



ASEM High-level Meeting on Disability & Global Conference on Assistive Devices and Technology

ASEM High-level Meeting on Disability Joint Initiative

Enhancing Disability Cooperation among ASEM Members

We, delegates from ASEM members, attended the ASEM High-level Meeting on Disability, held in Beijing, China on 29/30 October 2015. The meeting was part of the ASEM Disability Cooperation Event organized by China Disabled Persons' Federation with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, World Health Organization and International Telecommunication Union, aimed at implementing the initiative "incorporation of disability issues into the ASEM cooperation framework" of the 10th ASEM Summit in 2014, which gained support from a lot of ASEM members, among them Germany, New Zealand, Pakistan and France are co-sponsors. The Meeting is also in response to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During the Meeting, under the theme of "Break Barriers for Inclusive Development", delegates had extensive, in-depth and fruitful discussion on the following topics: Opportunities and Challenges—Current Status of Work on Disability in ASEM members; Enhancing Pragmatic Cooperation—Best Practice Sharing; Assistive Devices & Technology—a Starting Point of ASEM Cooperation on Disability; Towards Inclusive Development—Vocational Training and Employment for Persons with Disabilities. The Meeting was held along with Global Conference on Assistive Devices & Technology, namely "ASEM plus", an effort to promote assistive devices as the entry point for pragmatic cooperation.

We noted that the world has an estimated one billion people with disabilities, more than half of them live in ASEM member countries. Disability is an issue related to social development, human rights and economic growth that has to be tackled by ASEM members. In this field, ASEM members have significant varieties, complementarities and opportunities of cooperation. ASEM provides an inter-governmental platform for dialogue and cooperation, and performs important

Beijing, China

Break Barriers for Inclusive Development

function in promoting Asian-European countries to carry out mutual-benefit cooperation in many fields. Incorporating disability issues into the ASEM cooperation framework will contribute to the people-to-people exchange and social development, and will bring benefit to people living in the continents.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lays special emphasis on protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, and calls for strengthened international cooperation and amplified efforts by all stakeholders to build harmonious and inclusive social development. In this regard, we agree that future ASEM cooperation in the field of disability will be based on the following three pillars: social development, human rights promotion and economic growth. The exchange and cooperation in this field among ASEM members should be based on equality and mutual-respect, with common goals of breaking barriers and common development, so as to create a more inclusive social environment for persons with disabilities and promote their inclusion in development. This work needs to be in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

To achieve this objective, we call for concerted efforts in the following areas: ASEM High-level Meeting on Disability will be held every two years, for exchanging best practices on disability cooperation among ASEM members, with a view to establishing an appropriate long-term mechanism of ASEM disability cooperation;

To make full use of relevant resources to initiate and implement more disability-related international cooperation projects and more mainstreaming of disability concerns in general projects, to support the capacity building of civil society organizations of persons with disabilities, and to effectively promote the pragmatic cooperation in the field of disability;

To explore the possibility to establish a platform of exchange and cooperation in assistive devices & technology under the ASEM cooperation framework, for mutual complementarity, technology sharing and the making and implementing of policies for assistive technology as indicated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, so that they could benefit from the development of assistive devices, products and services;

To include disability issues into the existing multilateral and bilateral dialogue or cooperation mechanism among ASEM members, for sharing successful experience in all aspects of the work on disability, and promoting common development in this regard.

We suggest that the outcome of this meeting be submitted to the 12th ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting in November 2015, the 5th ASEM Labor and Employment Ministers' Conference in December 2015 and the 11th ASEM Summit in July 2016.