News and Notes

COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION GUIDELINES LAUNCHED AT ABUJA CONFERENCE

The 4th Community-Based Rehabilitation Africa Network Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria from 26th—29th October 2010 saw the launch of new WHO CBR Guidelines that will empower persons with disabilities by supporting their inclusion in all services.

Developed over seven years, these new Community-Based Rehabilitation Guidelines are the result of collaboration between the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Office (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), in close consultation with other key stakeholders on disability and development globally. Leprosy and CBR is included within a supplementary booklet of the Guidelines.

These Guidelines advocate a multi-sectoral approach involving all sectors of government in partnership with social organisations, persons affected by disabilities, their families and communities to address health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment issues identified by the CBR matrix. Guidance is given to community-based rehabilitation programmes on how to:

- “implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in low and middle income countries;
- promote a strategy for community-based inclusive development;
- ensure that persons with disabilities are empowered by facilitating their involvement in all aspects of their lives and decision-making; and how to;
- promote dignity and rights for all.”

The Nigerian Government was supportive of the 4th Community-Based Rehabilitation Africa Network Conference having recently signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the Optional Protocol on 24th September this year.

Ms. Joan Okune, the Executive Director of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Africa Network, noted that these Guidelines could help make a fundamental difference to the lives of up to 80 million people with disabilities in Africa, it is hoped that they will help make a fundamental difference to the quality of life of millions of persons around the world who are affected by impairments. Doug Soutar, General Secretary of ILEP welcomed these comprehensive guidelines as an important tool for those seeking to integrate their leprosy-related CBR programmes into the broader domain of disability-inclusive development.

The CBR Guidelines are available for download from WHO’s Disability and Rehabilitation pages: