



United Nations  
E S C A P

Commission for Social Development  
47<sup>th</sup> session  
4-13 February 2009

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda  
Priority theme: social integration

Statement by Ms Thelma Kay

Chief, Social Development Division  
United Nations Economic and Social Commission  
for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)



Mr / Mme Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Under its theme of inclusive and sustainable development, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been actively promoting social integration through various programmes.

ESCAP submitted the **Macao Outcome Document of the High-level Meeting on the Regional Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)**, to the first global five-year review of the implementation of MIPAA during the last Commission on Social Development in February 2008. An “Ageing Readiness” Conference will be held later this year to enhance understanding of the socio-economic and health dimensions of ageing as well as viable policy options, thereby assisting policy-makers in preparing for population ageing.

In April 2008, ESCAP provided technical assistance to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the **formulation of the National Youth Policy**, to map the policy context and review the status of the draft national youth policy and its process. ESCAP is organizing on 12-13 February, 2009, an **Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the Regional Follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY): Ensuring Regional Youth Development**. The EGM will focus on the regional priorities of education and ICT as development tools for youth, youth and employment, and youth and their well-being, including health.

In the area of youth health and substance drug abuse, ESCAP has conducted projects on “**Strengthening life skills for positive youth health behaviour**”, and on “**Developing Effective Policies and Practices to Manage Problematic Drug Use of Young People in the Greater Mekong Subregion**” focussing on community based interventions and community participation. Building community resilience was also the approach used in a project on “**Sharing Experience and Expertise on Building Community Resilience to Natural Disasters through Partnership**”.

In 2008, the 64<sup>th</sup> Commission Session of ESCAP adopted resolution 64/8 on the **regional implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five towards and Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific**. Reflecting the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the resolution called upon all ESCAP members States to mainstream the disability perspective into development initiatives, including the attainment of the MDGs and requested ESCAP to assist States in becoming parties to and implementing the CRPD. In this regard, ESCAP has organised **capacity building training sessions for Governments, NGOs and the private sector**, making available opportunities to understand the concepts and content of the CRPD and its linkage to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the Biwako Plus Five and the MDGs.

A **first round of study of anti-discrimination laws on disability in the region** has been completed to serve as a set of policy options for Governments to utilize in the domestic application of the CRPD.

In May 2008, ESCAP established stronger working relations with **Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan** on the issue of disability. To strengthen cooperation with the private sector, ESCAP briefed the “Conference Board”, a global association of prominent business organizations, on disability issues and the work place.

In response to the serious regional need to improve availability and quality of data collection on disability the Statistics Division of ESCAP, in collaboration with WHO and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, has provided a series of training for national statistical offices in the region as well as conducted pilot test surveys based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and its application to the national context. Complementary activities are a **Regional Workshop on promoting disability data collection through the 2010 Population and Housing Censuses** and the launching of a *Training Manual of Disability Statistics*

Building on the success of ESCAP’s first publication of “Disability at a Glance”, ESCAP has finalised a new expanded edition which will be released in early 2009. A web-based country profile on data and policy on disability issues, *Policy Central: Database of Disability Policy in Asia and the Pacific* has been launched.

To promote inclusion by improved accessibility, ESCAP has also promoted the concept and implementation of “**accessible tourism**” as a useful means for inclusive development, bringing benefits not only to persons with disabilities, reduced mobility and capabilities but also for the local government and community. A meeting on the subject will be held in Takayama City, Japan later this year.

ESCAP has promoted the integration of the social dimension in development frameworks. One example is its **Development Account Project to Strengthen Social Inclusion, Health Promotion and Gender Equality in the MDG Process**, an omnibus project with all five Regional Commissions, of which ESCAP is playing the lead. Through analysis and knowledge sharing with existing regional networks, the project aims to identify key barriers in these areas, ways to integrate these concerns in national policy-making as well as to measure policy progress, in particular in efforts to achieve the MDGs.

The High Level Meeting on International Migration and Development, which ESCAP convened in September 2008, included a roundtable **on the Social Dimensions of Migration** to deepen the understanding of migration mechanisms and their linkages with socio-economic development for the formulation of policies to protect the rights of migrants.

ESCAP is also addressing social protection of vulnerable groups through the entry-point of the family unit through activities on **Enhancing Family Well-Being Through Social Protection and Effective Delivery of Social Services**. Key policy issues to provide social protection for the well-being of families covered health, migration, social protection strategies, the needs of an ageing population, and issues of psychosocial wellbeing.

The broad spectrum of issues reinforces the importance that the social dimension has throughout policy-making, an emphasis that ESCAP has continued to promote in 2008 and aims to continue to strengthen in 2009.