



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



THE NIPPON  
FOUNDATION

# ***Outcome document***

**True Colours Festival**

**The Asia Pacific Celebration of Artistes with Disabilities**

**Artistes Open Dialogue**

**24 March 2018, Singapore City, Singapore**

# Preamble

We, artists gathered in Singapore for ***the True Colours Arts Festival and Open Dialogue with Artistes***, alongside respected Dignitaries, representatives of UNESCO and The Nippon Foundation, and in association with Very Special Arts Singapore, the National Arts Council of Singapore, as well as two UNESCO Artists for Peace, and having the support of the Nippon Foundation as Presenter and Sponsor, with the Singapore International Foundation as Principal Partner, alongside the British Council,

**Enjoying, with appreciation to our Sponsor, Partners and Event Organizers**, the privilege of the presence of Her Excellency the President of Singapore and many other Excellences, outstanding artists and performers, who have what are customarily but too often negatively called ‘disabilities’, from 14 countries across the Asia-Pacific Region and beyond – excelling in a wide range of artistic genres as singers, instrumentalists, orchestral players, dance groups; wondrous voices in wheelchairs, blindness no obstacle to beauty, dancing bodies twirling like gymnasts, overcoming disability,

**Evaluating** this as a gratifying fulfilment of what is stated in the opening *Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”,

**Reminding world opinion** that these Universal Rights of individual human beings sorely need to be seen in a global context where 15 percent of the world’s population have some kind of disability and at least that number – probably many more - are seriously impacted through being close to a family member or friend who has a disability: therefore approaching 3 billion out of a total global population of 7.6 billion,

**Appreciating** the urgency implied by these statistics for progressive ratification and implementation of the ground-breaking *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* [CRPD] adopted in 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly, which *re-affirmed* “the universality, indivisibility and interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed their full enjoyment without discrimination”,

**Recalling** also the UN consistent record in seeking to protect, include and empower the vulnerable through *the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families as well as other significant UN documents,*



**Having regard to** UNESCO's Recommendation concerning the Status of Artist (1980), Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005 updated in 2015) and other documents, which advocate the merits of the broadest possible cultural spectrum of artistic and creative expression and maximal citizen access, being aware in particular that Article 7 of the Convention (2005), urges ".....parties to create in their territory an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate and distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions...to have access to diverse cultural expression from their own territories and around the world"; and that "parties shall also endeavour to recognize the important contribution of artists in the creative process, cultural communities and organizations that support their work and their central role in nurturing the diversity of cultural expressions",

**Noting** that, within the cultural diversity framework, which UN documents proclaim and advocate, and aspire to, further scope exists for specific reference to the needs of persons with disabilities and, in particular – as was demonstrated at the True Colours Festival – artists with disabilities. This would increase the motivation to implement the several provisions of *the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* [viz. in particular Article 30 but also Articles 8, 9, 12, 13, 21, 24, 27 and 31] which relate to issues debated during the recent Artistes Open Dialogue in Singapore,

**Listening** to the views of leading expert practitioners and academics that issues of disadvantage in the cultural and artistic field cross-cut with disadvantage in many other areas such as education, employment, the environment and the media space – all of which reflect the interconnectedness of key development issues as expressed in the *Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 20 2015: "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"* and underline the urgent need for additional policy recommendations and their disciplined systematic enforcement,

**Expressing** gratitude for the full and enthusiastic participation of two UNESCO Artists for Peace: maestro violinist Mr Eijin Nimura from Japan always to be seen close to his partner, a rare and treasured 1707 Stradivarius; and 16-year old singer from Mauritius, Ms Jane Constance, without sight but with a wondrous voice,

**Welcoming** the opportunity for artists with disabilities to share and exchange views with experts and practitioners from a range of social and other disciplines on how they can themselves participate and contribute on a more equal basis and be empowered to make more informed decisions about their career path and those of their colleagues,

**Contending** that, in terms of their contribution to cultural life as envisaged by UNESCO Declarations and Conventions, persons with disabilities should absolutely not be regarded as minorities to be catered for, or on the fringe, but rather as equal citizens in the mainstream of creative and artistic thought, whose performance of their work may merely need, for reasons of physical limitation, to be delivered in a somewhat different manner – and perhaps sometimes actually to greater effect and with additional appeal,

**Endorsing** the integrated 'social' model of inclusion and interaction for persons with disabilities, as witnessed in Singapore's 'Enabling Village' as a community-friendly, inclusive and empowering space, equipped with a range of personal, experiential and advanced technological approaches,

**Arguing furthermore** that full implementation of the 'inclusiveness' and 'empowerment' criteria, as defined in the 2015 New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities, implies not just audience access or citizen participation in cultural life but, as spectacularly illustrated by artistes at the True Colours Festival, the opportunity to contribute actively and distinctively, to make their own mark through creative work, artistic performance and personal narrative, in line with Article 30 (2) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006),

**Urging** in this spirit that a more boldly proactive interpretation be placed on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* Article 27 "the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific life and its benefits...",

**Being conscious** that the Artistes Open Dialogue and associated Workshops are a logical and very significant follow up to the New Delhi Conference : an event whose Declaration and Outcome Statement [196 EX/11] received unanimous endorsement from UNESCO's Executive Board and included a request [para 12. 5 (b)] to the Director-General to "*prepare UNESCO's response for the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in all areas of its mandate, with a special focus on the application of open, inclusive and affordable technological solutions*",

**Witnessing** that in Singapore there were many striking examples of how high tech aids can break down access barriers and facilitate creative and artistic progress, accompanied by professional satisfaction for artistes and performers with disabilities as well for fellow professionals in the field,

**Signalling** with a view to the potential policy recommendations, in line with Article 11 of the 2001 *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* and in agreement with a recent Mid-Point Review of the Incheon 2013-2021 Strategy [E/ESCAP/APDDDP/4(4) "the pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society", and an urgent need to follow through with a well-calibrated multi-stakeholder approach in the spirit of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,

**Anticipating**, accordingly, a crucial and central role for government in the promotion and implementation of policy recommendations resulting from the Singapore Dialogue, Conference and True Colours Festival,

**Acknowledging**, therefore— as did the Economic and Social Council at the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Incheon Strategy [E/ESCAP/APDDDP(4)4 —that the main actors in any Plan of Action are Governments, but that a multi-stake holder approach is also appropriate in the spirit of the General Assembly's Resolution on the 2030 Sustainable Agenda, and that there is a need to make maximum effort to coordinate and track the work of all UN Agencies in terms of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 and in pursuance of such new

Recommendations as will emerge from the True Colours Festival and the UNESCO Open Dialogue on Persons within the Artistic/Cultural field, who have disabilities,

**Recognizing the responsibility**, to make policy recommendations which, being both legally robust and essentially practical, match the needs and talents of the artists with disabilities whom we had the privilege of witnessing and meeting in Singapore and others like them in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world.



## The main elements of the True Colours Festival, workshops, conference and open dialogue which took place from 22 to 25 March 2018 in Singapore City, Singapore

### 1

The Festival offered an imaginative range of events, differing in style and scale: from three performances of the immaculately produced Concert in the Singapore Arena on the grand stage, with spectacular sound and light through to specialized, smaller scale, intimate workshops and lectures. Conference sessions set up by local organizers and The Nippon Foundation, and the Open Dialogue organized by UNESCO-The Nippon Foundation, brought together, in a focused manner, a wide range of experts: tapping into the expertise of the artistes themselves as well as specialists from a wide range of relevant disciplines across the Asia-Pacific region. Many of the artiste participants had the opportunity to spend some time in Singapore's renowned Enabling Village. This space – with its gardens, lawns and trees sitting alongside workshops, lecture rooms, a coffee shop and a retail store selling high quality branded goods made by persons with disabilities – is a pioneering example [see **Policy Recommendations below**] of an integrated approach to the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities – The Enabling Village puts into practice the broad 'social' model of empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities, which received general support and affirmation in the Conference Panels, as preferable to the 'charity' and 'medical' models, now outdated because of their narrowness and lack of interconnectedness [see below *Outcome Statement and Recommendations*].

### 2

The Festival invoked UNESCO's specific mandate in the educational, scientific and cultural spheres, including the challenges and responsibilities contained in the *2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, calling (Article 8) for diversity of the supply of creative works" and (Article 11) "the pre-eminence of public policy in partnership with the private sector and civil society" and also of the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* which (Article 7) obliges signatories to ensure in their territory "an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate and distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the special circumstances and needs of women as well as various social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples". [See **Recommendations below**]

# Key points from the panels, workshops and dialogue

- 1** The artistes, most evidently, were not just there to be talked about, encouraged, helped and admired, nor even to describe their own experiences and achievements, but to contribute to analysing the situation, to identify challenges and to propose solutions, interfacing to a valuable extent with questioners and colleagues who were often in awe of their achievements.
- 2** A strong message was conveyed by a keynote speaker who had enjoyed a distinguished career as able-bodied actress, writer and director before pursuing the same career during the last ten years, through necessity, from a wheelchair. She emphasized the need for sufficient people with disabilities to be in leadership and policy roles – both in the art/cultural world and beyond – if unacceptable conditions of disadvantage are not to persist for disabled people. She said disabled actors should not be restricted to playing roles representing disabled people. Quite strikingly, when asked she would be concerned by critics labelling artistic work by disabled people as of lower quality, she said that frankly she would not.
- 3** A different ‘take’ also from Australia was offered by another expert in the field who believes that innate artistic talent can be spotted almost at birth or at a very early age, although the problems of realizing a child’s talent can be huge. In the same vein another participant spoke about the potential danger of putting people into boxes according to their shape or appearance, as if there was a ‘tick-list’ of the acceptable and unacceptable.
- 4** The illusion of perfection was a theme emphasized by several speakers, including one contributor who was the founder and musical director of a group of young musicians with severe levels of disability. He summarized his approach as ‘one size fits one’ which he posited as being the exact opposite of a competitiveness-based hierarchical approach or a spectrum ranging from perfection to imperfection.
- 5** This was reflected in a very personal way by a UNESCO Artist for Peace who said “Yes, I am blind, but I have a voice and I can sing. It is better to look at what you have than what you do not have” – a powerful thought for any sixteen-year old and movingly reinforced by followed up by a prominent figure from the London Paralympics who sings from a wheelchair.

- 6** A particularly meaningful personal statement was made by a gifted Singaporean pianist, who has 85% hearing loss; when asked to analyse his duet partnership with a disabled Canadian violinist, he said that their music-making was an expression of their friendship and shared musicianship.
- 7** A world-leading expert from Bangladesh emphasized the need for the appropriate balance between general education and special education to maximize support and progress for all persons with disabilities and she stressed the need for disability awareness to be more mainstreamed than is currently the case.
- 8** A prominent disability advocate from India set out her preconditions for inclusion and employment of persons with disabilities. Her specific appeal was for employers to realize that people with disabilities are not a burden to be born but an asset to be valued and she quoted examples where, from a total workforce, persons with disabilities have been singled out for special awards.
- 9** In Singapore itself, a story was told of how a group of young men on the autistic spectrum were selected for data-handling positions with a leading Singapore bank. Shortly afterwards the group was invited to lunch with the CEO, at the end of which the group members rose as one and in hyper-disciplined manner briskly walked out to resume work at their desks.


# Policy recommendations for the future

*We are acutely conscious* of the several declarations, including policy recommendations, made during recent years, in the name of UNESCO and other UN agencies: in spite of which persons with disabilities are only slowly getting delivery of the rights and benefits to which they are entitled.

*We recognize* – as did the Economic and Social Council at the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Incheon Strategy [E/ESCAP/APDDP(4)4 –that the main players in any Plan of Action are Governments, but that a multi-stake holder approach is also appropriate in the spirit of the 2030 Sustainable Agenda for Development, and that there is a need to make maximum effort to coordinate and track the work of all UN Agencies around compliance with the obligations set forth in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 and the additional Policy Recommendations, which follow, emerging from the True Colours Festival and the UNESCO Open Dialogue with Artistes with Disabilities.

*We note, in advance*, the call for urgent action from a particularly authoritative voice with government experience at the highest level in handling disability issues across India, alongside the advice of a senior adviser to The Nippon Foundation to keep it simple and financially practical when planning for the future.

*We recognize* the evident current consensus among professionals and artistes attending in Singapore, that the 'social model' is the appropriate ethical and effective approach to the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, in the cultural/artistic as in all other fields, bringing with it the need for a combination, both carefully planned and well financed, of a wide range of disciplines, skills and resources.

 **Therefore, against a background of consensus around the need for bold action and a broad vision within the Outcome Statement from the True Colours Open Dialogue and Festival Events,**



## We call upon governments

- **to adopt** policies, in the cultural and artistic fields, for artistes with disabilities characterized by *Comprehensiveness, Coherence* and *Practicability of Implementation and Enforcement*
- **to recognize** that barriers to inclusiveness in the cultural and artistic fields reflect those existing in many other fields, because of the inherent linkages between the economic, social and environmental aspects articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and after that therefore associated problems can best be resolved together, not separately, *implying* that, in the national context, cultural fulfilment often goes hand in hand with economic progress as specifically implied in the Article 6 of 2005 UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions which points to the inclusion of all groups, including artistes with disabilities in generating and delivering cultural and artistic products and performances.
- **to introduce and enforce** measures further to empower persons with disabilities in terms of access to opportunities in the artistic and cultural fields, including moving into positions of prominence and leadership,
  - *to stamp down* on any evidence of discrimination and
  - *to encourage* the dissemination of information about the latest Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) aids and facilities available to support artists with disabilities
- **to pursue and propagate** – *as a key background enabling factor for persons with disabilities aspiring to artistic and cultural careers* - an approach in Educational Policy which comprises of maximal realistic inclusion of persons with disabilities in general educational curricula, alongside deployment of specialist skills and facilities, together with a raising of awareness levels around disability issues in children, such that appropriate interventions can and will be made at the earliest possible moment
  - *appreciating* that a competitive, achievement-oriented approach is often an inadequate benchmark of educational progress for children, with or without disabilities, and that rather than “one size fits all”, the individual empowerment of children may be better achieved on the principle of “one size fits one” as explored in appropriate specialist literature [see , for example, “*Art and Disability – Intersecting Identities among Young Artists with Disabilities*” DSIQ – Disability Studies Quarterly 2012].
  - *ensuring* that adequate attention is given to the provision of courses and curricula in the artistic and cultural fields – thus meeting in a timely manner the needs and aspirations of potential artistes with disabilities.

- **to acknowledge in public advocacy terms** that this approach, both professionally demanding and humane (i) suits the specific needs of persons with disabilities and their families and (ii) familiarizes people at large – especially when reinforced by the media – with the challenges and capabilities of people with disabilities, in the cultural/artistic as well as in other fields, in accordance with the recommendation, in the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration (2014), that governments and other stakeholders should seek to change mindsets and, where necessary, negativities and dispel myths, about persons with disabilities
- **to apply, using all platforms**, this constructive and inclusive educational/informational approach to other policy areas relevant to persons with disabilities in the artistic/cultural and related fields: such as employment opportunities, independent living and accessible environment, as required by the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons and in the spirit of the pledge ‘Education for All’ made at two World Conferences (1990 and 2000) and through the Salamanca Statement (1994) aimed at delivering a curriculum which adequately caters for persons with disabilities.
- **to promote, encourage and enforce** legislation and regulations to achieve the above objectives, requiring all employers – whether in the public sector, at all levels of administration, or in the commercial and other private fields - as prescribed under the ‘General Obligations’ [Article 4] of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which includes the additional duty “*to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against persons with disabilities*” [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Goal Targets 9.1, 11.1, 11.7, and 16.10]
- **to apply** these principles (again as required by Articles 3, 12, 18 and especially 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in the sphere of access to political rights, the courts and justice system, and to public platforms of all kinds – especially the media which have the power to dispel misconceptions and to shape opinion in a wiser, more humane direction.[as specifically advised in Article 8 of the 2006 Convention and the New Delhi Declaration, ‘*The Way Forward for the United Nations System*’ pp.4]
- **to recognize the need for policy guidelines, applying especially to governments and public administration** to be formulated in precise and focussed form, reducing the risks of evasion, delay and content dilution, following the example of the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration (2014) which emphasized the importance of binding implementing parties to specific standards in areas such as the prioritization of disability need criteria within the procurement process, or updated briefing on the most fit-for-purpose ICT facilities and appliances.
- **to encourage and stimulate** furthermore open-minded and well-briefed communication and cooperation between stakeholders in the artistic/cultural, educational and health care fields, on the one side, and on the other all those involved in ICTs research, production and marketing, so as to observe and fulfil the recommendations of the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration [Annex page 4” paras 1-3] and (ii) **to evaluate and exploit** – in line with the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration - the extraordinary potential

of sophisticated ICT devices - alongside traditional skills like audio-scripting for the visually impaired and sign language for the auditorily impaired - as illustrated by vivid personal examples within the Singapore events, to ease and enrich learning and performance for all artistes with disabilities.

- **to recognize** – as did the Economic and Social Council at the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Incheon Strategy [E/ESCAP/APDDP(4) – that the main actors in any Plan of Action are Governments, but that a multi-stake holder approach is also appropriate in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that there is a need to make maximum effort to coordinate and track the work of all UN Agencies in terms of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 and the new Recommendations now emerging from the True Colours Festival and the UNESCO Open Dialogue with Artistes with Disabilities.
- **to accept**, in summary, oversight and monitoring responsibility across three distinct areas:
  - education: to seek a situation in which, for every child or person with disabilities, specialist interventions are made in a timely manner so that opportunities are not missed to nurture artistic and musical talent.
  - employment: to monitor, with a view to possible enforcement action, the numbers and, where appropriate, the quotas of people with disabilities employed in the cultural and artistic sphere, as well as in what capacity or at which level they work and how good are their promotion/career development prospects.
  - access: to review how conveniently and readily persons with disabilities can access relevant cultural and artistic venues, including stages and platforms, and also have materials available to them in a form which they can access and freely and openly utilize despite their disabilities; and this should apply to persons with disabilities regardless of whether they are audience members, performers or learners.

## We call upon the corporate and business sector

- **to ensure they are fully briefed** on the deliberations and decisions of UN agencies in particular as they apply in the Asia-Pacific region but also globally, as regards fulfilment of key documents such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Incheon Strategy of “make the right real” for the Region, as endorsed by the decisions [69/13 and 70/23] of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration (2014) as well as with such recent detailed recommendations as may emerge from the Singapore Open Dialogue and True Colours Festival.
- **to keep thorough and consistent track** of policy recommendations directed at governments, whether at federal or state levels, and associated administrative agencies focused on implementing policy recommendations in support of persons with disabilities, in such fields as employment best practice or the prioritization of disability needs within the procurement process, as well as in the building and equipping of new facilities in such other fields as fall under the scope of the 2006 Convention [CPRD], the Incheon Strategy [2013], the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration [2014] and the recommendations resulting from the Singapore Open Dialogue and True Colours Festival.
- **to encourage** responsible agencies to conduct audits around issues like the number and status of employees with disabilities placed in cultural/artistic organizations, as well accessibility inspections for theatres, concert halls, museums, libraries, archives and other relevant venues which feature in cultural and artistic life [Mid-Point Review of Incheon Strategy 14 (1)].
- **to exceed** where possible and practical – within their own freedom of action – minimum requirements and achieve ‘best practice’, thereby setting an example in their own countries of operation, regionally and globally: e.g. in sponsorship and patronage of the arts where they may, by way of example, direct funding deliberately to areas and sectors from which maximum benefit may be derived for disabled persons and colleagues working alongside them: in the organization, delivery and performance of artistic and cultural events: in background areas of education, training and organizational leadership which are necessary pre-requisites to building confidence and securing strong cultural outcomes for people with disabilities, as illustrated specifically and pointedly by remarks from keynoters and panellists in the *Arts & Disability International Conference*, the *Workshops* and the *Open Dialogue with Artistes*.

- **to pursue** the recommendation in the UNESCO New Delhi Declaration (2014), “to emphasize and stress to their executives and managers the growing importance of successfully negotiated public-private partnerships between corporations, government agencies, research institutes, the voluntary sector and end-users targeted towards the holistic inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream life” [196/ EX11 – Annex page 4].
- **to be open towards all opportunities** for supplying, on the most user-favourable terms, products and devices – including those incorporating ICTs – to persons with disabilities and those working alongside them, in collaborative and imaginative ways, inspired by examples seen at the True Colours Festival and as demonstrated in the recent (March 2018) workshops in Singapore, and previously at the 2014 New Delhi Conference.

## We call upon civil society organizations

- **to brief themselves** on the above recommendations to governments and to the corporate sector resulting from the Singapore Open Dialogue and Festival as also on the full range of statistics and data, which are relevant to empowering persons with disabilities - in particular as they bear upon protection and empowerment in the cultural and artistic spheres.
- **to monitor and contribute** to data-gathering processes within the UN framework.
- **to ensure** that regional and other local civil society organizations liaise with equivalent and counterpart organizations at the global level to rationalize and maximize accumulated information and coordinated impact.
- **to be alert** towards and cultivate constructive synergies between the public and private sectors which may be the source of practical initiatives to support and empower persons with disabilities, especially in the cultural and artistic spheres.
- **to use their voice** and resources to publicize success stories of persons and groups with disabilities, such as those evidenced recently at the True Colours Festival and accompanying events in Singapore, in particular drawing attention to the specific methodologies which have facilitated these successes; communicating with governments and the private sector as advised in the Mid-Point Review of the Incheon Strategy for Asia and the Pacific [Sections IV,V and VI, paras. 13-30] in particular alerting relevant UN Agencies so that they can network effectively, all with the longer-term aim of increasing the number of countries which ratify and, more significantly, implement the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## We call upon UN agencies, in consultation with governments and other stakeholders, to

- **to consider** whether existing UN frameworks covering the cultural and artistic spheres pay sufficient regard to disability issues, and – conversely – whether documentation around the empowerment of persons with disabilities pays sufficient regard to the development of the artistic and creative potential of persons with disabilities and their inclusion and involvement in cultural and artistic life.
- **to achieve**, in the light of these considerations, a more focused approach to disability issues within the cultural-artistic sphere and through making more effective and better balanced use of existing UN frameworks, available within relevant Conventions, Declarations and Recommendations.
- **to re-assess** what further action is needed to revise, rebalance and strengthen existing frameworks and to respond accordingly so as better to meet the needs and aspirations of those persons with disabilities who, as artistes or in other capacities, live their lives largely in the cultural and artistic spheres.