The participants of the Handy Cup 2011 Partnership Building and Networking Conference held in Malta from 9 to 11 September 2011, bringing together more than thirty delegations from fourteen Mediterranean and Gulf countries, reflecting both government and non-governmental perspectives, a balance of gender and a strong youth representation;

Having discussed with spirit of friendship and brotherhood, which crossed all borders and differences, with the aim of sharing their common and different experiences;

Engaging ourselves to work closely together in the coming weeks and months, to keep in touch and to keep on the fruitful and rich exchange of practices and projects;

Convinced that the Rights of People with Disabilities are Human Rights, not special privileges, charity or assistance, but based on the basic human rights of dignity and equal opportunities;

Decide to embark in a common journey and sail a shared itinerary together with Handy Cup, with the intention of ensuring that future editions can be as inclusive as this event, and involve all shores of the Mediterranean, and to that end

Commit themselves to work together in order to ensure:

1. the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its Additional Protocols are ratified in each of our countries and effective national implementing legislation is necessary to realise in practice its aims and principles is adopted;
2. the adoption of strategic national policies based on a “right based approach”, including early warning indicators, that can guide national strategies to implement the full recognition of the rights of people with disability and the acceptance of diversity in abilities and characteristics as an enrichment of the fabric of society,
3. that more opportunities are available to people with disabilities and their families to share policies and possibilities to express themselves and to increase their capacity for self advocacy and freedom of expression, through awareness campaigns, policies and initiatives that expand the public spaces of participation.
4. that the text of the UNCRPD is translated and adapted also in sign language and local languages, so that it be understood, shared and used as an effective tools of self-advocacy for human rights by people with disabilities;
5. the establishment of National Committees and/or High Commissions representing people with disabilities, their families and other stakeholders to provide a participatory democratic mechanism facilitating interaction between government and non government actors, to monitor the effective implementation of the UNCRPD and prepare national strategic policies and plans in respect of people with disabilities;
6. that inclusion and self determination extend to all forms of disability, notably to people with psychiatric disabilities, so as to enhance their contribution to social and public life, with a view to an inclusive civil society, ejecting detention as a method of custody;
7. to encourage people with disability to participate in political life, both as voters and as political candidates and leaders at all levels of elections;
8. that technical aids be made available as needed and that all public buildings be designed to ensure effective access and that international donors, include respect of disability rights as a criterion for funding all sectors of development cooperation;
9. that sign language is officially adopted as a standard in national visual media and government institutions, and that its use is encouraged in wider society to allow everybody to exercise effectively their freedom of information and freedom of expression;
10. to create, initiate and enact civil society initiatives and working groups to undertake research and studies on disability issues, ensuring effective quality control and results-oriented approaches;

11. the protection for people with disability in all situations of armed conflict and occupation;

12. that persons with disability be protected from all kind of harassment and sexual abuse, both inside their families and within reclusive institutions;

13. that women with disabilities are afforded opportunities to build their capacities to be leaders and engines of change;

14. that people with disabilities be assured the full right to exercise their freedom of choice in all personal matters, including the right of choosing their life partner and all other life choices;

15. the expansion and promotion of effective inclusive vocational training and employment for people with disability, including people with psychic and psychiatric disabilities;

16. to build the capacity and special education skills of teachers and education professionals, including special educational programs for new cohorts of graduate teachers.

17. to lobby and advocate political parties to take in consideration the rights of people of disability in all their activities;

In furtherance of these commitments participants decided to establish a Mediterranean network of Organisations of Disabled People and create a space and opportunity for dialogue and exchange of ideas, projects and initiatives. Each organisation within the network is committed to these shared goals and to working together to achieve them, within the Mediterranean Region and beyond.

To conclude participants would like to express their thanks to HandyCup and Inspire, as organisers of this Conference for all the work they have done to make everything possible and to have created the opportunity for exchange and participation from so many different countries;

Participants also have expressed their heartfelt appreciation to Pezzi di Ricambio, including Maestro Fabio Buccioli, his team and orchestra, as well as all the musical and artistic groups for their extraordinary capacity to engage and involve everyone, not only Conference participants, but also the welcoming inhabitants of Marsaxlokk, Malta;

A special thanks also is due to the Government and People of Malta, for their warm and friendly embrace, to the Presidency of the Republic of Malta for its welcome to the Island and to the Presidential Palace, where H.E. Anton Tabone generous audience constituted a highlight of the event.

Finally, the participants and the organisers owe a debt of gratitude to the Italian Ambassador to Malta His Excellency Luigi Marras, and through him also to the Government, the President and People of Italy for the extraordinary commitment to the Conference and its objectives, both during the preparation processes and during the event;

Participants also express their appreciation to No Peace Without Justice, its secretary-general Niccolo Figa-Talamanca and the NPWJ team for facilitating a fruitful exchange of views by all participants during the Conference, ensuring full and effective participation and inclusive discussion.

Finally, participants also extend their gratitude to Dr. Moussa Charafuddin, Mr. Nizar Basalat, Dr. Ali Al Shawaheni and Ms. Shaikha Al Shaiba for coordinating the discussion and inputs in the formulation of these recommendations.