

Editor's note



Welcome to the September edition of IRJ. In the last few months, we have received a number of emails and letters regarding the first edition, so thank you for the support and for the time and effort you have taken to write us. It all indicates your deep interest in promoting and developing this initiative.

In the article of "USWRS at a glance" in the first edition, we must apologize that we have neglected the impressive Role of Dr. Mohammadi, the former head of Iranian welfare organization, in establishing and founding USWRS, a unique approach that equipped the Rehabilitation and Welfare system to an academic - scientific character. Fortunately, during these months, we had two important pieces of news concerning disabled people in our country.

First, for the protection and promotion of the rights of disabled people, new comprehensive legislation was passed by the Islamic parliament.

This law covers all the key areas such as access to physical environment which all governmental and public sectors must provide for their buildings and facilities. This should consider People with various types of disability.

The municipality should consider barrier-free features as a standard requirement in designs and plans for all new constructions. Welfare organization has responsibility to expand rehabilitation services in medical, social, vocational and educational dimensions. The participation of disabled people and their families must be encouraged and private, charity and non-governmental sectors should be used.

Assistive devices and technologies should be provided at subsidised prices to different

groups of disabled people. Pre-vocational and vocational skills training programs for people with disability mostly in mainstream settings must be expanded. Effective medical care should be provided through introducing supplementary insurance schemes for people with disabilities.

In the area of employment active support should be provided through a variety of measures, such as, quota schemes, reserved employment for blind people, loans and grants for small businesses, and premium exemption and financial assistance to enterprises employing disabled people.

For continuing education of disabled people, in addition to adequate access and support services, special concessions for university entrance examination will be provided and studying will be free of charge.

The second piece of good news was that after several years of debate finally a historical decision was made by parliament to establish a "Ministry of Social Welfare". Before organizing this ministry there were 28 GOs and NGOs which had responsibility for social security and welfare affairs but now according to this law all these different organizations will be integrated or at least their policies and planning will be coordinated by this ministry.

The main function of this ministry in three broad areas: (1) social security on a contributory basis which covers retirement pension, unemployment, accident, incapacity benefit and health insurance, the beneficiaries are entitled to a basic level of services and in the case of requiring supplementary services the users must be assessed for it. Contributory benefits are those benefits which individuals, their employers and government have paid through national insurance. Payment of