

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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DECLARATION ON THE DECADE OF THE AMERICAS
FOR THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (2006-2016)

(Approved by the Permanent Council at its meeting of May 17, 2006)

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FOR THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (2006-2016)

(Adopted by the Permanent Council at its meeting of May 17, 2006)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING its resolutions AG/RES. 1249 (XXIII-O/93), "Situation of Persons with Disabilities in the American Hemisphere"; AG/RES. 1356 (XXV-O/95), "Situation of Persons with Disabilities in the American Hemisphere"; and AG/RES. 1369 (XXVI-O/96), "Panama Commitment to Persons with Disabilities in the American Hemisphere";

BEARING IN MIND that the 1999 Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities provides that "[a] distinction or preference adopted by a state party to promote the social integration or personal development of persons with disabilities does not constitute discrimination";

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that, in the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata, November 5, 2005), the Heads of State and Government instructed the Organization of American States (OAS) to "consider at the next OAS period of regular sessions of the General Assembly to be held in the Dominican Republic, a Declaration on the Decade of the Americas for Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), together with a program of action";

DEEPLY CONCERNED that approximately 90 million people live with disabilities in the Hemisphere, many of whom are subsisting below the poverty line in our countries, excluded from their communities by physical, political, cultural, social, economic, attitudinal, and other barriers;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that it is especially important for the states to undertake joint efforts to promote the effective exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities and their integration into the countries' economic, social, cultural, civil, and political activities, and to promote their active participation in social development so as to comply with international commitments, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; and

CONSIDERING THAT, in order to promote short-, medium-, and long-term action to integrate persons with disabilities, international and regional institutions in various parts of the world have found it advantageous to declare disability decades, the aim of which is to call attention to the actual situation of persons with disabilities, strengthen governments' political will, and attract human, technical, and economic international cooperation resources through concerted hemispheric and/or regional action to bring about make substantive change toward improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities,

DECLARES:

1. Its deep concern over the persisting state of disadvantage, inequity, and discrimination in which most persons with disabilities are living.

2. The need to adopt urgent Hemisphere-wide and/or regional measures and strategies to promote the recognition and exercise of all basic human rights, including civil and political as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as the fundamental freedoms, of persons with disabilities.

3. The decade from 2006 to 2016 to be the “Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities,” with the theme: “Equality, dignity, and participation,” the objectives of which are the recognition and full exercise of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and their right to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political life and in the development of their societies, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

4. The need, during the aforementioned Decade, to undertake programs, plans, and measures to bring about the inclusion of and full participation by persons with disabilities in all aspects of society; to carry out social, political, economic, cultural, and development programs, so as to enable such persons to attain opportunities on an equal basis with others; to promote effective measures to prevent new disabilities; and to provide persons with disabilities with access to rehabilitation services and programs.