



SINGAPORE AND THE UN CRPD





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Disabled People's Association, Singapore (DPA)
1 Jurong West Central 2,
#04-01 Jurong Point Shopping Centre,
Singapore 648886
www.dpa.org.sg

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
THE CONVENTION	6
Article 1: Purpose	6
Article 2: Definitions.....	7
Article 3: General Principles	7
Article 4: General Obligations	8
Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination	8
Article 6: Women with Disabilities	9
Article 7: Children with disabilities.....	10
Article 8: Awareness-raising.....	11
Article 9: Accessibility.....	13
Article 10: Right to Life.....	15
Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies	15
Article 12: Equal recognition before the law.....	16
Article 13: Access to justice.....	17
Article 14: Liberty and security of person	18

Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	19
Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse	19
Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person	20
Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality	21
Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community	21
Article 20: Personal mobility	23
Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information	25
Article 22: Respect for privacy	27
Article 23: Respect for home and the family	27
Article 24: Education	29
Article 25: Health	31
Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation	33
Article 27: Work and employment	35
Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection	37
Article 29: Participation in political and public life	39

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport	40
Article 31: Statistics and data collection	42
Article 32: International cooperation.....	43
Article 33: National implementation and monitoring	43
Article 34: Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities	44
Article 35: Reports by States Parties	44
Article 36: Consideration of reports	44
Article 37: Cooperation between States Parties and the Committee	45
Articles 38 to 41	45
Article 42: Signature	45
Articles 43 to 45	46
Article 46: Reservations	46
Article 47	46
Article 48: Denunciation.....	46
Article 49: Accessible format.....	47
Article 50: Authentic texts.....	47

INTRODUCTION

On 30th November 2012, Singapore signed the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Agreement was then ratified on 18 July 2013 and came into effect for Singapore on 18 August 2013.

This paper is the Disabled People's Association, Singapore (DPA)'s attempt to contextualise the CRPD in Singapore. In this document, we have listed each article in plain English and given a short overview of what policies and programmes are in place to realise each article as well as DPA's opinion or recommendations on them.

This document is meant as a quick guide to the CRPD and an overview of the many disability policies and programmes that are being implemented. It is not meant to be exhaustive or the authoritative opinion on the CRPD.

It is also not a legal paper. You need to look at the full Convention itself if you want to know exactly what the Convention says, or what countries have signed up to. You can find the full Convention on the United Nations Enable website at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

THE CONVENTION

Article 1: Purpose

The Convention seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights and freedom as everybody else.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Did you know?

The CRPD is a series of legal obligations that are meant to be applicable to all countries. The individual governments of each country that sign the CRPD have to translate those CRPD obligations into locally-appropriate policies and legislation.

The Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 is an action plan to implement the CRPD. It is a list of concrete and comprehensive recommendations to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Singapore. It is then up to the Government ministries to act on those recommendations by means of policies and initiatives.

The Singapore government does not have a clear definition of disability and persons with disabilities. The National Council of Social Service (NCSS)/Social Service Institute (SSI) lists a SSI course on Mental Illness under the disability category. Yet, persons with chronic mental illness are not eligible for policies, schemes, and initiatives intended for persons with disabilities such as the Open Door Programme.

Article 2: Definitions

- “communication” refers to the ways which help persons with disabilities communicate and understand information such as Braille and large print;
- “language” includes spoken and signed languages and other forms of non spoken languages;
- “discrimination on the basis of disability” refers to any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability, which has the effect of impairing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all spheres of life;
- “reasonable accommodation” refers to the necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments that enable persons with disabilities to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- “universal design” refers to the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be useable by all people, to the greatest extend possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Article 3: General Principles

The principles of the present Convention are:

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of others;
- b) Non-discrimination;
- c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities;
- e) Equality of opportunity;
- f) Accessibility;
- g) Equality between men and women;
- h) Children with disabilities should be respected for who they are and their abilities.

Article 4: General Obligations

The Singapore government must ensure and promote the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities. To this end, the Government shall:

- a) Adopt all appropriate measures to implement the rights recognised in the present Convention;
- b) Modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities;
- c) Protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes;
- d) Stop any practice that go against the present Convention;
- e) Ensure that any person, organisation or private enterprise do not discriminate against persons with disabilities;
- f) Undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities which require minimum adaptation and least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disability;
- g) Undertake or promote research and development of new technologies suitable for persons with disabilities;
- h) Provide accessible information about assistive technologies and forms of assistance, support services and facilities to persons with disabilities;
- i) Promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities;
- j) Actively involve persons with disabilities in laws and policies that affect them.

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

The Singapore government agree that all persons are equal, and shall prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Did you know?

This article is aligned to Article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore, which states that “all persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law.”

Although DPA firmly believes in this article of the Constitution, it is not clear how this principle protects persons with disabilities in practice.

People living in Singapore may discuss issues of concern they may have using the following feedback channels:

- REACH (reaching everyone for active citizenry@ home) is an e-engagement platform that helps Singapore citizens engage with the Government through public forums, dialogue sessions, SMS, telephone, email, Facebook and Twitter.
- OneService Mobile App is another e-engagement platform for the public to provide feedback on municipal issues within Singapore.
- *The Straits Times* has a forum section for the public to write in on any matters.
- All Government ministries’ websites have online feedback channels for the public.

Yet, many persons with disabilities are used to being beneficiaries of charity and are not comfortable with giving feedback, be it positive or negative, about policies that are meant to support them. More should be done by the Government to engage persons with disabilities on a policy level.

Article 6: Women with Disabilities

The Singapore government must ensure that women and girls with disabilities are treated equally as others.

Did you know?

The Singapore government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 5 October 1995. This signifies the Government's commitment to protecting the rights of women with disabilities as well. In particular, Article 12 on Women and Health states that the Government must ensure that health services are sensitive to the needs of women with disabilities and are respectful of their human rights and dignity.

Article 7: Children with disabilities

Children with disabilities have rights and should be treated equally as other children. This includes the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them.

Did you know?

The Singapore government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 2 October 1995. Article 23, in particular, affirms that children with disabilities have the right to special care and support, as well as all the other rights codified in the CRC.

There are various laws protecting all children. The list is as follows:

- Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) safeguards the care, protection and rehabilitation of children and young persons below 16 years of age.
- The Women's Charter provides for the protection of young girls against abuse and exploitation.
- The Guardianship of Infants Act (GIA) protects the best interests of a child whose parents are divorced or separated.
- The Penal Code criminalises and prohibits any sexual activity involving children.
- The Adoption of Children Act protects the interests of adopted children.

- The Employment Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 12 years.

There are also child protection and welfare services. The Ministry of Social and Family Development coordinates the investigation of reported child abuse cases, convenes case conferences to share knowledge and opinions on cases and decisions on follow-up actions, and also monitors the implementation of the protection and welfare plans for the child.

One area in which DPA believes children with disabilities are not treated equally is in the area of education. Unqualified exemption from the Compulsory Education Act can affect the education of children with disabilities and their future employment prospects (see article 24 for more on this issue).

Article 8: Awareness-raising

The Singapore government must adopt effective and appropriate measures to encourage respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. This can be done by:

- a) Having public awareness campaigns to promote awareness about the rights, skills and abilities of persons with disabilities;
- b) Fostering an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities at all levels of the education system;
- c) Encouraging the media to portray persons with disabilities accurately;
- d) Promoting awareness-training programmes regarding persons with disabilities and their rights.

Did you know?

The Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 recommends enhancing public education initiatives to promote inclusiveness.

Over the past few years, various voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), disability agencies and NCSS have launched public education campaigns to raise awareness about persons with disability. Some of these include:

- On 16 September 2013, DPA launched a public campaign with the tagline “Their Greatest Disability is Our Apathy” to raise awareness of the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities as they go about their daily travel.
- NCSS and various VWOs also worked together to organise The Purple Parade, a movement supporting the inclusion of persons with special needs. This is held annually to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December).
- On 22 March 2013, NCSS launched a year-long campaign with the tagline, “We are Able! Enhancing Possibilities, Celebrating Abilities”, as part of raising awareness about the Convention and the Enabling Masterplan.

NCSS continues to work closely with various VWOs to raise awareness about disability through public education campaigns.

The media also celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities such as local athletes Laurentia Tan and Yip Pin Xiu.

Despite these initiatives, more needs to be done in terms of promoting awareness about persons with intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities. Too much emphasis is placed on one type of disability or those with a physical disability in these campaigns.

The media should also have a more accurate representation of people with disabilities. It is great that our society celebrates successful persons with disabilities, yet this portrayal of disability gives the impression that a person with a disability is only successful if they are outstanding. Rather than focusing only on those that can perform extraordinary acts, the media should provide a more balanced view of those with disabilities.

The public should also have access to stories about everyday people with disabilities working and living in various situations, with wide-ranging responsibilities, and not necessarily overcoming great odds to achieve their status. A success story should also focus on the skills and abilities of the person with a disability, rather than emphasising how they overcame their disability, which implies that a disability is inherently a negative thing.

Article 9: Accessibility

The Government must ensure that persons with disabilities are able to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. This can be done by:

- a) Making sure that buildings, roads, transportation, schools, housing, medical facilities, workplaces and other indoor and outdoor facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- b) Making sure that information, communication and other services are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- c) Having minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of public places and services;
- d) Providing appropriate forms of assistance and support to persons with disabilities to ensure their access to information;
- e) Promoting the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communication technologies to persons with disabilities.

Did you know?

The Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 recommends better maintenance of signage and communication features in public transport, amenities and buildings, as well as accessibility to information in public institutions.

To improve the accessibility of the physical environment, the Building and Construction Authority of Singapore (BCA) has reviewed and strengthened the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment 2013 to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities. More mandatory requirements are introduced to minimise restrictions in the environment so persons with disabilities are able to make full use of the building premises and amenities.

Yet, it should be noted that the above Code only applies to buildings that are constructed after the Code came into effect. There is no legislation to ensure older buildings are accessible.

The Government also provides funding support to companies to make their workplace and buildings more accessible to persons with disabilities. The two schemes are as follows:

- Open Door Programme (ODP) provides up to 90% subsidy of workplace modification.
- Accessibility Fund subsidises up to 80% of the construction cost of basic accessibility features such as ramps, lifts, accessible toilets and signage.

Moreover, the Ministry of Transport (MOT) and the Land Transport Authority (LTA) are working toward making all public buses wheelchair accessible by 2020. As of 12 June 2015, SMRT Buses and SBS Transit offer 45 WAB services and 183 WAB services respectively.

In 2015, LTA also began a \$330 million island-wide programme to make public transport physically accessible to persons with disabilities. This programme includes building more sheltered walkways from all existing transport nodes and installing lifts at more pedestrian overhead bridges. In addition, LTA expanded the Green Man Plus scheme to cover 500 pedestrian crossings by 2015, a scheme that allows older pedestrians and pedestrians with disabilities more time to cross the road.

In Singapore, there are also two legislations – specifically, the Environmental Public Health Act and Rapid Transit System Regulations - permitting guide dogs into food establishments or any toilet of the licensed premises and onto public transport.

However, these laws have no real effect due to the lack of punitive measures or complaint recourse associated with it. DPA is aware of many cases in which taxi drivers continue to discriminate against guide dog owners by refusing them service.

Article 10: Right to Life

Everyone has the inherent right to life. The Government must ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy this right on an equal basis with others.

Did you know?

This article is aligned to the spirit of the Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 which seeks to enable persons with disabilities to live a life of dignity from the cradle to the grave.

Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

The Government must take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in dangerous situations such as a war, an emergency and natural disasters.

Did you know?

The public sector has made efforts to include persons with disabilities in their emergency evacuation plans. NCSS, the Singapore Police Force and the Singapore Civil Defence Force introduced the Emergency Short Messaging Service (SMS) Helpline services to offer persons who are deaf/hard of hearing or have speech difficulties an avenue of communication with the Police and Civil Defence Force in times of emergency.

All buildings, except some residential and healthcare buildings, are required to comply with fire safety requirements for persons with disabilities. This means that there are provisions to assist persons with disabilities during emergencies and the development of plans to manage the evacuation of persons with disabilities. These provisions include:

- Visual alarms to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Designated holding points to serve as temporarily safe space for persons with disabilities to await assistance for their evacuation;
- Distress button/voice communication device;

- Designated lift for evacuation.

During disaster-induced displacement events, the Government will also provide temporary shelter and food, financial support and psychological help. They have also set aside an accessible additional space for persons with disabilities. Captioning is also available during emergencies on television for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

SMRT Corporation informed DPA that they have an emergency protocol for passengers with disabilities to be informed of an emergency situation and to evacuate the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station safely.

However, this information is not publicised on their website. Thus, most people with disabilities are not aware that there is a protocol or know the details of it. DPA only learned about this emergency plan through an email correspondence with a SMRT Customer Relations officer.

In practice, it does not seem that the MRT authorities any clear plan to help passengers-in-wheelchairs evacuate the station in the event of lift breakdown. In the past wheelchair users have relied on fellow commuters or MRT staff to help carry the wheelchair user and his or her wheelchair down the stairs, which could be dangerous. Moreover, it is not known whether MRT authorities have any contingency plan to evacuate passengers-in-wheelchairs out of the train in the event of fire outbreak or train breakdowns and whether all staff are aware of that plan.

Article 12: Equal recognition before the law

Persons with disabilities should be treated equally by the law. They have the same right to make their own decisions about important things as everybody else.

Did you know?

The Singapore government has a reservation on this article. The reason given is that the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) is an important legislation that will protect

the interests of a person who has lost mental capacity. The MCA is not aligned with the article, as it allows for a person with mental capacity to appoint a proxy to make decisions for him should he lose mental capacity in the future. Once mental capacity is lost, the proxy can act or make decisions on the person's behalf for matters relating to his personal welfare and/or property and finances. Important decisions are monitored by the Government and there is a complaint process against a proxy who is not acting in the best interest of the person without mental capacity.

The problem with the MCA lies in its assumption that there are willing and able family members or friends who will make the requisite court applications to become a proxy. Many people do not have any one willing to act as a proxy.

DPA firmly believes that when it comes to important decisions, there must be an attempt to consult with the person with a disability just in case that person is able to communicate their wishes, even after the person is legally without mental capacity. That opinion should be given weight, rather than being overridden by a proxy. Even if the view of the person with a disability is balanced against the views of medical professionals or that of the proxy, it should not be ignored or worse still, not even solicited.

Article 13: Access to justice

The Government must ensure that persons with disabilities have equal and effective access to justice. To do so, the Government shall promote appropriate training for those working in the field of administration of justice such as police and prison staff.

Did you know?

In 2015, the Appropriate Adult Scheme (AAS) was launched to provide persons with developmental disabilities (PWDDS) with trained volunteers who will act as a bridge between them and police investigation officers. The volunteer accompanies the PWDDS and facilitates the police interview process, enabling PWDDS to understand the officer's queries and communicate more effectively.

This provides PWDDS a safeguard from wrongful admission of a crime that they did not commit.

Persons with disabilities with low income can approach the Legal Aid Bureau for legal advice, aid and assistance. The Legal Aid Bureau covers a wide range of civil matters such as divorce, adoption, custody of children and estate matters. However, the Legal Aid Bureau assistance is only offered to Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents residing in Singapore.

The Vulnerable Witness Support Programme provides support to persons aged or with mental capacity aged 18 years and below who are giving evidence in criminal cases in court. The support to the witness under this programme is through a Volunteer Support Person recruited by the State Courts and Singapore Children's Society.

In addition, DPA was informed that the Supreme Court of Singapore accepts the use of sign language in courts, and that the court will provide a sign language interpreter free of charge where necessary. However, this crucial information is not publicised on the Supreme Court website and thus not known to many. The lack of accessibility information is not isolated to the Supreme Court website and, in fact, many Government and public services websites lack sufficient information about accessibility.

Article 14: Liberty and security of person

Persons with disabilities have the right to liberty and security, and should not be deprived of their liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. They should not be deprived of their liberty just because they have disabilities, but only if they break a law.

If they are incarcerated, they should be treated in accordance with the international human rights law and in compliance with the objectives and principles of the present Convention.

Did you know?

This article is consistent with Article 9 of the Constitution that states that “no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty save in accordance with law.”

Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Persons with disabilities must not be tortured or be experimented upon without his or her consent. The Government must take all necessary measures to ensure that any form of torture or cruel treatment does not happen.

Did you know?

The Constitution does not explicitly define and thus prohibit torture and other cruel, inhumane degrading treatment or punishment. There is also no legislation to protect persons with disabilities from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Under the Mental Capacity Act (MCA), the proxy cannot make certain decisions. This includes making or revoking a gift of a body or any part thereof under the Medical (Therapy, Education and Research) Act.

Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

The Government must do everything possible to protect persons with disabilities from violence, exploitation and abuse. This can be done by:

- a) Providing persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers information and education on how to avoid, identify and report instances of exploitation, violence and abuse;
- b) Ensuring that all facilities and programmes designed to serve persons with disabilities are effectively monitored by independent authorities;

- c) Providing help, support and protection services for persons with disabilities who have been exploited and abused;
- d) Having effective legislation and policies to ensure that instances of exploitation, violence and abuse against persons with disabilities are identified, investigated and prosecuted.

Did you know?

This is consistent with Article 10 of the Singapore Constitution which states that “no person shall be held in slavery” and “all forms of forced labour are prohibited but Parliament may by law provide for compulsory service for national purposes.”

The Women’s Charter, Children and Young Persons Act and Penal Code also protect individuals, including persons with disabilities, against exploitation, abuse and violence (See article 7). There is also a child protection system in place to prevent child abuse (See article 7).

The Vulnerable Adult Act also protects adults who cannot care for themselves or are abused by family members. It permits social workers and other professionals to enter the house of a suspected victim to assess the situation and remove him to safety if necessary. It will protect people aged 18 and above who are deemed to be unable to protect themselves from harm, due to mental or physical incapacity or disability.

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

Persons with disabilities should be respected and treated in the same way as others.

Did you know?

The Voluntary Sterilisation Act (VSA) was amended in 2012 to strengthen protection of persons with disabilities on matters concerning sexual sterilisation. Under the amended Act, the consent of the person with disability who has mental capacity to make decisions for himself or herself will be

needed for a sexual-sterilisation procedure. For those who lack the mental capacity, a court order has to be made. In the case of minors (persons below 21), the decision to sterilise must be approved by the Hospital Ethics Committee, the minor, and his or her parent or guardian.

But there is no anti-discrimination legislation that will ensure that persons with disabilities are respected and treated in the same way as others.

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Persons with disabilities have the right to liberty of movement, to freedom to choose their residence and to a nationality.

Children with disabilities have the right to a name, to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

Did you know?

This is consistent with Article 13 of the Singapore Constitution which states that “no citizen of Singapore shall be banished or excluded from Singapore” and “every citizen of Singapore has the right to move freely throughout Singapore and to reside in any part thereof.”

In theory persons with disabilities have the right to apply for citizenship or permanent residence in Singapore on an equal basis as others.

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community

People with disabilities have the right to live and participate in the community. The Government must take effective and appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy this right.

This can be done by ensuring that:

- a) Persons with disabilities can choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live;
- b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, which support independent living and prevent isolation from the community;
- c) Community services and public facilities are available to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

Did you know?

The Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 has recommendations to widen the range of care options, enhance accessibility and improve the quality and delivery of services in the adult care sector.

There is also a range of support options and living arrangements catering to the nature and severity of the impairment. These arrangements enable persons with disabilities to live in their own home or community as long as possible. This includes:

- Drop-in disability programme: a social, recreational and/or therapeutic/training activities;
- Community group home: independent living in HDB rental flats;
- Day activity centre: day care and simple life skills training;
- Sheltered workshop: pre-vocational training and work opportunities;
- Home-based care pilot: therapy, personal hygiene care, housekeeping services and medication reminder services;
- Adult Disability Homes: long-term housing and care as well as short-term care.

But these living arrangements have limited capacity. The Community group home, for instance, is offered by only one VWO – the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) – and can only support 12 persons.

Article 20: Personal mobility

The Government must take effective measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can move about independently at an affordable cost. This includes:

- a) Facilitating the personal mobility of persons with disabilities in the manner and at the time of their choice;
- b) Facilitating access by persons with disabilities to quality mobility aids, devices, assistive technologies and forms of live assistance and intermediaries;
- c) Providing training in mobility skills to staff working with persons with disabilities;
- d) Encouraging entities that produce assistive devices to consider the different needs of persons with disabilities.

Did you know?

The Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 has recommendations to further enhance the affordability of assistive technology.

MSF has set up the Assistive Technology Fund (ATF) to provide persons with disabilities subsidies to purchase, replace, upgrade or repair assistive technology devices. ATF covers persons with disabilities at all ages and for all purposes. This is a means-tested subsidy of up to 90% of the cost of assistive technology devices or up to \$40,000 over the individual's lifetime, whichever is lower.

MSF also introduced the Special Assistance Fund (SAF) to provide persons with disabilities with low or no income subsidies to purchase assistive equipment, technical aids or home retrofits to improve mobility, increase independence or help in rehabilitation.

Older Singaporeans with disabilities can also tap onto the Seniors' Mobility and Enabling Fund to subsidise up to 90% of the cost of assistive devices that aid mobility and enable independent living. This scheme is administered by the Ministry of Health (MOH).

The Government, various disability agencies and the public sector have also worked together to make public transport more accessible to persons with disabilities (See article 9).

The Government also introduced various public and specialised transport subsidies for persons with disabilities. The list is as follows:

- The Public Transport Concession gives persons with disabilities, aged less than 60 years, 25 per cent off their adult fares.
- VWO transport subsidies offers up to 80 per cent subsidy to persons with disabilities taking dedicated transport provided by VWOs to access school and care services.
- Taxi subsidy scheme offers up to 50 per cent subsidy to persons with disabilities who need to travel by taxi for school or work purposes.

The following is a list of organisations offering specialised transport services:

- Caring Fleet;
- Handicaps Welfare Association;
- Silveray;
- Singapore Wheels on Wheels.

Besides public and specialised transport, persons with disabilities can choose to travel by private cars. SG Enable administers the Car Park Label Scheme which allows persons with disabilities who drive or their family members who drive them to park at disabled-parking lots. Persons with disabilities who are certified unable to take public transport can also enjoy a waiver of Additional Registration Fee (ARF) and Certificate of Entitlement (COE) for purchase of cars.

By the second half of 2015, SG Enable will also set up an AT Resource Centre at Enabling Village, an integrated community space for persons with disabilities. The centre will promote the adoption of AT and enable persons with disabilities, caregivers, therapists and social service professionals to preview and get advice on devices.

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

The Government shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, to find out, receive and share information and ideas. This can be done by:

- a) Providing public information to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies in a timely manner and without additional cost;
- b) Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille and other means of communication (where needed);
- c) Encouraging others such as private companies and mass media to provide information and services, including through the Internet, that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Did you know?

The Enabling Masterplan Steering Committee recognises this right and recommends greater access to information in public transport, amenities, buildings and public institutions.

In 2013, the Government adopted the web accessibility standards for all government websites so that persons with disabilities can easily access their webpages. All public-facing websites on the gov.sg domain comply with the Triple-A Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

There is also subtitling for news in four different languages, yet sign language interpretation is not provided.

In addition, some hospitals have used technology (i.e. text) for patient-care services to better communicate with patients who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some hospital employees are also trained in sign language.

Singapore also ratified the Marrakesh Treaty that facilitates access to copyrighted works for persons with reading disabilities. In doing so, Singapore

amended the Copyright Act so as to allow copyrighted materials to be reproduced in any accessible format. Through these amendments, institutions such as Lighthouse School and Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped are able to produce or source for copyrighted materials in formats accessible to those with reading disabilities.

The infrastructure of public transport is also accessible to persons with disabilities. All Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) trains have a SMRT Active Route Map Information System (STARiS) that provides journey information such as the current station, next station, direction of travel, interchange station and the side of doors opening. There is also a display mounted on the ceiling of the carriage that provides multi-language transcripts of audio announcements. These features are useful for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, persons with a visual disability will know when they have arrived at their destination because station names are announced on trains.

The Government is facilitating the use of sign language in their official interactions. The People's Action Party has provided a sign language interpreter for its two post-General Election 2011 by-election campaigns. Then-presidential candidate Dr Tony did likewise for his rallies during his presidential election 2011 campaign. And 'live' sign language interpretation was provided during the Budget 2015 speech delivery.

However, the provision of live signing for key national events is not consistent. For instance, the 28th South East Asian (SEA) games held in 2015 do not provide sign language interpretation or live captioning.

Moreover, not all private companies providing services to the general public have made their websites accessible to persons with disabilities. Mediacorp's website is an example of one such company.

In addition, not all private and public companies providing services to the general public have publicised information about their existing accessible features. SMRT's webpage on accessible features for persons with disabilities is a good example of what should be done.

Article 22: Respect for privacy

The privacy of persons with disabilities should be respected and safeguarded. The Government shall ensure that personal information of persons with disabilities is kept private like everybody else.

Did you know?

Government agencies need to comply with the Government Instruction Manual (IM). The IM contains guidelines on privacy. It is not known how information about disabilities, including chronic mental illness, is shared or protected between Government agencies.

The Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) governs the collection, use, disclosure and care of personal data. Under PDPA, all persons with or without disabilities have the right to protect their personal information. However, the Act does not cover persons with chronic mental illness who have to declare their condition for medical insurance purposes. It is also not clear how the Act protects the personal data of persons with chronic mental illness.

Article 23: Respect for home and the family

The Government shall take effective and appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships as everybody else. They shall provide appropriate assistance to persons with disabilities who are raising children.

Children with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life. The Government shall provide services and support to these children and their families, and prevent concealment, abandonment, neglect and segregation of children with disabilities.

The Government must ensure that a child is not separated from his or her parents against their will unless such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. A child should not be separated from parents on the basis of a disability of either the child or one or both of the parents. Where

required, the Government shall provide alternative care arrangements for children whose families are unable to care for them.

Did you know?

There are various laws and services that protect the best interests of the child (See article 7).

Persons with disabilities are also protected against arbitrary sterilisation under the amended VSA (See article 17).

Children Disability Homes provide long-term residential care to children with disabilities aged below 16 who are neglected or whose caregivers are incapable of caring for them. These homes also offer short-term or respite care for individuals whose families are unable to provide care for them for a short period of time. At the residential homes, children can undergo therapy, training and enjoy recreational activities to maximise their abilities.

The Government also provides support for family formation. Under the Marriage and Parenthood Package, married couples raising and caring for children can receive all sorts of funding support such as Baby Bonus, Parenthood Tax Rebate and Foreign Domestic Worker Levy Concession. The package also offers work-life support to parents such as maternity leave, child care leave and infant care leave.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) contracted a company to develop a guide to help special education (SPED) schools design programmes in personal safety and relationships. In 2013, MOE also started a pilot in sexuality education in six SPED schools. Even though not much information is available on these programmes, DPA hopes that the sexuality education guide teaches students with disabilities about healthy sexual relationships and family, rather than only tackling the issue of abuse.

Article 24: Education

Persons with disabilities have rights to an inclusive education and lifelong learning. In realising this right, the Singapore government shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the education system on the basis of disability. The Government shall also ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation and effective individualised support measures within the education system.

The Government shall also facilitate the learning of Braille, sign language and other forms of communication and peer support and mentoring. They shall also ensure that teachers are employed and trained with the right skills to support persons with disabilities. The Government shall also ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to access tertiary education, lifelong learning and vocational training.

Did you know?

The Enabling Masterplan 2012-2016 has recommended improvements to the curriculum and governance of special education schools. The Masterplan called for the MOE to make the education for children with special needs compulsory by 2016.

In 2014, MOE introduced the Special Education Needs Fund for eligible tertiary students with physical and sensory impairments to purchase assistive technology devices and support services that enable them to learn better in class. In addition, children with disabilities in special education or mainstream school can apply for ATF to purchase assistive technology devices. (See article 20).

MOE also announced that every publicly-funded university, polytechnic and ITE College will set up a Disability Support Office (DSO) which will provide holistic support for students with special educational needs.

Students from Special Education schools can also apply for the Computer Access Trust Fund (CATF) to get subsidies for computers and computer-related

assistive equipment. The subsidy is determined based on the applicant's household income.

However, there is no law to ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to all stages of mainstream inclusive education and receive accommodation and support to help them succeed. The Compulsory Education (CE) Act, an Act that codifies compulsory education for children of primary school age, automatically exempts students with disabilities. This means that mainstream schools do not have to admit of children with disabilities. In addition, children with disabilities who attend SPED schools are not covered by the obligations of the CE and issues such as truancy cannot be dealt with in the same as it is handled for children in mainstream schools. In addition, some children who attend SPED schools find it hard to find open employment for various reasons. Some may find it hard to find a job due to the stigma that is at times associated with attending a special education school. Other special education school graduates may not have the appropriate vocational training or qualifications in order to find a job because it was not offered at the SPED school they attended.

Another possible issue is that not all mainstream schools are resourced with facilities and/or programmes to support students with disabilities. Currently, allied educators help those with disabilities and/or special needs in the classroom, and there is specialised training for teachers. But there are not enough allied educators, and mainstream teachers find it difficult to cope with the needs of those who require more help, on top of their existing teaching duties.

As recommended in the Masterplan, DPA is of the position that children with disabilities should be included in the CE. Yet, this integration should not be done at all costs. DPA believes that in the future there can be an integrated education system in which special education schools are in some way included in the national education system, rather than existing somewhere in between that system and the voluntary welfare sector.

In the meantime, integration can be done on a case-by-case basis and only when it is in the best interest of the child, and when there is a robust support structure in place and the schools are able to accommodate their needs.

Article 25: Health

Persons with disabilities have the right to the same range, quality and standard of affordable health care and programmes as provided to other people. The Government shall also provide health services needed by persons with disabilities specifically because of their disabilities, and provide these health services near to where people live.

They shall also ensure that healthcare professionals provide the same quality of care to persons with disabilities as to others, and prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in the provision of health and life insurance and health care services.

Did you know?

The Government has expressed reservation towards this article. The reason given is that they do not intervene in the commercial underwriting decisions of private insurers or mandate the coverage of persons with disabilities.

Yet, the Government has made efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to affordable and quality health services. By the end of 2015, MediShield, a national health insurance scheme, will be enhanced to Medishield Life. This scheme covers all Singapore citizens and permanent residents for life, including those with pre-existing conditions. The premiums of those with disabilities will be higher if the disability is classed as a pre-existing condition, but there will be means-tested subsidies for those who cannot afford the higher premiums to ensure that no one loses their coverage due to not being able to pay their insurance costs. Private insurers managing the Integrated Shield Plans and Eldershiield Supplements are also prohibited from discriminating against persons with disabilities.

However, non-Singapore citizens and Permanent Residents with disabilities are not covered by the scheme among many others. DPA is of the position that all persons with disabilities living in Singapore should have access to these services at reasonable/affordable prices.

There are also early detection and intervention programmes for at-risk infants. The list is as follows:

- Child Development Programme (CDP) provides early surveillance, diagnosis and interim intervention. The programme includes detailed assessment and diagnosis in KKH or National University Hospital.
- Development Support Programme (DSP) supports children with mild developmental needs in mainstream preschools, and provides targeted, short-term, one-on-one, in-class interventions.
- Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) provides therapy and educational support services to children with moderate to severe disabilities.

There are also various practices in place to improve early detection:

- KKH trains nurses on standardised screening assessment to screen infants at high risk of developing delays.
- Every child is issued a health booklet with developmental assessment checklist.

The Government also sought to increase awareness of at-risk infants by doing the following:

- Working with medical schools to incorporate relevant modules in undergrad medical curriculum;
- Training doctors and healthcare professionals in developmental health screening and early referral of at-risk infants to appropriate centres for early assessment and intervention.

Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation

The Government shall take effective measures to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, ensuring their full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life. They shall promote initial and continuing training for professionals and staff working in habilitation and rehabilitation services.

Did you know?

NCSS, SG Enable and various VWOs run or fund the following programmes to maximise the potential of children with disabilities of preschool and schooling age:

- Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) provides educational and therapy services to children aged six and below diagnosed with special needs that affected their development.
- Private intervention providers of EIPIC.
- Development Support programmes provide on-site intervention and learning support to pre-schoolers with mild developmental needs in mainstream preschools and childcare centres.
- Integrated Child Care Programme helps parents who have children with special needs to find suitable child care centres and also subsidises the cost of child care fees.
- Special Student Care Centre in SPED schools provides before- and after-school care services to students with special needs aged 7 to 18.
- School-To-Work Transition Programme develops more work and training options and pathways to benefit graduating SPED students.
- Vocational training.

There are also various programmes to train persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible and enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities through social inclusion.

- Day Activity Centres/Independent Living Training Centres provide activities and services to equip adults with disabilities with skills to maximise their independence.
- Homes/Hostels provide accommodation and training to persons with disabilities with no alternative accommodation or require specific training for independent living.
- Community Group Homes enable persons with disabilities to live independently in designated Housing Development Board (HDB) rental flats retrofitted with disabled-friendly features.
- Therapy Hubs provide therapy services for clients of VWOs, in particular they offer outpatient rehabilitation services.
- Sheltered workshops provides employment and vocational training
- Job placement and support services

Although there are a number of programmes designed to encourage independent living through customised homes and different types of rehabilitation services, more needs to be done to encourage and raise awareness about independent living as a realistic option for persons with disabilities.

In addition, although the idea is put forward as a goal for persons with disabilities, the concept is not clearly explained nor is there a reason given why it is preferable to other living arrangements. Another issue is that the above options are not available to foreigners or their dependents.

The Government also promotes training for professionals and staff to build capacity, enhance quality and ensure standards of care:

- Continuing Professional Development frameworks for EIPIC teachers and Learning Support Educators
- Compulsory teacher training requirements for EIPIC teachers
- Develop pool of Learning Support Educators
- National Social Work Competency Framework provides social workers with clear and uniform benchmarks to guide them in upgrading their skills, and to help them get higher positions and pay.

- Social Service Institute is an integrated social service hub for training, practice, resource and career services
- Therapy and Psychology hubs enhance professional capacity and capability

Article 27: Work and employment

People with disabilities have the right to work and have access to the same employment opportunities as everyone else. The Government shall take measures to:

- Prohibit discrimination;
- Protect the right to work in an inclusive and accessible workplace;
- Enable access to vocational training and placement services;
- Promote employment and career advancement;
- Promote self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities;
- Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector;
- Promote employment opportunities in the private sector;
- Ensure reasonable accommodation in the workplace;
- Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation and acquisition of work experience.

Did you know?

Instead of having legislation to protect employees from discrimination based on disability, Singapore has adopted a promotional and education approach. The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) has guidelines on fair employment practices, encouraging employers to adopt progressive Human Resource (HR) practices. The Employment Act and Child Development Co-Savings Act restrict employers from dismissing female employees, including those with disabilities, for certain periods before and after the delivery of a child.

The Government also works in collaboration with other agencies and VWOs to promote and support the employment of persons with disabilities. In

particular, SG Enable serves as a focal point of contact for employers of persons with disabilities as well as persons with disabilities who are seeking employment. SG Enable works to enhance the employability and employment options for persons with disabilities by leveraging on the strengths of existing partners and schemes.

The Government also offers various schemes to enhance the employment and employability of persons with disabilities:

- Open Door Programme (ODP) is an initiative that provides funding support to Singapore-based or registered companies to hire, train and integrate persons with disabilities.
- Special Employment Credit (SEC) is offered as an incentive for companies to hire Singaporean workers with disabilities. Employers will get a credit of up to 16% of the wages of their worker with disabilities.
- Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) supplements the wages and retirement savings of persons with disabilities. This is a means-tested subsidy, meaning that the amount subsidised depends on the salary of the person with a disability.

The Government also works closely with other agencies and VWOs to facilitate the recruitment, integration and retention of persons with disabilities in employment:

- The Enabling Employers Network (EEN) is an alliance of like-minded employers of persons with disabilities who champion and advance the employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Members of EEN have collectively employed a total of about 200 persons with disabilities.
- School-to-Work Transition Programme (see article 26).
- SG Enable Internship Programme provides internship opportunities at companies to students with disabilities who are currently studying in Institutes of Higher Learning.

Despite the extensive funding and support available, not enough employers are aware of the existing policies. Misconceptions remain regarding how to provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace and people with

disabilities continue to be offered low-skilled jobs and less pay as compared to other people in the workforce. DPA is of the position that without anti-discrimination legislation, companies will continue to have discriminative practices and attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Codifying antidiscrimination policy in employment will signal the Government's commitment to eliminate discrimination, thus showing everyone that discrimination is wrong and should be prevented at all costs.

Another thing to note is that people with chronic mental health issues are not eligible for ODP funding and support, but the Government has indicated that they will be eligible for the ODP in the future. The reason given for the delay is that the Institute of Mental Health is trying to determine how to apply the eligibility requirements to those with mental health issues and in particular, what type of mental health issues should make one eligible for the ODP.

Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection

States Parties shall take measures to provide an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families. This means that persons with disabilities should have access to adequate food, clothing and housing, social protection programmes, poverty reduction programmes, affordable services, assistance for disability-related needs, assistive devices and retirement benefits. The Government shall ensure that these rights are enjoyed by persons with disabilities without discrimination.

Did you know?

The Government and the Special Needs Trust Company insure the financial security of persons with disabilities through the following schemes:

- Special Needs Savings Scheme: parents nominate their children with disabilities to receive monthly CPF pay-outs upon their demise.
- Special Needs Trust Fund: the trust provides for the child's expenses, as per the trust deed and any letter of wishes given by the parents, upon their demise. Assets such as payouts from the parents' life insurance policies can

be injected into the trust upon their demise so as to boost the assets of the trust;

- Central Provident Fund (CPF): tax relief for cash top-up of CPF accounts of spouse or sibling with disabilities.

To protect the best interests of a person who has lost mental capacity, the Government also passed the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) which will appoint a proxy to oversee the welfare and finance matters of a person who has lost mental capacity (See articles 12 and 15).

The Government also introduced the following schemes to support persons with disabilities in various aspects of their life:

- Assistive Technology Fund (ATF) (see article 20);
- Special Assistance Fund (SAF) (see article 20).

In addition, the Government offers disability schemes regardless of gender or age so as to ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, have access to retirement benefits and programmes. The SEC and WIS schemes, for examples, apply to persons with disabilities of all ages (See article 27). This helps to ensure that the pension or CPF monies of a person with disability are optimised as much as possible.

The Government also offers financial assistance on a means-tested basis to ensure that persons with disabilities and their families living in situations of poverty have access to assistance from the state with disability-related expenses, including adequate training, counselling, financial assistance and respite care.

To ensure access by persons with disabilities to public housing programmes, the HDB offers subsidised housing to those with low or no income on a case by case basis. In addition, there are subsidised hostels and group homes run by VWOs (see article 26).

Yet, many of these funds are not offered to foreigners living and working in Singapore, nor is it available to their dependents. In addition, many of these

funds are capped at a level that does not take adequate account of the rising cost of living in Singapore.

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

People with disabilities have the right to take part in politics and public life on an equal basis with others. This includes the following:

- Accessible voting procedures, facilities and materials;
- Vote by secret ballot;
- Right to stand for elections;
- Right as electors;
- Participation in the public and political life;
- Forming and joining organisations of people with disabilities that represent them.

Did you know?

Voting at elections is compulsory for all eligible citizens. To facilitate independent voting, the Government has made polling areas accessible to persons with disabilities by:

- providing stencils to people with a visual disability so that they can mark the ballot paper themselves without assistance;
- arranging for an election official to assist voters with visual and/or physical disabilities;
- Providing wheelchairs to voters who need it;
- Arranging priority booths for voters with disabilities;
- Providing lower polling booths to voters using wheelchairs;
- Arranging special drop-off points for those with mobility issues.

The Government's concern to keep voting secret is the reason why they have a reservation on article 29 of the CRPD, which has a clause allowing persons with disabilities assistance in voting by a person of their own choice. The Government explained that a specially trained officer is more likely to protect

the privacy of one's vote and will less likely influence the vote of the person they are assisting. There are also punitive measures for an officer who violates a voter's privacy or tries to influence a voter.

The problem with this reservation is that it fails to consider that some persons with disabilities would prefer to have someone they know and trust to help them vote. For example, some people with autism do not adjust well to strangers trying to help them vote and this may result in them not voting.

In addition, election officials may not have the necessary skills to communicate with certain groups of disabilities such as those with multiple disabilities like the deaf-blind, or may not be adequately trained in providing assistance to voters with disabilities. This may result in them being less likely to vote or being left out of the voting process altogether.

Currently, there are also no consistent policies to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in the political process. For example, public broadcasts of political campaigning and election rallies are not offered with closed captioning or live sign language interpretation. Election rallies are not necessarily planned with accessible routes to the venues or with areas reserved at the front for those in wheelchairs or who need to be able to view a sign language interpreter (if one is on the stage, which is only sometimes the case).

In addition, there is no specialised training for polling station officers in order for them to accommodate the special needs of those with disabilities. There is also no information available about accessible features (in accessible format) on the Elections Board website.

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

People with disabilities have the right to participate in and enjoy the arts, sports, games, films and other fun activities. The Government shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy this right.

This includes ensuring access to theatres, museums, playgrounds, libraries, cultural materials, television programmes, films, theatre and cultural activities.

The Government shall also ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential. They shall also support persons with disabilities and their specific cultural and linguistic identity, which includes the support of sign languages and deaf culture.

Did you know?

In Singapore, some progress is made in promoting opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in culture, recreation, leisure and sport. Singapore began their participation in the Paralympic Games when a squad was sent to the 1988 Summer Paralympics held in Seoul, South Korea. At the 2008 Summer Paralympics, Singapore earned its first Paralympic games medals. The national team was made up of six athletes and they won four medals. Singapore athletes with disabilities have also been successful at the ASEAN Para Games and other international competitions. Singapore will host the 8th ASEAN Para Games in December 2015.

The National Arts Council also tripled the arts grant to SPED schools. There is also an integrated playground in Sembawang catering to children with special needs. There are wheelchair-friendly features such as a ramp and handrails, panels with bells and drums to cater to people with a visual disability.

Singapore also has a national disability sports organisation known as the Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC). SDSC offers persons with disabilities a wide range of sports at both elite and non-elite levels.

In addition, there are a few VWOs that promote participation in the arts for persons with disabilities. One of the larger organisations is Very Special Arts and they hold concerts in which persons with disabilities of all ages perform in musical and artistic performances. SG Enable also plans to open an accessible gym in 2016.

Yet, there needs to be more opportunities for people with disabilities to join in and contribute to the mainstream arts and sports scene. At present persons with disabilities are invited to attend cultural performances much more than to contribute to or participate in them. More leisure spaces should also be planned to promote integration between persons with and without disabilities.

Article 31: Statistics and data collection

The Government must collect appropriate information, including statistics and research data, to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the present Convention. The information collected shall be kept private and confidential to respect the privacy of persons with disabilities.

Did you know?

In Singapore, statistics regarding the population of persons with disabilities are not publicly available. According to NCSS, it is estimated that more than 110,000 Singaporeans have some form of disability. However, this does not take into account the number of persons with disabilities who are not citizens living in Singapore. There are some statistics available about persons with disability in Singapore, but the information is not centralised and therefore not easy for stakeholders to source.

According to data published by the Health and Education ministries in 2010, Singapore has about 97,200 people with disabilities, with the vast majority - 77,200 - above 18 years old. It is estimated that the prevalence rate of persons with disability is about 3% of Singapore's resident population.

Mr Ron Chandran-Dudley, who founded DPA, said "When you know the numbers, then you know how to plan." Indeed, without access to those statistics, it is impossible for ministries and VWOs to adequately budget for or plan disability-related programmes and policies, and even more difficult for civil society to track the implementation and efficacy of those programmes and policies.

Article 32: International cooperation

Countries should help each other to fulfil the articles of the present Convention. This means that countries with more resources and/or experience in implementing policies designed to empower persons with disabilities should share their resources and/or expertise with other countries.

Did you know?

The Government works together with other countries to share best practices in empowering persons with disabilities. To this end, the Government has participated in regional and international meetings, events, workshops on disability:

- Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN);
- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC);
- Conference of State Parties at the United Nations, New York;
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Article 33: National implementation and monitoring

Singapore shall designate one or more focal points within the Government for matters relating to the implementation of the present Convention. Singapore shall also establish or designate a coordination mechanism within the Government to facilitate action in different sectors and at different levels.

The Government shall strengthen, designate or establish a framework, including one or more independent mechanisms, as appropriate, to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the CRPD.

Did you know?

In Singapore, the Standing Committee on Disability chaired by the Permanent Secretary of MSF addresses and coordinates disability issues, and tracks the implementation of the Enabling Masterplan 2012–2016, which is based on the

articles of the CRPD. This inter-ministry committee of MSF works with other ministries and agencies, in particular NCSS and SG Enable to coordinate the implementation of the CRPD.

The Enabling Masterplan Implementation Committee was set up in 2012 to monitor the implementation of the Masterplan recommendations. The committee is made up of representatives from the Government and various disability groups.

Although the implementation committee was set up, not much has been done to raise awareness of the need for persons with and without disabilities to track the implementation of the CRPD and the Enabling Masterplan. There is no clear information that the public can easily access about how to feedback information about disability initiatives in Singapore.

Article 34: Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities

This article addresses the make-up and the role of the Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities within the United Nations.

Article 35: Reports by States Parties

Each country will submit a report on measures taken to implement the CRPD within two years of the CRPD coming into effect. Thereafter, the Government shall submit progress reports at least every four years and whenever the Committee so requests.

Article 36: Consideration of reports

The Committee will look at the reports and make recommendations about what the Government should do to implement the CRPD going forward. That country may respond with any information it chooses to the Committee. The

Committee may request further information from States Parties relevant to the implementation of the CRPD. The United Nations shall make available the reports to all States Parties.

The Government shall make their reports, as well as the suggestions of the Committee in response to that report, widely available to the public in their own countries.

Article 37: Cooperation between States Parties and the Committee

Member countries will work together with the Committee and shall provide the Committee members with any information required of them.

Articles 38 to 41 relate to the more procedural aspects of the CRPD, and in particular the relationship of the United Nations Committee on the CRPD and other agencies of the United Nations. To learn more about these articles, please refer to a full text of the CRPD.

Article 42: Signature

The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States at the United Nations Headquarters in New York as of 30 March 2007.

Did you know?

Singapore signed the Convention on 30 November 2012 and ratified it on 18 July 2013. The Agreement came into effect for Singapore on 18 August 2013. The CRPD is said to be ratified when a country is ready to implement a significant number of the articles of the CRPD. This ability of Singapore to ratify the CRPD so quickly is due to what was achieved in the first Enabling Masterplan 2007-2011.

Although DPA applauds the progress of the implementation of the CRPD, there is much more work to be done, especially in the area of ending discriminatory practices, attitudes and behaviour against persons with disabilities. As mentioned previously in this document, DPA does not think that full realisation of the CRPD can be achieved without legislation and punitive measures designed to stop discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities.

Articles 43 to 45 again deal with the procedural aspects of the CRPD. Please see the full text of the CRPD for more information.

Article 46: Reservations

Reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the CRPD shall not be permitted. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time.

Did you know?

Singapore has expressed three reservations on the CRPD. For information about the reservations, please see articles 12, 25 and 29.

Article 47 again deals with the procedural aspects of the CRPD. Please see the full text of the CRPD for more information.

Article 48: Denunciation

This article states that a country's government can opt-out of the CRPD and the process for doing so.

Article 49: Accessible format

The text of the CRPD shall be made available in accessible formats.

Did you know?

On the website of NCSS, there are versions of the CRPD available for downloading. These versions include a full text and a simplified version. The simplified version is available in a written as well as audio format. However, there is no video of a sign language version nor is there a braille format available from NCSS.

Singapore has four national languages - they are Chinese, Tamil, English and Malay. It is not obvious where versions of the CRPD in the other main languages can be found on Government or related agency websites.

Article 50: Authentic texts

The Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of the present Convention shall be equally authentic.

This publication is also available in large font and accessible format and can be downloaded from the Disabled People's Association website.



1 Jurong West Central 2 #04-01,
Jurong Point Shopping Centre, Singapore 648886

Tel: 65.6791 1134

Fax: 65.6791 1284

Email: info@dpa.org.sg

Website: www.dpa.org.sg

Facebook: DisabledPeoplesAssociation

Blog: disabledpeoplesassociation.wordpress.com