
Baghdad, 16 July 2011

Recommendations

On 16 July 2011, a seminar joined with a cultural celebration dedicated to persons with disabilities and special needs was held in Baghdad. The meeting was designed to increase public awareness and promote a free and inclusive dialogue on the requirements and needs of disabled and socially disadvantaged people from Iraq.

More than 500 persons attended the meeting, including persons with special needs and disabilities, organizations and associations working on disability issues (Mr. Moafak Al-Khafaji – President of Iraqi Handicapped; Mrs Lamia Talbani – Head of the Voice of Independent Woman Organization; Dr Abdul Hassan – Head of Audio Visual Rescue for the Children of Iraq and Expert in the Affairs of disabled persons; Mr Mehdi Jawad Al-Aazami Al-Mashhadany – Head of Blind Cultural Organization for Blind Care) from all Iraqi provinces, the Minister of State for Woman Affairs, members of the Iraqi Parliament, and representatives of the diplomatic corps.

The meeting offered a unique opportunity for disabled people to freely express their opinions and ideas and to interact directly with representatives of relevant institutions and organisations on the various types of discrimination and daily problems they face (in terms of unemployment and lack of proper health care, resources and education facilities).

Participants agreed on the following recommendations:

1. Iraqi government and non-governmental institutions have to promote and implement all necessary measures to enhance social, economic and political integration of disabled and socially disadvantaged citizens

2. Iraqi government and non-governmental institutions have to act in support of measures and initiatives supporting disabled and socially disadvantaged citizens to have a much greater role in making decisions on key issues related to their own needs and priorities.

3. Iraqi government and non-governmental institutions have to promote and implement all necessary measures to develop an accurate demographic statistics database on the population in Iraq. The available estimations indicate the existence of 3 million disabled persons, victims of tragic past decades marked by wars (use of chemical and biological weapons, depleted uranium and WP, landmines) and the use of torture and repression in addition to the tragic circumstances faced by the country after 2003.
4. Iraqi government and non-governmental institutions have to promote the elaboration of comprehensive scientific surveys and standards for the rehabilitation and social-economic empowerment of persons with special needs and disabilities.

5. Iraqi national authorities have to create a National Fund to support persons with special needs and disabilities through a basic income allocation to be funded through a specific percentage from petrol taxes, tourism, donations and by allocating a percentage of 10% of houses under construction by the State.

6. Iraqi national authorities have to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention related to the rights of persons with disabilities, which entered into force in 2008 and has been signed by 139 countries.