RECOMMENDATIONS TO WORLD BANK SAFEGUARD POLICIES

We appreciate the opportunity to present our recommendations to the process of Review and Update of the World Bank’s Safeguard Policies

A. WHO WE ARE

Fundación ONCE for Cooperation and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities was founded in February 1988 by agreement of the General Council of ONCE (the Spanish National Organization for the Blind and Fundación ONCE’s founder), as an instrument for cooperation and solidarity of the Spanish blind to other groups of people with disabilities to improve their living conditions.

In addition to ONCE itself as the founding entity, the main organizations of persons with disabilities in Spain are present in Fundación ONCE. These represent people with physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities and mental health at Fundación ONCE’s Board of Trustees, its highest governing body.

Over the past decades ONCE has developed a decidedly international outlook, with the main driving force being its Foundation for Solidarity with the Blind in Latin America (FOAL in Spanish), set up in 1998

http://www.once.es/new/otras-webs/english
http://www.fundaciononce.es/en/page/who-we-are
http://www.once.es/new/Onceinternacional/0_pruebaonceint/FOAL

B. DISABILITY APPROACH

More than one billion people in the world live with some form of disability (15% of the world's population), of whom nearly 200 million experience considerable difficulties in functioning. In the years ahead, disability will be an even greater concern because its prevalence is on the rise (Date from 1970: 10%). This is due to ageing populations and the higher risk of disability in older people as well as the global increase in chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mental health disorders. Besides, Disability is part of the human condition – almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life. We are all potentially disabled.

Across the world, people with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. This is partly because people with disabilities experience barriers in accessing services that many of us have long taken for granted, including health, education, employment, and transport as well as information. These difficulties are exacerbated in less advantaged communities.

As mentioned above, there is a clear link between disability and aging that has to be underlined. In Spain, for example, out of the 3.85 million people with disabilities living in households, 2.23 million (56%) are over 65 years of age (showing the impact of the progressive aging). Moreover, there is a relation between age and severity; 66 % of people with a severe disability are 65 years old or more.

The world population is rapidly ageing. Between 2000 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will double from about 11% to 22%. The absolute number of people aged 60 years and over is expected to increase from 605 million to 2 billion over the same period. The number of people aged 80 years or older will have almost quadrupled between 2000 and 2050 to 395 million. Low- and middle-income countries will experience the most rapid and dramatic demographic change.
C. THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

Therefore, the social disadvantages suffered should not be eliminated as a result of the “goodwill” of other persons or governments but should be removed because these disadvantages are in violation of the enjoyment and exercise of their human rights. (Art. 1 CRPD)

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is and must be a turning point in the treatment of disability to be the final step towards the human rights model. The CRPD is based on a social model of disability in which the disability itself does not reside in the person but in the environment that does not allow them to develop their potential. Disability is, according to this model, the interaction between the capabilities of the individual and the barriers posed by the environment and attitudes.

The social model of disability stresses that disability is a complex phenomenon, which is composed of an individual phenomenon (a characteristic of a person), combined with social factors (the way society is designed). It is explained illustratively by the British author Jenny Morris “a limitation or inability to walk is a deficiency, while a limitation or impossibility to enter a building because the entrance has a series of steps is a disability.”

This means that disability is largely the consequence of the way we build society. The role that the environment plays on disability should be noted the role that the environment plays on disability should be noted because if we understand this not so much as a deficiency but a mismatch between the social ecosystem and the different abilities of the people we would accept that the environment can facilitate or restrict the rights of citizenship of the people with disabilities. The main obstacles we encounter in facilitating the adaptation of the environment to the people are inadequate policies and standards, negative attitudes based on prejudice, lack of universal accessibility, inadequate provision of services, insufficient funding, lack of consultation, participation and information.

D. HIGHER RATES OF POVERTY

Poverty affects persons with disabilities in a disproportionate manner. They are overrepresented among the poorest in the world, experiencing higher rates of poverty and deprivation, and lower levels of income than the general population. Population with disabilities is among the most disadvantaged and discriminated. However, development economic theories have forgotten essential matters about this population, contributing towards their invisibility and poverty. The extraordinary costs that arise from a disability and from the psychological, physical and social barriers that persons with disabilities face, contribute to their poverty, lack of freedom and infringement of human rights, as put forward by current studies on this subject.

Out of the more than one billion people with disabilities in the world (15% of the population), 80 % live in poor countries (UN, 2006c: 1). Some World Bank studies assert that "500 million people with disabilities are among the poorest of the poor" ( Metts , 2000: 39 ), and it is estimated to account “for 15 to 20 % of the poorest countries developing, being among the most disadvantaged groups and suffering greater discrimination and vulnerability” ( Elwan , 1999 : 15-16 ).

On the one hand, poverty causes disability, which may occur as a result of poor nutrition or malnutrition, lack of health care, such as perinatal care during motherhood, or due to diseases and deficiencies that could have been avoided. Moreover, the discrimination that results from disability leads to exclusion, marginalization, lack of education, unemployment; and all these factors increase the risk of poverty.

Poverty among people with disabilities is recognized as the result of different aspects, both of th individual and of the environment in which they live. These relate to material aspects such as employment, income, the extraordinary costs. They are also linked with the services that people with disabilities receive with regards to to education, health, rehabilitation and social inclusion. In addition, there are the issues related to social and psychological aspects of poverty, such as self-esteem, stigma,
social contact, violence, power and authority. Importantly, many of their extra costs are directly related to lack of accessibility.

The exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labor market contributes significantly to explaining these poverty levels. Working-age adults with disabilities experience low employment rates and salaries worldwide. A study in 10 developing countries shows that unemployment and labor inactivity range from 32 to 100 percent among people with disabilities, depending on the level of the impairment.11

Discrimination and stigma, unequal opportunities, and physical and attitudinal barriers are also causes for the social exclusion and poverty of persons with disabilities. Lack of education, in particular, has a significant impact on poverty in adulthood of persons with disabilities. Poverty reduction programs do not adequately include persons with disabilities

The existing cycle between poverty and disability, can only be broken by inclusion. The concept of inclusion underlines the need for the environment to make adjustments taking into account their human, social and civil rights. However, this inclusion does not occur, despite the large number of disabled people in poverty and being a population disproportionately represented among the poor, are “invisible” and mostly absent in the definition and implementation in both political agendas and the implementation of actions in the field of development cooperation. Also, the definition of inclusion in the safeguards does not include persons with disabilities. We advocate for a change in this definition to ensure persons with disabilities are included. There is a direct relationship between disability and poverty that needs to be addressed, and the first step to change this patron is through an inclusion of the concept of people with disability.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS.

I. Ensuring the visibility and commitment with Persons with Disabilities:

The way Persons with Disability are projected and positioned has an enormous impact on how we are perceived and treated in each situation. Taken into account the arguments highlighted in points B, C and D and according to the objectives of the World Bank, it is clear that Disability should be placed in the main body of the Framework, not in the footnote.

II. Executive Summary of Environmental and Social Framework (Second Draft) in point 1 shows Bank Mundial’s objective that the proposed environmental and social framework has the aim of being the most advanced of its kind, reaffirming the commitment of the World Bank to be leaders in the provision of measures to promote the protection of the most vulnerable people and the environment, promoting inclusive access to the benefits of development.

Leading is not only about being good, but of being a reference. Being a reference is excelling and is, therefore, an exponent or symbol in a specific area, an example to follow. This commitment by the World Bank as well as being worthy of recognition must be reflected, therefore, not only in policies and measures relating to projects financed by the World Bank, but also in those governing its internal functioning, its management model system of human resources, including recruitment and internal training, thus demonstrating the feasibility of its requirements, before other actors, corporations, governments and public administration. (Adopt a disability strategy with a plan of action would be a great step of esta comitmen).

III. Basic principles that should be taken into account in policies, projects and actions of the World Bank:

1. Non-discrimination, equal treatment before the law and equality of opportunity: no discrimination, direct or indirect, discriminatory harassment or discrimination by association, because of or on the basis of disability, including any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing by persons with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, labor, civil or areas otherwise, with particular reference to equal treatment between men and women. Regional equal opportunity means adopting positive
measures designed to prevent or compensate for disadvantages for a person with disabilities to participate fully in the political, economic, labor, cultural and social life.

It should be ensured that all persons with disabilities enjoy protection against discrimination and have equal opportunities independent of their level and type of disability.

2. **Universal Accessibility:** It is understood by Universal accessibility, the condition to be met by environments, processes, goods, products and services, as well as objects or instruments, tools and devices, to be understandable, usable and practical for all persons in safety and comfort and as independently and naturally as possible. The strategy of “design for all” is taken for granted and is understood without prejudice to reasonable adjustments to be adopted.

Universal Accessibility is a prerequisite to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. We know that the World Bank has already used the Universal Access as a basis of the Safeguards Policies and we are satisfied with this action, but it would be essential that the Universal Access were considered a mainstream of the Safeguards, keeping it as a reference. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to:

a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces
b. Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

Universal Accessibility is fundamental to achieving equality and non-discrimination, and failure to achieve it is considered as a course of discrimination, and more specifically, as an alleged violation of the right to equal opportunities for people with disabilities. It is the condition that guarantees the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Universal Accessibility is essential not only for people with disabilities, but also for people of age, people with special needs (anyone without disabilities but who in certain circumstances may have reduced mobility, pregnant, plaster das, ...) and for society in general.

3. **Design for all** is the activity that is conceived or projected from the beginning and wherever this is possible, environments, processes, goods, products, services, objects, instruments, devices or tools, so that they can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible. Design for all is part of inclusive and sustainable development.

4. **Mainstreaming of disability policies:** the principle under which the actions carried out are not limited to plans, programs and specific actions designed exclusively for people with disabilities, but who understand the policies and lines of action general in any of the policy areas where the needs and demands of people with disabilities are taken into account.

5. **Participation:** Disability should not be a barrier to full participation in society

To include the "active participation " or " Proactivity " of people with disabilities, which should be incorporated into policies and actions not only as drivers or as they mere consultants, but as executors, following the approach of "Nothing for disability without disabilities." Through the participation of disabled people themselves is possible, on the one hand, the design of policies, environments, customs, practices, goods, products and services in an effective manner; and secondly, that disabled people are no longer seen as mere recipients disenfranchised of paternalistic policies that are taken on the issues that most concern them.

IV. **Social protection**

Social protection is fundamental for achieving the social inclusion and active participation of persons with disabilities, and promoting their active citizenship. Disability-inclusive social protection should be a
prerequisite for the universalization of social protection. To achieve disability-inclusive social protection every country must move away from traditional disability-welfare approaches towards embracing the innovative rights-based model put forward by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Social protection is understood to cover a variety of interventions designed to guarantee basic income security and access to essential social services aimed at securing the well-being of a person in the event of social risk and need.

Social protection constitutes an essential condition for social and economic development for all. In fact, effective national social protection systems can contribute to building inclusive societies and social cohesion by protecting individuals from social risk and deprivation. They are not only a powerful instrument for providing income security and reducing poverty and inequality, but play an important role in enhancing human potential, enabling individuals to access food, health care, education, employment and financial means. Every country should therefore provide social protection programmers that cover disability-related issues, to prevent a significant deterioration of standard of living and to prevent poverty.

To ensure a comprehensive social protection system, States have an obligation to adopt national strategies and plans of action that consider the equal rights of persons with disabilities. We have experience assessing, designing, monitoring, through the different steps of the procedure to achieve inclusive social protection systems.

It is recommended that the World Bank Safeguard Policies, including its programs and funds, make efforts to promote social protection systems that are inclusive of persons with disabilities, and provide additional technical guidance to States in implementing inclusive social protection systems.

Furthermore, there should be clear that Social Protection is not only about preventing harm to people with disabilities. Social Protection should imply that people with disability have access to project benefits and the Safeguards do not focus on Social Protection from a perspective of prevention, but from a perspective if inclusion and rights equality.

I. Employment:

We are convinced that employment is key to achieving social inclusion of people with disabilities factor .

The right of people with disabilities to decent work, however, is frequently denied. People with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, face enormous attitudinal, physical and informational barriers to equal opportunities in the world of work. Compared to non-disabled persons, they experience higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity and are at greater risk of insufficient social protection that is a key to reducing extreme poverty.

People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and generally earn less even when employed. Global data from the World Health Survey show that employment rates are lower for disabled men (53%) and disabled women (20%) than for non-disabled men (65%) and women (30%).

Persons with disabilities have the right to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.

In order to analyze the impact of measures to promote education and employment of people with disabilities as well as the factors that facilitate or impede access to education and employment by the group, it is important to have statistical data valid and reliable, as well as a framework of analysis to systematize existing information. This analysis framework should be designed in such a way as to show and analyze the evolution of the main indicators on labor insertion in the labor market, broken down (as far as possible) for different structural variables such as sex, age, disability, educational level or territory, among others.

The results of a recent study by the ONCE Foundation in Spain, show that the rate of economic return on investment in active employment policies, considering the costs of incentives to employment and vocational training together, decreases as it reduces the "successful employment of educated people." The rate of return is 1.55 euros per euro invested if the employment is 100%, to 1.53 euros if it is 70% and
1.51 euros if it is 50%. Success in the employment of people with disabilities is a factor that affects the increase of welfare of people, also contributing to the creation of wealth. In 2011, people with disabilities integrated occupationally representing 1.84% of the total employed population and accounted for 1.83% of GDP. The final conclusion is that the investment in training and active employment policies for people with disabilities is profitable and contributes to reduce the rate of poverty and reduces inequality of the population.

II. Education

Education is the key and the gateway to achieve an inclusive society. Limited access to education and high dropout rates, is one of the decisive factors involved in the processes of social exclusion of people with disabilities. Gaps in education and training, a low level of knowledge, will limit decisively the opportunities for individual progress and social inclusion.

Children with disabilities are less likely to start school than peers without their disabilities, and have lower rates of staying and being promoted in schools. Education completion gaps are found across all age groups in both low-income and high-income countries, with the pattern more pronounced in poorer countries.

One important matter regarding education is early detection and the implementation of schools and training centers prepared to accommodate people with disabilities. The earlier a person with disabilities has recognized his or her disability, the better he or she could prepare to take part in the formative world. To allow this, institutions need to have effective protocols to ensure that any person with a disability has the same rights accessing a school or a training center as a person without disabilities. There is evidence that early recognition of disability and early inclusion is one of the best ways at avoiding economic and social gaps in the future.

The educational level is essential for achieving the employment inclusion, both for access to the labor market and the labor conditions. The access to general education is difficult for children with disabilities, and when it does occur, it takes place in special schools. Also, the dropout rate is much higher in PCD compared to PSD. Disabled people and especially children, should be properly integrated into the mainstream education system, with the necessary support.

The following measures in World Bank projects should be taken into account:

a) Promoting the education of persons with disabilities and reduce dropout rates
b) Promoting its goals, an inclusive education and training at all educational levels, with the necessary means of support.
c) Encouraging early detection of special educational needs.
d) Promoting inclusive education. Strengthening the continuous training of all teachers.
e) The level of studies, or perhaps the factors that may underlie this level of studies— is a good indicator for explaining the levels of labor integration of people with disabilities. The more educated the better the working conditions will be.

III. Information, statistics and data

Among the general recommendations it is necessary to highlight the need to improve information about people with disabilities and the importance of producing comparable series.

It is necessary to collect and disseminate appropriate information, including statistics, indicators and research, both general and specific that allow visibility to formulate and implement policies and measures on disability.

The information should also serve to evaluate and measure the results in the implementation of the commitments made and the goals assumed.

The disability perspective must be included in the various reports of the World Bank.

Information, materials, procedures, and communication relating the World Bank must not create barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities. Persons with sensory and intellectual impairments are often particularly affected.

IV. Raising Awareness

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In order to achieve the recognition and effective implementation of the rights of the disabled, it is essential to take action to raise public awareness especially regarding disability and universal accessibility.

It is suggested to the world bank to include effective measures to raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level and public awareness campaigns regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities; and of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities to the society.

But awareness is not only by itself. To really make people aware about the need of inclusion, it would be important that The World Bank and other International Institutions started including people with disabilities in their decision groups, including them in the design, implementation and monitoring of their projects, because nobody better than them to know the challenges they have to face daily.

V. Women and Children with disabilities

Women with disabilities face significantly more difficulties - in both public and private spheres - in attaining access to adequate housing, health, education, vocational training and employment, and are more likely to be institutionalized iv. They also experience inequality in hiring, promotion rates and pay for equal work, access to training and retraining, credit and other productive resources, and rarely participate in economic decision-making v.

Through setting international norms and standards the international community recognizes the need for the gender perspective and the empowerment of women with disabilities to achieve the equal enjoyment of all human rights and development for all, including persons with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities recognizes that women and children with disabilities are often at a greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation. To address this concern, the Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities has also taken a two-track approach to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women with disabilities. It has as one of its principles equality between men and women, and it devotes an article to women with disabilities.

Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in society. Facing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes, lack of adequate policies and legislation, they are effectively barred from realizing their rights to healthcare, education, and even survival.

Estimates suggest that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world, but numbers could be much higher. They are often likely to be among the poorest members of the population. They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard in society. Their disabilities also place them at a higher risk of physical abuse, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

Children and women of all ages with any form of disability are among the more vulnerable and marginalized of society. There is therefore need to take into account and to address their concerns in all policy-making and programming. Special measures are needed at all levels to integrate them into the mainstream of development.

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i "World Report on Disability", World Health Organization and World Bank Group
iii The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD
iv Women and adequate housing, Study by the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Miloon Kothari, E/CN.4/2005/43, para. 64.