

Campaign to Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

“This is the beginning for us, as adults, to take this cause forward, and highlight its importance to broader society. We will collaborate with the government and work in partnership with all key stakeholders to achieve the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.”

Mr. Amin Hashwani, President NOWPDP, expressed his views on the Youth Advocacy Forum, held on 14th May 2009 that celebrated the collection of more than half-a-million signatures for the ratification of the UN Convention in Pakistan on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The Youth Advocacy Forum was a joint collaboration between NOWPDP and Children’s Museum for Peace and Human Rights (CMPHR), where children representing 104 schools and organizations in Karachi collected over 1.1 million signatures on a petition addressed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan requesting him to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of differently-abled citizens.

NOWPDP’s subsequent initiative, after the signing of the convention by Pakistan in July 2011, was to release a booklet on the UN Convention for the Rights of differently-abled citizens and its implication, celebrating the ratification of the Convention by the Government of Pakistan on 25th September 2008. As of February 2010, 78 countries have ratified the UN Convention for differently-abled citizens. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equal human rights as others.

The booklet has been distributed to all members of Parliament to raise awareness about ways in which Pakistan can implement the clauses of the Convention and become a more inclusive society for people of all abilities. It highlights:

- The state of disability in Pakistan and the benefits of an inclusive society.
- Proposals for implementation of legislation, through effective monitoring and governance bodies within the government
- Accessibility of buildings and the environment for the differently-abled
- Availability of quality education for all differently-abled children
- Equal opportunities for people with disabilities to gain employment without fear of discrimination
- The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of differently-abled, as a symbol of commitment of the Pakistan Government to eradicate discrimination.

NOWPDP and CMPHR are working together to increase awareness of the UN Convention and Pakistan’s obligations under the Convention, and hence the booklet covers the following topics comprehensively:

- Primer on special abilities
- The state of special abilities in Pakistan
- Benefits of inclusion of people with special abilities
- Suggestions for making Pakistan an inclusive society
- Copies of the booklet are available upon request.