



“Creating Accessible Societies”

Seminar Transcript

10 December 2009

**Sabancı University, Sakip Sabancı Museum, “the Seed” Conference Center
Istanbul, Turkey**

Speakers:

**Dr. Aubrey Webson, Perkins School for the Blind
Charlotte McClain Nhlapo, World Bank**

Moderator:

İpeknur Cem Taha, Host of ‘Global Leaders’ TV Program, NTV

WELCOME

Master of Ceremonies: Dear Representatives of Local Government, Distinguished Representatives of the Third Sector, Guests and Members of the Press; welcome to the “Creating Accessible Societies” seminar organized by the Sabanci Foundation.

Today we will start with opening remarks followed by the speeches of our guest speakers Aubrey Webson and Charlotte McClain Nhlapo. Following these presentations, Ipeknur Cem Taha will chair the discussion session. We will have a 15 minute coffee break at 11:00 and then we will resume our discussion. At 12:00 we will have a Q&A session and close at 12:30. I am pleased to invite Ms. Guler Sabanci to make her opening remarks.

OPENING REMARKS

Guler Sabanci: Dear Representatives of Civil Society, Distinguished Speakers, Dear Guests and Dear Members of the Press; we are at “the Seed” Conference Hall of Sabanci University Sakip Sabanci Museum.

Welcome to our third seminar. I want to thank everyone for joining us today on behalf of the Sabanci Foundation. Before starting my speech, I would like to remind you of today’s importance. As you know, today is the United Nations Day for Human Rights, so please join me in celebrating this important day.

And I also extend my gratitude to you for joining us today at our seminar. The name of this seminar is “Creating Accessible Societies” and we will be discussing how we can ensure social participation and accessibility for women, the disabled and the youth.

As I mentioned, this is the third Sabanci Foundation Seminar which hopefully will become an annual tradition. Led by Husnu Pacacioglu and contribution of Zerrin Koyunsagan and Filiz Bikmen Bugay, our Foundation is amidst a new era. As in previous years, we plan to host this Seminar annually in order to share with you the best examples and practices from all around the world. For this reason, we make an effort to invite leading professionals in the field of philanthropy.

Just as in our past two seminar, today we are joined by two eminent guests: Dr. Aubrey Webson, who is an Institutional Development Consultant of Perkins School for the Blind, and Charlotte McClain, who is a Senior Operations Specialist from the World Bank. I want to welcome them and thank them for joining us today.

Today’s seminar will be chaired by Ipeknur Cem Taha, I also thank her for joining us. Today our seminar is being organized under the auspices of the European Consortium of Foundations on Human Rights and Disability. Some of the Consortium members are with us today and I want to welcome the Consortium members to Istanbul and to “the Seed”.

The Consortium is very instrumental for the field of disability rights and the international community. Our Board of Trustee member Ms. Dilek Sabanci will talk more about the role of this consortium and our foundation.

Dear guests, our Foundation's focus areas are women, youth and persons with disabilities. We aim to ensure that they have equal opportunities in this society and can equally participate in social and economic life.

Sabancı Foundation has a history of 35 years. Based on our track record, experience and the number of grants we have provided, we believe that civil society organizations are crucial for the wellbeing and development of a society. Today we have a number of civil society representatives with us here. You know that we need your support to make a difference in our societies.

Our foundation launched its grant programs two years ago and we've been learning a lot throughout this process. At the Sabancı Foundation, we do not only address immediate needs and short term solutions to problems. We seek sustainable, lasting social change. I want to thank Zerrin and her team for their efforts with our grant programs.

Our foundation allocated around 4.5 million Turkish Liras toward grant programs in the past two years. But there is something much more important than our financial commitment. The efforts of my colleagues, their energy, their passion and their focus on supporting sustainable projects and creating a difference in the society are far more important than monetary figures. And I think the sustainability of projects we support is above and beyond our financial commitment. Therefore, I want to honour and thank my colleagues for making this possible. This year, we received 168 applications from 48 provinces for our new grant program. I asked Zerrin about this a couple of minutes ago and she said that we will finalize our decisions for next year's grant program in March 2010.

We also think it is important to showcase socially responsible people who make a difference in other people's lives and contribute to the society. My late uncle Sakip Sabancı always considered learning lessons from the experiences of role models to be very important. We want to honor the role models of our society. As such, we launched a new program this year, called "**Turkey's Changemakers**", hosted by Cuneyt Ozdemir. For 32 weeks, this program will be aired on CNN Turk, telling the story of a new Changemaker each week. There have been hundreds of applications from all across Turkey. The progress is very promising. If you have missed this program, I strongly recommend that you watch it and if you want a copy of this program, the footage, we would be more than happy to share it with you. And if you have any suggestions, or have a nomination, please contact with us.

Dear guests, Turkey is a developing country in which women, youth and persons with disabilities must be encouraged to participate in the social life. And our Foundation is committed to this purpose. Today we have with us leaders in the third sector, Ms. Semahat (Arsel), an eminent leader, and several many NGOs here with us today. Let me once again cordially welcome all of you for joining us this morning, and I also want to express my gratitude to our speakers. I am looking forward to learning a lot from them. Thank you so much, and welcome again.

Master of Ceremonies: Thank to Ms. Guler Sabancı for her speech. Now I'd like to invite Ms. Dilek Sabancı member of the Board of Trustees of Sabancı Foundation to make her opening remarks.

Dilek Sabanci: I want to thank Ms. Guler Sabanci for her opening remarks. Dear Representatives of Foundations and Civil Society Organizations, Esteemed Guests and Dear Members of the Press; today we are going to discuss a very important topic and we have guests which have travelled a long distance to be with us. I want to thank Ipeknur for being the moderator of our seminar today, and I want to thank you all for caring and joining us in helping creating an accessible society.

We need to encourage women, youth and persons with disabilities to participate in social life. We have to create a more accessible society at all levels. This is the duty of all citizens. But there is even a greater responsibility on foundations, NGO's and local governments.

The Sabanci Foundation has been developing grant programs to promote greater social participation for women, youth and persons with disabilities while also fostering collaboration among organizations to achieve this goal.

Since 1991, Sabanci Foundation has been a member of the European Foundations Centre, and as of 2009, became one of the founding members of the European Consortium of Foundation on Human Rights and Disability. This consortium was established to foster and encourage the implementation of the United Nations Convention on Persons with Disabilities. The Consortium organizes symposiums and seminars to discuss the rights of the disabled and it also conducts reports on the best practices for disability rights.

Our seminar is being organized within the framework of the European Consortium of Foundations for the Disabled and Human Rights, because this is very important for Turkey. Myself personally, and the Sabanci Foundation, we have always highlighted the infrastructure problems because we need to make Turkey a more accessible country for the disabled. I'm sure we will be able to solve the current issues, with all your support.

I believe the recent developments have been quite promising in Turkey. There are several developed countries which haven't signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, yet Turkey signed this Convention on September 28th 2009. This provides an international legal framework for disabled people. This convention will provide Turkey with a better approach and a better framework for disability rights -and not only on the issues of medical care or protection. Disabled people are independent individuals that have the right to join the society at all levels on their freewill.

I want to thank you for joining us and as Ms. Guler Sabanci said, today is a very important day; the Human Rights Day of the United Nations. It's such a nice coincidence that our seminar is being held today also. I cordially welcome you once again, and I want to thank Husnu Pacacioglu, the General Manager of Sabanci Foundation and his team for organizing this event. Also once again I want to thank our guests for taking their time and joining us from the U.S. Thank you so much for joining us everyone.

Master of Ceremonies: Thank you very much Ms. Dilek Sabanci for your speech, now I'd like to turn this over to the moderator, Ipeknur Cem Taha.

SPEAKERS OPENING REMARKS

Ipek Nur Cem Taha: Dear guests, I'm very pleased to moderate what I hope will be a lively and groundbreaking discussion today. We will be talking about accessible societies. You might wonder what is an accessible society? Of course we will be discussing that in further detail today. We are talking about a society in which all citizens, including persons with disabilities, can participate fully. This is not utopia, it just takes hard work, action, planning and consistency. But above and beyond, it requires the willingness on the part of governments, civil society, citizens and international organizations to push for a change and be ready for out of the box thinking. We have today two distinguished experts to discuss the topic "Creating Accessible Societies". To my left is Charlotte McClain Nhlapo, and to the far left we have Dr. Aubrey Webson. I would like to give them another warm welcome. I know they have travelled a long way. I'd like to welcome our guests and then give them the floor.

Charlotte McClain Nhlapo is trained as a human rights lawyer. She obtained a Masters degree in International Law at the University of Warsaw in Poland. And thereafter studied at Cornell Law School in New York. In August 1999, she was appointed by President Nelson Mandela to the South African Human Rights Commission. She was subsequently reappointed by President Mbeki in October 2002. In 2004, on a leave of absence from the commission, she joined the World Bank in Washington D.C. In her position at the Bank, she works in the East Asia and the Pacific region and the Africa region as a Senior Operations Specialist. Over the years she has worked primarily in the area of human rights with a particular interest in marginalized groups: Children, women and people with disabilities. Before joining the South African Human Rights Commission, she was a project officer on child protection for UNICEF. She has served as an expert on a number of UN committees in the areas of child rights, the right for food and the rights of people with disabilities. She also represented the National Human Rights Institutions at the UN during the process of developing a convention for people with disabilities. Ms. McClain Nhlapo served on the editorial board on the UN study on "Violence against Children". In addition, she continues to serve on a number of community boards. She was, until recently, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of the University of South Africa. Ms. McClain Nhlapo has written widely on human rights issues and is committed to social justice. Welcome.

And to her left we have **Dr. Aubrey Webson**. Welcome. An institutional development consultant for the Perkins School for the Blind since 1992, Dr. Webson specializes in management and leadership training and policy formulation. He was formerly with Sightsavers International, and Helen Keller International where he advised the HKI African and Caribbean Development Programs. From 1981 to 1987 he was the Chief Executive of the Caribbean Council for the Blind. He has served as adjunct professor and/or guest lecturer at Rileau College, East Nazarene College, Boston University, Boston College, the University of South Africa, the University of Vander and the Uganda College of Special Education. He was a speaker at the United Nations General Assembly, presenting at the closing of the "Decade of the Disabled" in 1991, and he has been a featured speaker of the World Blind Union General Assembly, in both 1996 and 2002. Credited with developing the "Africa Forum" at the Africa Conference on Services for the Blind, he has authored "NGO's and Ethics" in 2002, and "NGO corruption and Democracy" in 2001. He is also a member of numerous organizations such as the Affinity Group for Students of Non-Profit Organizations. Dr. Webson has received his PhD in management from Case Western Reserve University in Ohio and he was awarded a post graduate certificate in Organizational Development and his B.S./M.S. in Management of Non-profit

Organizations from the New School of Research in New York.

After this incredible CV that we heard, I would like to start with you Charlotte and give the floor to you to enlighten our audience.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Thank you very much. I'd like to first of all say thank you very much to the Sabanci Foundation for the invitation to be here today and for the warm hospitality. It really indeed is a great pleasure. So, thank you.

By way of introduction I would like to share with you how I came to be involved in the area of disability. My path has been both professional and personal. And while the two are inextricably linked, I'll attempt to highlight each one of them. At a professional level, my choice of study was law. I studied international law with a special focus on human rights law. I believed that law could be used as a tool for social change and for challenging inequality, discrimination and social injustices. Some might say naïve, but my passion and enthusiasm that change was possible soon paid off. Shortly after I graduated from law school I landed a dream job as a senior researcher at one of the leading think-tanks in Cape Town, South Africa. This think-tank was tasked with supporting the development of the new South African Constitution. It was exciting, in fact, it was exhilarating to be working with some of the foremost legal minds and at the epicentre of developing a new constitution. A Constitution that, today has the principals of non-discrimination, equality and human dignity at its cornerstone.

At the personal level I grew in a home with activist parents completely committed to the fight against apartheid. So as a child already, I was conscious of the evils of discrimination, prejudice and inequality. And very aware that the apartheid state carried out grave human rights violations with impunity. So perhaps it was not too surprising that I became a human rights lawyer and later a commissioner with the South African Human Rights Commission. It was during this period that my professional and personal lives would become so tied up. Shortly after I started working I was involved in a terrible car accident that resulted in my disability, presenting yet another important factor that led me along this trajectory. My own lived experience has given me a unique perspective on what an inclusive society should be like, I think. So if I may, let me share my thoughts.

I see an inclusive society as part of a larger concept of an enabling environment. The first part of the enabling environment architecture are the policies, the laws, functioning institutions, inclusive programs, and very importantly, resource allocations that in tandem work together to support an inclusive society. The second part is an informed and **robust civil society, including disabled peoples organizations** that demand, facilitate and contribute to the enabling environment. In this regard there are some emerging vignettes of good practice. For example, in Uganda much has been done to include disability in policies, in legislation and at a civil and political level. We have seen an increased number of persons with disabilities in the Ugandan Parliament. This is also true for South Africa. But there are many other examples. In some parts of Brazil, the local government is exploring the idea of becoming a disability friendly city so I think the message is that it can be done. It is my observation that in the global South, we are seeing a surge in self representation of persons with disabilities internalizing the mantra “**nothing about us without us**”. And again this is very important.

An inclusive society is premised on the principles of respect for difference, non-discrimination,

empowerment, and equality of opportunity and of course the removal of barriers. And it is clear to me that disability is a lever for achieving that. Why? Well, I believe that the inclusion of disability in programs and policies requires us to step out of our often narrowly defined boxes of norms and practices and recognize that we all have human rights and beyond that we all have dreams, aspirations and the need for love, even if do not all function in exactly the same way. Therefore, I see the inclusion of disability as necessarily recognizing our diversity and our common humanity. It is also my view that disability is part of our life cycle and affects all of us at one time or the other. And that if we strive to create inclusive societies we will benefit not just persons with disabilities but also their families, the general public, people with chronic illnesses, and so on. However, we must remember that an inclusive society is not just about building ramps and having Braille in elevators. That is of course important, but how useful is that when stigma and paternalistic attitudes still keep people with disabilities from participating in society and when children with disabilities are not able to get an education for no other reason than because they're disabled. Some recent research from the World Bank shows that disability is a stronger correlate of non-enrolment than either gender or class.

Another issue is women with disabilities. Women with disabilities experience double discrimination; because they are disabled and also because they are women. Making disability and gender differences and inequality intersecting features of social inclusion and poverty is very important. And I think this area of inter-sectionality needs to be better understood so that we can work together towards achieving these inclusive societies. I would argue, therefore, that it is essential that we adopt a holistic approach to disability. And what do I mean? Well, I think we need to address the human rights of the person, of the group, and to look closely at the development issues related to full and **sustainable inclusion**. And perhaps this is a good time for me to say a few words about the work of the World Bank and disability. The Bank's approach is threefold. First is to generate technical knowledge on disability. And I have to say that we really need to better think about how do we actually address the issue of **making societies more inclusive**? The second area is to **collect good practices** and share those good practices so that we know this happens and that it can be replicated. And the third area, very importantly, is to force the **partnerships with others** working in the area of disability and inclusive development. At the same time, there is a need to work within the Bank, amongst the Bank staff to provide entry points and find knowledge on how to mainstream disability into Bank operations. I'm very happy to make the point that the Bank's commitment to disabilities and development was recently re-emphasized in a statement by President Zolick last week on the Third of December in International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This day also saw some important discussion around making the Millennium Development Goals inclusive for persons with disabilities. Which in many ways underscores the substantive provisions in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and I believe can contribute greatly to making societies more inclusive.

Before I conclude, I want to say a few words about Conventions. There have been many Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities takes its place as the 8th core Human Rights instrument. The momentum around this convention has been huge and we already have 74 ratifications and some early indications of implementation at the national, as well as at international level. And in this regard, I think it's important to note that already some of the key donor agencies are framing their aid objectives around the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In terms of the indications of impact I think the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides some useful insights. It has reached almost universal ratification and I think shows us the following strides: Firstly,

there has been development in the international policy and process as it relates to children. Secondly, that we have begun to see some changes in the behavior of state parties as it relates to children. And thirdly, and very importantly, the impact on the lives of children themselves. I think at the international level we've seen an increased profile of the issues around children's rights. We've seen a plethora of policies and processes which protect children and are in fact based on the Convention of the Rights of the Child. And I think a good example of this would be the UN study on "Violence Against Children" which, throughout the report, addresses the issue of children with disabilities and points out that children with disabilities are at a heightened risk to violence and abuse. At a country level I think the domestication of the Convention of the Rights of the Child has spurred a passage of legislative reform on children's rights. And it has really brought about the establishment of institutions like the Ombudsperson for children in Costa Rica and other similar type of institutions in various parts of the world.

And last and not least, the impact on children's lives themselves. And here I have to say while we still see many many grave violations of children's rights, there are some good practices. Children are increasingly participating in processes that affect them. A good example, I think, is Sierra Leone where children participated in the Truth and Reconciliation commission around issues that affected them. Children are increasingly able to obtain an education and I think much of this momentum derives itself from the principles of Convention on the Rights of the Child. And I think if we think about it, children with disabilities also participated in the negotiation process in the development of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and this would not have been possible 20 years ago before the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To conclude my introductory remarks, I'd like to make the point that an inclusive society will need to **recognize the diversity that comes with disability**. Disability is not a homogeneous group. There are different types of disability and I think this is very important for us to be mindful of. For a society to exist there is a need for the imperative of collective action. People with disabilities cannot make an inclusive society alone. It requires us all to be part of the process. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability marks a defining time in our history. But we have to be ambitious. We have to believe that we can make inclusive societies and we all have **to be part of removing the barriers** to achieve that.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you Charlotte for taking us through your own personal journey and sharing with us some of the pillars of an inclusive society including an enabling environment and informed and robust civil society. You also shared with us some valuable examples of good practices in other countries and also the World Bank approach which is quite important and pushes other levels of organizations and societies.

I'd like to hear from Aubrey as well. His recommendations as well as his thoughts on the topic...

Aubrey Webson: Thank you very much. Let me first apologize for my voice. I've been experiencing some challenges with my voice the last 48 hours. I hope you can hear me clearly. I too would like to join with Charlotte that very outstanding arrangements have been made for us for our participation in this seminar. I am honored and consider it a privilege to be part of this event and be invited to share my thoughts on the subject of an inclusive society. I want to also thank and acknowledge the Sabanci

Foundation and its work with persons of multiple disabled and its collaboration with the Perkins School for the Blind from which I come. We're indeed proud to be partner with you and we feel honored to be working with you in this and we know that persons who are multiple disabled are even further disadvantaged than a community of persons with disabilities. And I will get back to that. Thank you very much. I want to share my own story with you and to speak of it firstly from the personal side which then led me to my profession.

I will share with you my thoughts on an inclusive society and I will speak to about the things that I feel and I have been driven by in my own work as an activist and seeking changes for persons with disabilities.

I was born in a very small community a very small village. As I was saying to one of your colleagues yesterday, my village wouldn't even be a village in Turkey, it would probably be just a clan. I'm from the island nation of Antigua that has 70,000 people, so a village with a couple of hundred people. I had the wonderful experience of living in what was an inclusive society. Not a society that was driven by laws or policies but a society that embraced people for what they are, and embraced differences. The most significant part of that was the family from which I came. For a person with disability to break barriers, **the process has to begin with the family**. My family showed no form of embarrassment or disappointment because a child was born blind. It was a family that embraced that child, me, into its community and allowed me to become part of that broader community. It was a family that saw its first member of its community to achieve a university degree and that that first person was its only disabled child. It's that embrace that allows me to become the professional that I am.

Working in disability was never on my agenda. Working as an activist for social change against poverty and against issues of disadvantage was on my agenda. I too wanted to become a lawyer and from very young I began working as an activist for change. On completion of university I was approached by members of the Caribbean Council for the Blind and I was offered the position to become the Director of the Caribbean Council. Of course I said no. I said no because my intention, as I said, was about transforming the broader lives of the broader mass of persons who were in poverty. I decided however, after much conversation with my family and with other colleagues that this was a journey and this was that first step on that journey for change. I joined the organization and immediately began to set about the task of changing what it means to be blind.

We were confronted in the Caribbean at that time with many issues where persons with disabilities were marginalized even within their own organizations. I recall a story famously, of working with a gentleman who himself was the President of the Caribbean Society for the Blind. This gentleman was himself an activist in the 1930's and 40's for social change against colonial oppression in the Caribbean. I recall sitting in a meeting to discuss the issues of persons who are blind, and he said to me as I recall very vividly, 'let's hear your points'. I laid them out, he said: "Thank you, you can leave and we will discuss them." I of course refused to leave and said to him: "I would just like to ask you one thing, can you just bear one further point with me? You were the leader and at one point the deputy leader of the Antigua and Leeward Islands struggle against the British colonial oppression for the workers, weren't You?" He said yes. I said, "you asked for a voice at the table didn't you?" He said yes. I said "that's all we're asking, a voice at the table". It appears that people who very often work in the field and even persons who work with disability, forget that the person with disability has to have his or her own voice. And that "**nothing for us without us**" is in fact real mantra that has real meaning.

After my event there that leads me onto discuss with you what I believe is an accessible society and should be a truly enabling society. Like my colleague, Charlotte, I believe that it's not only about the physical transformation of the society the roads with ramps, crossings with sounds, it's not only about Braille and other forms of access to information. But it is about **changing attitude**, it is about **truly accepting persons**. We can have laws and policies, we can have ramps and Braille, but unless the society sees people, accept differences, accept that we are living in a world where difference is important, that we are living in a world where there are people of not only colour difference or religion difference, but there are **people with physical differences** and that's OK. We have to address the issues that socially retard the progress. I want to mention specifically persons who are not just blind or physically disabled, but persons with multiple disabilities, persons with mental health challenges who may not appear on the surface to be disabled but need as much or more access to services and information as the person who is blind or off in a wheelchair. The persons who have the silent disability, the minority groups within the disability sector; those groups are the groups to whom much attention and much voice must be given.

Working for social change, I work with a concept that we call '**empowerment**'. We believe that the strategy of empowering people through information and **to make people self-advocates** is a key strategy in creating the accessible society to which we all strive. It is important to me, as we think of the process of how people can change and how people become self advocates, that we build in any of our development programs the concept of empowerment which is based on access to information, access to developmental self-awareness and training so that people can become their own advocates. A friend of mine, when discussing this concept said once that when you train somebody to get a job who is disabled, if you've had an interview (if you ever get there), it's important that you are so empowered that you take the person through the process so that they understand. The more persons with difference whether they are disabled or otherwise, that they can intermingle in society, that's the change we would bring about. We will not necessarily bring about change by laws only. These are instruments that are most important in helping us to be able to litigate for change, helping us to strive for changes in society. But to my mind the key transforming factor is going to be the more people we can see with difference, **the more people we can see with disability walking our streets, working next to you, eating with us, and socializing with us, participating in the daily activity of family, the daily activity of work, the daily activity of life**. And it is that transformation that I want to see in bringing about a truly accessible society.

I will not touch at this time on the changes in countries; Charlotte did an admirable job of providing us information about that. I just want to spend a few minutes before I draw my opening remarks to close, on inclusive education and unemployment because those are the two largest areas for change in service deliveries. Charlotte mentioned the World Bank study on education and the role of persons with disability in that study. It's very important, as we proceed through, that some significant steps have been made in many countries on action towards an inclusive education program. We've seen changes through policies in South Africa, in Uganda, of course in countries in the North, the United States and England; we've seen changes in many countries. However the population of children who are disabled out of school continues to daunt us. We will not meet the Millennium Development Goals related to education until we can provide more places in school and we can **ensure that these children stay in school**. It's critical that they stay in school because we know that opportunities have been made where children have been placed into school. To do that, the support systems must be in place. Teachers,

training of teachers, **support for children in the classroom**, whether it is equipment of otherwise, support with equipment and material.

Employment; allow me to touch on employment very briefly. Whereas education remains a major problem, we can boast that over the last 30 or 40 years we have made strides in the education of children with disabilities. We have increased the numbers a little bit; we have had many people with disabilities coming through colleges and universities. However, employment remains the major problem towards people with disability. People who are blind and visually impaired: A study in Denmark and a study in the UK even amongst those who are trained, more than approx 70% of those persons are unemployed. In the United States, the figure remains similar. We must find ways, if we are going to change the society, if we are going to have a truly accessible society, we must find ways of finding opportunities for persons with disabilities to be employed. That includes, even the organizations that work with persons with disabilities themselves, good practice will have to begin within those organizations.

The opportunity for creating employment is the biggest challenge that faces us and is the new challenge we must walk with as we try to transform our societies. Let me not sound like over the last 30 years we've only had gloom and doom. There have been some significant breakthroughs. There are more persons who are disabled in education and schools. The most significant thing that has happened to assist that has been the breakthrough in technology. As I said to my colleague just before we started, with the advances in technology the persons who are disabled and especially people who are blind or visually impaired can feel competent and confident that they can work at the same level as anyone simply because of the advancement in technology. We have had significant advancement in laws and policies since the UN declaration of the Decade of the Disabled and the many programs, and now the Convention. And of course as a result of that we are seeing, especially in the South, there is a far more activist approach by persons with disabilities implementing in practice the mantra "nothing about us without us". Thank you.

DISCUSSION

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you Aubrey for sharing some of the main themes of the debate. A voice at the table is one of the things I remember most and of course "nothing about us without us". You talked about not only physical transformation also society with the right organization and funding is feasible, but also **attitude change and accepting more people with disabilities into our lives** and one of the main success measures that you put forth for us is the more people we see around us with disabilities we see around us, at the dining hall of a school, at the university, out on the street, in school, the more successful we are. I think all of us in this room and many places around the world share all principals of inclusion.

The challenge perhaps is to do with how we implement it as it requires so much funding, so much planning. There's lots of new technology, countries with good practices, good experience, so how to learn from each other? I just put forth before our coffee break a discussion about how can governments effectively learn from good experiences abroad? I'm putting this forth because I read somewhere that **80% of people with disabilities live in the developing world** and the developing world is not the rich world, so this increases the difficulty of the task. First, Charlotte.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Well thank you. I think that's a really good question and a very interesting issue. We often get confronted with that when we speak to client countries. The first thing they say is what's the cost of this? And I think for me we need to recognize that **the cost of inclusion is by far a lot less than the cost of exclusion**. Not including children with disabilities in schools means you're not educating children with disabilities. They won't get an education which means they won't be able to play a part, they won't be able to be a part of the employment, of the labour force. So the cost of exclusion far outweighs the cost of inclusion.

Now we have also done, there's a lot of research in the North that shows if you plan for inclusion, if you are building a school and you plan from the get go that this school will be inclusive -and in this case I'm talking about the ramps and the hardware, the cost of doing that is minimal. But if you build a school and you don't include it and when Jane comes to school in her wheelchair and you think 'oh dear, what are we going to do?' Then you have to build the ramp and the cost is a lot more. Retrofitting is a lot more than actually planning ahead. And I think, to be very honest, we have to recognize that there are costs but there are costs for doing everything. And so why should we then hold up the red flag and say the inclusion of people with disabilities involves the cost and the effort ...I really don't think there's much of an argument there.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Yes, I wasn't just talking about costs but organization and looking for good role models around the world, making the right investment in the right technology. Getting technical knowledge and the like.

Aubrey Webson: I want to agree with Charlotte and everything she said there and looking at costs in that broad way. In terms of technology and so on, yes, again like Charlotte said, there is a cost, but if we're speaking about an inclusive society, if we believe in that, then we're speaking about all citizens, all people. And cost should not be the major factor in that regard.

Yes, 80% of people with disabilities live in developing countries. Yes we don't have much money. But do we call them all to waste in developing countries? I argue -and I argue this in the Caribbean where I come from quite significantly, that it's not about money; it's about the management of money. If we manage money properly and plan properly then we will address some of the cost issues and channel money to ways that doesn't look like it's wasteful but certainly looks like it's going to meet some of the new challenges that an inclusive society will create.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you very much. I think we have about 5 minutes before the coffee break. Basically the UN Convention is a groundbreaking document. Many countries have signed it and many countries are at a different level of implementation. When you look across the globe, do you see any country as being more successful as a country in terms of some the accessibility you talked about in terms of schools, in other public areas and other aspects of life? Are there some role model countries that we, for example sitting in our seats in Turkey, can be on the watch out for?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Well I think it's really early days to say. The Convention has only just come into force and as I said there have been 74 ratifications. But I do think that what we are seeing, there is a momentum that the Convention has certainly spurred. And we're seeing countries wanting to

find out how to deal with accessibility and those related issues. But I think it would be premature at this stage for me to say that there is a particular country, and I'm not too sure how helpful that is.

I think for me the Convention presents a really important opportunity to ensure that countries actually begin to implement the Convention. And I think that this Convention is very important because not only does it have the provisions on accessibility that are very broad but it also has provisions that relate to national monitoring issues. This, for me, is critical. It's important that we have not just provisions but that we have the understanding that monitoring is crucial for implementation. In the Convention, we have the option of protocol that allows for complaints. So I think it is a fairly comprehensive document but I think it will be important to see what happens as countries report on progress. And they will begin to report because two years after ratification, countries will be required to report to the treaty body on what implementation has taken place. Herein lies, what I think, is a very important role for civil society- to make sure that governments are doing what it is that they're supposed to do and what they now have a legal obligation towards.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Aubrey?

Aubrey Webson: I want to agree that it probably serves no really useful purpose identifying a country. It's very new, it's just rolling out (70 odd countries as Charlotte noted), so to that end it doesn't serve any real purpose. However, I think in terms of the monetary process it's going to be critical because of practice; a lot of countries are going to sign the Convention but the question is for civil society and international organizations to begin to monitor how they roll it out in practice. I am concerned about practice. I am concerned about the countries really doing what they signed to do. And the fortunate thing with this Convention is that of course you have the monitoring process and that I think is going to be the most helpful because there are legal obligations to this. Countries can be chastised publicly and charged on it and I think that's very useful.

Also, with regard to inclusive education, I think there are two points worth noting. One is there is no country in the world that has done inclusive education in its entirety. But at the same time there is no point in waiting for that utopist country to arrive. It's not going to arrive. It's not good enough for us to say there is nobody else or how can we do it if we don't know. It's going to be important for us to find out how to do it. It's important and there are many models. In Latin America there are models where countries have given a certain percentage of the education budget towards inclusive education. There are different models within that context, in Brazil, in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, Costa Rica, and so on. In India they have a very great project that has been rolled out as well. To countries in South Africa, their program is a very inclusive program. Some countries have rolled it out based on history; some have rolled it out and embraced what society should be and new responsibilities around person with disabilities. I think that every country can unroll the process. We have enough technicians to work with and provide support.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you for both your comments. I understand that it's more of a joint responsibility and that we cannot wait for some people in rich countries to take leadership and follow when the time comes. We really have to do it all together. And on that note, I would like to invite everybody for a coffee break and we will discuss further after the coffee break.

Dear guests, welcome back once again. We're going to have now a discussion with our guests about some of the pending issues and then open the floor to questions and hope to conclude around 12:30. One of the issues that remained in my mind is the issue of segregating disability from other social issues such as children, such as women, such as human rights. More and more, there is a tendency to try and include it and try to make it a part of concepts as opposed to it just sitting in a corner by itself. Can you discuss this trend a bit?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I think that that's a very important point that you raise. Because the tendency has been to have disability as a separate issue and I think very often that further fosters that exclusion. I think when certainly I talk about inclusive policies I'm talking about policies that address all people including people with disabilities. And that is an approach that we really try to take at the World Bank. We're not looking at supporting projects, for instance, and focus just on people with disabilities; we're looking at projects that include all people, including people with disabilities.

Having said that, sometimes it may be necessary for a small demonstration or a pilot project to have specific focus on people with disabilities. But that's to draw the experience, to learn from that and then to find ways to make sure that it's replicated and it becomes inclusive. Because if it doesn't, it's very unsustainable. I mean if we look at the area of education in many countries we still find that there is a separate section for dealing with children with disabilities in special education. I've found that that department, that unit is usually understaffed, under-resourced, and really doesn't have the kind of clout that's needed to really get the message across. So, I think when we are talking about creating inclusive societies, we really need to look at inclusive policies, inclusive projects, inclusive programs that recognize we are all part of this. Otherwise I think there is a tendency to further marginalize groups of people with disabilities.

ipeknur Cem Taha: Just before Aubrey, I'm sorry, just a marginal note. You're sitting at the World Bank today. How does the World Bank reframe its policy issues with this new mindset? Is it newly beginning or are there projects in place where this frame of mind is now included in their approach?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Well the World Bank started in 2002 with a disability adviser so the issue is not new to the Bank. But I think certainly the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has urged us and has encouraged us to do more and I think we anticipate that our client countries will be requesting more technical assistance from the bank on how to. I think that within the Bank, we've gotten past the stage of should we do this or should we not do this? It's pretty clear that in order to address poverty and in order to address universal primary education and many of the other Millennium Development Goals, we have to do it. The question is how? And this is what we're doing. We're trying to create ways, we're finding the knowledge, generating the knowledge on how to.

We're drawing on best practices, finding out what's going on in all parts of the world to share amongst our staff that this is in fact happening. There are some good examples. For instance there's a project in Cambodia which is a project that looks at basic primary education for all children. It's not a separate project for children with disabilities, it's for all children. And within that we've been able to develop a component around inclusive education. So children with disabilities will be a part of that. But what we've had to do is actually step back and go back to the early childhood development. So, identify

children with disabilities and then move along to show inclusion, We've also been involved in the development of policies in relation to inclusive education so there are some practices existing in the Bank but we really need to scale up on that.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you very much.

Aubrey Webson: Let me mention the issue of segregation has two components to this discussion on disability. One, disability itself is an individual issue and then you have the social, broader societal issue that has in effect extended the challenges towards how a person with disabilities should exist within society. The issue of creating special services, special schools, special training and so forth has in itself led the individual person to have a challenge that keeps him or her out of full inclusion. It's not just because of the special service, it lies within the socio-dynamics; social dynamics set the components of most societies. Culture, many years of culture told people in many societies what, exactly what a person with a disability should be. That, in most societies, segregates that person and puts that person into a special box. That's why the attitudinal change has to begin and has to be an approach that addresses the culture the society as well as the practices that policy and so on are meant to address.

The social policy, if your society strives for equal opportunity and inclusion, cannot simply be a social policy that addresses a specific issue or disability or a particular group. As much as that may focus some attention, it does not allow, again in a developing country, emphasis to truly be expanded because of lack of resources, etc...What have you done, is out of your education budget. Let us assume that you have given a small piece to disability while the rest of the education programs continue. The disabled person and the programs that operate for the disabled person are expected to follow all achievements and measurements as the rest of the programs. So why separate them out.

So the two approaches that has to be addressed. First, at the individual level, we have to change individual beliefs and customs, which then address the questions of the social dynamics of our society. And second, at the social policy level, we have to move the social policy towards an inclusive embrace, so that we can address the issue of disability within the context of poverty or education or whatever it might be.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you very much. We've been talking a lot about the UN Convention, And I am wondering with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in place (over 70 countries have ratified it), what are some of the first steps that governments can take to really get these programs going.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I think it really depends on the particular government, on the particular setting. But I do think that one of the first issues to look at is to repeal all legislation that is discriminatory. That seems to me a basic place to start. What kind of legislation exists and how it impacts on people with disabilities is a good place to start. I think that having a baseline is also very important. Understanding where people with disabilities are, who they are, and what their both social and economic circumstances are is key. I think having a baseline is very useful. I also think that it's really important that a country, after it has ratified, to have a plan on how they're going to implement the Convention. So a national plan on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, for me seems like a very good place to start.

Ipek Nur Cem Taha: Does this mean that the governments would have to have special advisers or the World Bank or the UN? Kind of really holding their hand through this process?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Well again, it depends from country to country and I think that certainly in a lot of the countries that I've worked in you have advisers or you have an office within the highest office. In my country South Africa, we have an Office of Persons with Disabilities in the President's Office and we now have a Minister focusing on disability issues of women and children and related issues. And they would be tasked with these types of issues. I think it really depends on the architecture of the particular country. But my sense would be to have it local. To have advisers that understand, and I'd say preferably to have people with disabilities themselves, that understand the issues, and that can advise and bring together in a multi-sectoral fashion to plan for implementation.

Aubrey Webson: I'd just like to add a little bit to that. First of all, one of the things that is also important is, in the first part of the discussion is also a clear definition. That's a very troubling one because in many countries, and also in the North, in Scandinavian countries, the definition of disability people is kind of cloudy, murky. We have to have some kind of definition with which to work. That's one. With regards to advisers, in every country there are persons with disabilities who are working at all levels and it would be important first of all to get the local knowledge. Even if you are advisers from the World Bank or the world stage who may come in and do training and working and so on, it's still is important to use local people for two reasons.

First, the environment; local people know best. Second, local people then become role models, which every transformation of any society requires and needs role models and these local people can be very significant role models to follow and they can look to those people when they're thinking of how far their own child or their family member can go. So I think it's important to have the issue centered within some sort of major government programs, and then to have the right persons including persons with disabilities in there, not as tokens but as leaders. Because change will only take place when you have persons with disability who are there as leaders, who are respected for the quality of what they bring and not just because they are disabled.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: If I may just add that there is also a very fundamental and important role for national human rights institutions and in many countries we've seen these institutions that are often mandated to create awareness around human rights have been very important in really pushing the agenda around disability rights. I think it really depends on what exists in a particular country, but to emphasize what Aubrey pointed out, I think it really needs to be local.

Aubrey Webson: Even on the Human Rights Commission and so forth, it's important that you have persons with disabilities on those commissions.

Ipek Nur Cem Taha: All of this also relates to the topic of independent living because we're actually talking about people taking their own decisions in their own hand. They need help from society but they are actually going to do it themselves. So what about this concept of independent living? How far along are we? It's a fairly new concept for me.

Aubrey Webson: It depends on society and different societies of course. The concept itself derived from North America; it is a Western European sort of model of independence. Of course in communities and societies where families are far more connected, that concept is not as strong. To my mind, the most important part on that is the concept of empowerment. Because if you're going to work with people to gain their independence, you have to begin to make sure that people understand the things around them. So you've got to empower people. Empower people to question, empower people to seek, empower people to be able to utilize information of that sort. So, having a clear understanding of what it means to empower individuals, give people self awareness so they can become self-advocates is the first step towards independent living. Of course in societies where they/we are fast changing, even in developing countries where people are living away from their larger family circles, there are different models of independent living. There are models where persons who are severely challenged with disabilities other than a single disability or persons who have multiple disabilities, etc...The independent living concept is about a helping an environment where there is some level of support. The person learns to make their own decisions. The base point behind independent living is the empowerment of the individual and therefore, the person's ability to make decisions on their own.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Charlotte, would you like to add anything?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I'd just add, I'd want to give you an example, after the earthquake in Pakistan in 2004, the World Bank has been involved in supporting of the concept of independent living because, as result of the earthquake a substantial number of people became disabled. So the concept of independent living has been one that we've been supporting but left very much to community based rehabilitation, so again focusing on the notion of empowerment and ensuring that people are able to take control of their own lives. In some instances that may require support. And so I think that is a good example of independent living outside of the North American context. But there are many others.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: When you talk about all these issues, time frame also comes into mind. If a child is born today with disability and the government or the society collectively starts making some changes based on the Convention; would that child have some resources by age three or by age five so that he would have a different path than the previous generation?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Well, that's an interesting question. It's a difficult question. I think that in some ways, the Convention provides an answer to that because the Convention evokes the principle of progressive realization which essentially says, once a country ratifies the Convention, the country needs to show progressively what they are doing towards implementation. I think it's quite clear that tomorrow not all children will be in school. As much as we'd like that, we have to be realistic. But we need to be able to show that government has a plan towards this, and very importantly, has allocated a budget. Because it's one thing to have a plan, it's another to have a plan with a budget, right? So to have a budget to support this, and then ideally to have a time frame, like the next five years this is our plan to roll out inclusive education. So while there isn't a set date or a set time period, the Convention supports the notion of progressive time realization.

Aubrey Webson: At the practical level I think, it still depends on where you are born. It still depends, even within a country, where you were born. And it still depends on exposure and the drive by family. Today there is more opportunity to hear more and to see more persons with disability, and there is more

opportunity through technology to understand a little bit more about the process. So children born today, especially with families who are exposed or families who wish to seek what might be best, have far better opportunity of realizing a dream that a child born 20 years ago or 30 years. However, it is a little arbitrary to talk about time frame if the society itself has not set its own time frame.

We have to have governments, as Charlotte said, layout a plan for an inclusive and enabling society. It doesn't mean that you have to transform the entire country all at once, it's impossible. But I have heard of some countries are thinking of a town, a region, a province, and so on, and starting slowly. People will find much more opportunity. Let me cross-pollinate. This is similar to any other transformation process. In the United States where they had a transformation process in the 1960's and 1970's. For example, people moved from one part of the country to the other part of the country because it was more comfortable and it afforded more opportunity for you if you were of a different race to be able to feel more comfortable and create more opportunities for yourself and your children by moving there. And it's the same thing, if you develop a community, a town, a state, a region, persons with disabilities will be able to find their feet, they will move to some parts. And other parts of the country will be inspired by what's going on in the south or the north or whatever, and begin to set themselves goals.

And in fact, that's already happening in some parts of the United States where you have public schools that are far more accessible and have the supportive environment for children with disabilities. Very often families who have children with disabilities move to those areas so that their children can benefit from those particular schools.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: One last question before we turn the floor to our audience. Just last week Stevie Wonder was named UN Ambassador for Peace and Disability Rights. I was able to listen to one of his first speeches and found it quite inspiring. What can role models like that on an international or national level accomplish? Just to pick your brains on that.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I think on an international level -I mean I wasn't at the UN when Stevie Wonder's Ambassadorship was announced, but it was the first time that I saw on mainstream television the issue of the Convention. And I thought, 'this is really interesting, we've been working on this for the last eight years but it was the presence of Stevie Wonder, it was the Presence of Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at this event that really gave it the limelight'. I don't think we can underplay the celebrity factor and I think Stevie Wonder is the perfect person for this. He himself is a person with disability and for me I think the connection with peace is also very important.

Aubrey Webson: I agree, I think Stevie Wonder's appointment as an Ambassador is groundbreaking and an excellent opportunity to get the attention of every government person everywhere in the world because of who he is. I think in countries, we have to look towards role models at the local level. Especially at role models, if there are role models. Every country has individuals who have broken through whether because of their academic achievements or their ability or whatever. And using a celebrity who has a disability is a significant part of the transformation. And if we could identify people within our country, if Stevie Wonder came here it would be important that he not just stand alone but that he stand with persons with disabilities. And especially somebody with disability who has a recognized face, that would be most useful.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you very much. Now we come to the more exciting part, taking questions from our audience. There'll be microphones around the room.

Question: I'd like to ask about there are children with disabilities who were abused or subject to violence and corruption. Are they mostly from underdeveloped countries?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Actually the study found that children with disabilities across the board, just as other children across the board, irrespective of where they came from, were at a heightened risk to violence. And so it didn't really matter whether you come from developed or developing countries. It's an issue across the board. But I do think that it's important to note one of the findings of the study and it was that amongst vulnerable children, children with disabilities were at a heightened risk for violence across the board. Why? I think one of the reasons that the report highlights is that people with disabilities have multiple interactions. So, if you're going to school, and these are children who often go to segregated schools, they often have the carer, you have the driver, you have a whole lot of people that are outside your immediate family. So that is one issue. The multiple carers come into play.

The other issue is that people just don't believe that you would abuse a child with a disability. So for children with disabilities it's very difficult to actually make that case and actually have people act on it. Because the sense is how could you ever do that? But people do it and we saw this through a number of reports of sexual violence on children with disabilities. So it's this notion of not thinking it could happen to children with disabilities. And also thinking children with disabilities may not report that they have been abused. So there are multiple factors that came up in the report but I think that it's something we need to think about when we work with children generally, that children with disabilities are a significant group of children and are children that experience abuse as well.

Aubrey Webson: We did a similar study many years ago actually in the Caribbean, in the late 80's, early 90's, with women with disabilities and we found that they were more abused than the general population for the same kind of reasons. Some of it being the disability of itself. A person with down-syndrome is more trusting, and they're abused. If you are more dependant based on the multiple carers, and then there`s abuse. The same things which Charlotte mentioned.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Next question?

Question: I am hosting the first television program on persons with disabilities. I also established the first career web portal for persons with disabilities. Here, we talked about accessible societies and enabling environment. There are certain programs that are being run in Turkey right now. Even though we start these programs, there`s also the problem of the disabled being involved in these programs. So what would be your ideas about actually involving these people into the programs? Of course there are certain processes to be followed in terms of employment. We give education for these people but we need to include them, and we need to include certain incentives in terms of employing these people and providing jobs for these people. What would be your ideas or recommendations to encourage employers in this respect?

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Would you like to take a stab at that, Charlotte?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Yeah, I'm going to try. I think it's a bit difficult because I don't know what the problems are and what the program is. But I do think it would be useful for me to understand that before I can make any comment on that.

Aubrey Webson: Yes, I agree with Charlotte. I'm not sure what the program is and I'm not sure what the problem is and for us to be able to address it or make some comments around it. But I want to make one observation, permit me to do this. The first change, the speaker just presented and raised a questions, and in my mind the first change is an attitudinal change. Because here you were speaking of these people and those people, these and them, those and us. But if you're going to change you have to be all of us. And you've got to want persons with disabilities in there as us, not as them.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: He mentioned he is doing a television program on people with disabilities so that was what the program was about.

Question: Thank you very much for your contributions. My question is for disabled people. Whether the disability come from birth or later in life, does the Convention differentiate between these two situations? Are they treated differently, if they are disabled from birth, or they are disabled due to some accident, or whatever reason or some disease? Thank you.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Did you get it?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: Yes, thank you for the question; it was a very good question. The answer is no. The Convention doesn't make a distinction as to when you acquire the disability. What it does do is, it recognizes the disability and provides a lot of provisions that would support at various stages of disability. So if you look at the Convention, there are Articles that address issues that would deal with say childhood disabilities, women with disabilities, education, health care. There is Article 19 that deals with mobility issues, rehabilitation and habitation, so it looks at the life cycle of the various aspects of the magic areas. It does not look at when the disability was acquired.

Question: My name is Fazil Cengiz. I am an educator and the manager of a school with 1850 children. We have disabled children with us in the same school, the same classrooms. Do you think this is appropriate?

Ipeknur Cem Taha: He's an educator and basically he is managing the 1850 people school and he said they also have some students with disabilities within the same school. Do you feel it's appropriate, he's asking.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I think it's desirable.

Aubrey Webson: I would support that, that's very good. We would support that anytime. It is appropriate.

Question: We talked about the definition of disability when we studied this closely. The disability is

not always from within the individual, it is sometimes created by the society itself and the structure of the society. In the social infrastructure, the system that we have right now, there is a constant race, a competition, and this system is full of obstacles for the disabled. It makes them even more disabled.

The life system we have right now is egoistic. There`s no collectivity in our system. And the disabled people are stopped from participating in everyday life, in social life, in this capitalist system in our world. How does the World Bank see this collective action?

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Any clarification that you need? Aubrey, will you take a first stab?

Aubrey Webson: Well sure, but maybe ask the World Bank first.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Yes you're right. Let's ask the World Bank first, it makes more sense.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I think the collective action is something that is essential and I think the Bank recognizes that is has to be there. And I think that is one of the reasons, for instance we've been focusing on building partnerships. That is one of the three areas I mentioned, and in that regard the disability and development team at the World Bank supports the global partnership on disability and development which is a collective. It's a collective of NGO's that are really looking at the issue of inclusive development. And there are many other instances.

For instance, when we've been engaged in the development of reduction of poverty strategy papers in Tanzania, during the consultation process we had included persons with disabilities within those processes. So I think there really is a sense that collective action is essential and that we recognize that we can't do it alone, and I also recognize that people with disabilities can't do it alone. So as I said in my opening remarks, that if collective action is absolutely essential. We all need to be a part of bringing down these barriers. And I don't think we can say that it's the Bank's role, or it's the UN's role, or the government's role or civil society. We all have a role in that regard.

Aubrey Webson: I think in addressing the question of collective action, a key player is going to be civil society. To address some of the questions and some of the points you raised about the race in development, civil society, whether it's a collection of a network between persons with disabilities and organizations and NGO's from nations, etc... will have to , as individual and partners, to make sure that whether it's the World Bank or others, or government, that actions taken by them are a) bound within the Convention, and b)within the culture. So that collective action is imperative. One of the interesting dynamics that is coming out of this new era, including the Convention is, like the NGO sector experienced in the 1980's and 90's where you could vertically have an industry of NGO's, we are seeing, or more likely to see an industry growing up around disability and the Convention. How you address that through civil society is going to be critical because disabled people as well as that sort of action can lend itself to exploitation. And the question of making sure whether an industry will develop around civil society and persons with disability or not is important. Not just mushrooming into individuals seeking their own way, but keeping the path of collective action for social change is going to be very important and the role that the larger civil society movement is going to have to play working together with the groups or persons with disability is also key.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Next question?

Question: I am here from the Young Guru Academy. We are working towards training the leaders of the future and we are working since 2006 with visually impaired persons. As you all know, the first Turkish female pilot was Sabiha Gokcen and she set a role model for all the Turkish women and an example to us. And we believe we are setting a role model working with the visually impaired persons. From your point of view, among the visually impaired, who can be a role model, who can set an example as a world leader?

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Aubrey, perhaps you could take this one.

Aubrey Webson: We were just speaking earlier about Stevie Wonder and his Ambassadorship. I am assuming that by him taking that position is in itself a leading position. He is visually impaired, he is blind, and that in itself is a leader. I'm not sure I can identify a person as a world leader or if that can be easily done. People rise, leaders rise as you know, based on condition and situation, and so on. And you have many visually impaired persons who themselves have risen in the field of politics, in the field of science, you name it; what is important though is what you are doing, working amongst young persons who are visually impaired and giving them the ability and the strength that they can become leaders within them. Firstly that they become comfortable within themselves, and then become leaders within their community, and then they will rise from one point to the next based on personal interests. And they then can become role models within their community, the larger society and the larger Turkish society as a whole.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you. Next question, the gentleman in the back.

Question: My name is Ibrahim Burusuk and I am coming from Sevda Cenap And Music Foundation. We are organizing the Ankara International Music Festival. Since the end of 2002, we have been working with a professional dance group and we brought together a dance group for persons with disabilities. And we brought these two groups together and we included them in our festival program.

This was such an exceptional experience for us. It showed us that, when we put together a jazz band and dance group, that the disabled can show such great success in art. And I believe that art is extremely important in terms of bringing the society together. You gave us the Stevie Wonder example, it's a great example. And art can be used as an instrument, a tool to reach the disabled and make them part of the society.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Who will want to go first?

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: To comment on that, I think that that's fantastic and I think that's really important to show that those people with disabilities have the same kind of passions and interests that everybody else has. So I think that those kinds of exposés are very important. I also think that the area of sport is a very important one as well because it too can bring together the reality that we all have common interests. I was just reminded as you were talking about a blind cricket team in Pakistan that has really been so – that has become an actual hobby alongside the Pakistani cricket team. So the different types of things out there and yes, I think sports, art, music, academia, there are so many roles,

and people with disabilities can fit all of those roles and I think that it's important for us to have that, and it becomes part of that inclusive society.

Aubrey Webson: For me, the dream of an inclusive society is that when you see that it does not become the exception to the rule and it does not become the fantastic norm. So what you are doing is breaking the ground and it's an outstanding opportunity you're creating and I think that kind of program will work us towards that inclusive society, that dream that I have, that others have, where you would see persons with disabilities as a natural part of your art group. I was actually just reading yesterday about the first visually impaired person who is going to be doing the lead role in a film in India. It's a dance thing but he is going to be the lead actor and that is the kind for thing that we see will be the norm. The good thing about that is not a person who is acting to be blind, this is a blind person.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: I would now like to group the last questions in the interest of time and then let our speakers address them jointly. If you can keep them brief, please.

Questions:

- a. What is the next step of a country who ratifies the Convention and who monitors it? How is it to be monitored? And what are the expectations from NGO's and civil society for this ratification?
- b. I am an education policy analyst. In a recent study in Central Asia, Open Society Institute and UNESCO included people with social and economic disadvantages as disabilities. And as such designed a study to assess the situation of those not only with disabilities but also those suffering from social and economic disadvantages. Now when you think of inclusion as the ultimate goal, this makes sense. But I still wanted to hear whether this even broader definition is actually doing a good job for the cause or not. Thank you.
- c. After the earthquake in 1999, the World Bank and European countries started certain rehabilitation projects in the Kocaeli region. And we started to put together a production centre and we established a production centre that employed 230 people. It included textiles and other production activities. The conditions in Turkey to employ 230 people, you need 7000 workers to get together to establish this production unit. Of course we received support from European Union. And we had some government funds for education programs. But we did not have any operating capital. You need to come up with your own resources to be very competitive. Hence we got in contact with two Ministers but this did not take us anywhere. First of all the companies, in terms of employing disabled people, there is a compulsory employment right now for the disabled. We requested the exemption of companies that support from the compulsory employment of disabled. We also think that there should be more funds made available from the government for operating budgets. World Bank provides funds for education and for the establishment of production units. We don't have funds for operating capital in Turkey. Maybe the World Bank can offer us funds in this respect. Would you like to comment on this now?

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Would you like me to give you a refresher on the questions? The first one had to do with UN Convention monitoring. Maybe we can do it just one person answers and the other comments if needed.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I think the question around monitoring is a very important one. The Convention provides two types of monitoring. At one level it provides national monitoring. That's very important because the implementation of the changes is going to take place in Istanbul, they are going to take place at a domestic level. The national monitoring is very important. And the Convention spells out the different types of monitoring mechanisms at a national level that could be in place. In addition to the national monitoring, there's also the international monitoring. And in this regard a committee has been set up, a treaty body set up of experts on disability rights issues. And this committee will monitor the country's implementation once it is ratified.

Turkey has ratified the Convention, so in two years time, it will have to submit a report on its progress of implementation to this committee. The committee will review the report. The committee will also accept reports from NGO's, so NGO's will be able to submit what is called a shadow report or an alternative report giving a different, or presenting an NGO perspective. The committee actually goes through these reports and, very importantly, the committee comes up with concluding commentaries or remarks. And these are important because these should be the next steps. And then after that countries will have to submit reports every five years. So again going back to the notion of progressive realization, there is no expectation that everything will become accessible tomorrow. But there is a legal obligation that we start planning towards that.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you. The second one had to do with disability: economic and social disability vs. disability, the definition and categorization. Aubrey do you want to take a stab at that?

Aubrey Webson: I wasn't quite sure if I got the entire thing. What the Open Society defined it as. The gist seemed to me was whether we should use that concept instead of using the inclusive education concept. Or if it does any harm to use the other. I didn't get the question clearly on the Open Society. The concept of inclusive education, however, has and continues to be a transformative concept and is one that, in terms of bringing people with disability into the mainstream, seems to be very helpful.

The practice of inclusive education is done by total community involvement. It's not just an education-school environment, it takes an entire community. And if we practice that, it's not just good for children with disability. It's a concept that can and does reach into community development and community social change. We have seen examples where approaches that we've used in the disability development sector have reached into, especially in education, the implementation and practice of general education services. That concept seems to be working. I couldn't comment any further on the Open Society protocols but would love to talk about it.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Charlotte, if I could ask you to comment on the World Bank or other international organization or contribution to projects like the gentleman mentioned.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo: I certainly share your frustrations around not having the operational capital. But in terms of the Bank, the Bank works through the government, so is there a possibility to get funds from the Bank? I hate to be the bearer of bad news, unless the request comes from the government that's not possible.

Aubrey Webson: It depends on the project. That kind of frustration lends itself right throughout the NGO sector as well. Where everything has to be on a project plan basis and the operational costs are always strapped. You might want to talk to other NGO's as to how they do this, and foundations. Foundations have a very big role in that if the program is transforming and moving towards an inclusive society. Similarly it would be very useful in that NGO monitoring process within the UN Convention and the protocol that Charlotte alluded to in question one. Foundations can play a significant role in helping the NGO community in doing its part in monitoring from its end. But these are two concepts that you might want to move further in working with foundations in Turkey.

Ipeknur Cem Taha: Thank you very much. I know we've been very stimulated but we are now bringing to closure the 2009 Sabanci Foundation seminar "Creating Accessible Societies". We thank our esteemed speakers and all our guests and thank you very much.