

Year-end and Holiday Greetings!

2009 has brought much progress in moving forward the international disability agenda at the United Nations!

The Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCPRD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) wishes to express its deep appreciation for all the support we received from the international community: Governments, our colleagues from UN agencies and civil society – especially the disability community – for moving forward the international disability agenda in all aspects of development.

During 2009, there have been a number of new ratifications of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol, adding to the impetus towards the goal of the United Nations – the realization of human rights and development for all for a peaceful and prosperous world.

We have all worked hard this year to move forward the process to mainstream disability in development, with our focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The expert group meeting held in April this year and the Report of the Secretary-General on Realizing the MDGs for Persons with Disabilities have spurred on this process, as has the work towards mainstreaming disability in development. We continue to further our efforts to advance the cross-sectionalities between CRPD and other human rights conventions for making development more just and equitable.

The second Conference of States Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held in September, helped us to take stock of progress in implementation of the CRPD, with a focus on how the CRPD and its measures could advance the rights of persons with disabilities in development.

At the same time, collaboration with our colleagues within the UN system brought further progress to the work of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention. The Group has now finalized its Strategy and Plan of Action.

The undg Task team on disability will move forward to develop a guidance note for the UN Country Teams all around the world in the New Year.

As the year came to a close, we need to thank Sheikha Hissa Al-Thani (Qatar), the Special Rapporteur on Disability, for her tireless work for persons with disabilities during her mandate and welcome Mr. Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa) as a new Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development.

We were very excited with the addition of a strong new voice for persons with disabilities at the UN, this month. The new UN Messenger for Peace, Mr. Stevie Wonder, a celebrated musician and song writer who has made great strides in promoting human rights, will now be a global voice for persons with disabilities.

We look forward to what the year 2010 has in store for us, especially in relation to the upcoming 2010 Review of the MDG processes. We eagerly wait to see our work bear fruit in disability-inclusive development. We wish to see the long-standing barriers and obstacles placed in front of persons with disabilities removed, so that they can be both beneficiaries and change-makers in all development processes – the premise of the work of the UN in the field of development that goes back a quarter of a century.

But we cannot rest on what has been accomplished this year, since much has yet to be done to fully realize the rights and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities. We will continue to move forward with you as our partners in this challenge.

We wish you a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year 2010!

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www.un.org/disabilities