes the message of Ms. Nanda Krairiksh, Director of the ESCAP Social Development Division.

Thank you.