

**U.N. and U.S. Pronouncements  
Initiating The International Decade  
Of Disabled Persons**

Following the highly successful 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), in December 1982, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a World Programme of Action for Disabled Persons. It also proclaimed the period 1983-1992 as the International Decade of Disabled Persons (IDDP), urging all nations to intensify efforts toward the full participation of the world's half-billion

disabled persons and toward the prevention of disabling conditions.

The U.S. Congress has unanimously passed a resolution, introduced by Senator Robert Dole and Representative Larry Winn, on the Decade, setting forth long-term goals of and for disabled Americans. President Reagan has issued a Proclamation. This pamphlet sets forth these important documents.

This is a challenge and an opportunity for the world. We urge you to get involved.



**By the President of the United States of  
America  
A Proclamation**

During the 1981 International Year and the 1982 National Year of Disabled Persons, we learned about the many accomplishments of disabled persons, both young and old. We also gained vast new insights into the significant impact that access to education, rehabilitation, and employment have on their lives.

The progress we have made is a tribute to the courage and determination of our disabled people, to innovative research and development both in technology and training techniques to assist the disabled, and to those—whether in the private or public sectors—who have given so generously of their time and energies to help enrich the lives of disabled persons.

We must encourage the provision of rehabilitation and other comprehensive services oriented toward independence within the context of family and community. For only through opportunities to use the full range of their potential will our disabled citizens attain the independence and dignity that are their due.

In furtherance of the initiatives encouraged by observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons, the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the years 1983 through 1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The Congress of the United States, by House Concurrent Resolution 39, has requested the President to take all steps within his authority to implement, within the United States, the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 3, 1982.

NOW, THEREFORE I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the years 1983 through 1992 as the National Decade of Disabled Persons. I call upon all Americans in both the private and public sectors to join our continuing efforts to assist disabled people and to continue the progress made over the past two years.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

*Ronald Reagan*

**NATIONAL  
ORGANIZATION  
ON  
DISABILITY**



**INTERNATIONAL  
DECADE  
OF  
DISABLED  
PERSONS  
1983-1992**



**U.S. Congress Concurrent Resolution #39**

Whereas, a new era in recognition of human rights and universal respect for these rights has begun;

Whereas, The United Nations General Assembly has declared 1983 through 1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons;

Whereas, The United States has made great strides during the last decade in improving the lives of thirty-five million American citizens with physical and mental disabilities;

Whereas, there is still much to be done to open doors to the full participation and equality of disabled persons in society throughout the world;

Whereas, handicapped individuals should be able to participate fully in the mainstream of society through education, employment and community living opportunities;

Whereas, the United States recognizes the need for further progress in strengthening public understanding and awareness of the needs and aspirations of disabled persons;

Whereas, there is hope that this spirit of carrying out the goals of the International and National Years in 1981 and 1982 will continue throughout this decade;

Whereas, a framework for national action has been established by these previous initiatives and the improvement of programs for the disabled over the last decade; and

Whereas, further progress should be made in the United States toward achieving the following long-term goals of and for disabled persons promoted during the Interna-

tional Year of Disabled Persons: (1) expanded educational opportunity; (2) improved access to housing, buildings, and transportation; (3) expanded employment opportunity; (4) expanded participation in recreational, social, and cultural activities; (5) expanded and strengthened rehabilitation programs and facilities; (6) purposeful application of biomedical research aimed at conquering major disabling conditions; (7) reduction in the incidence of disability by expanded accident and disease prevention; (8) expanded application of technology to minimize the effects of disability; and (9) expanded international exchange of information and experience to benefit all disabled persons: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),* That it is the sense of the Congress that the President should take all steps within his authority to implement within the United States, the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 3, 1982.

Sec. 2 The President should report to the Congress annually during the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons on the plans developed by the executive branch in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 37/53 to implement, within the United States, the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and on the steps taken pursuant to those plans.

Sec. 3 The Clerk of the House shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the President.



**Message Of  
United Nations Secretary-General  
Perez de Cuellar**

The General Assembly has proclaimed the period 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

This proclamation underlines the determination of the international community to carry forward the impetus given by the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981 towards the prevention of disability and the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, as well as their rehabilitation in society.

I am therefore fully confident that during this decade efforts will be intensified for the implementation of the world programme of action concerning disabled persons, the primary aim of which is to realize the rights of as many as 500 million disabled persons around the world to contribute to and benefit from the economic and social progress of their countries. However, this cannot be achieved unless society changes its attitude towards people with disabilities. Indeed, we should focus on their abilities and the contribution they can make.

We bear the responsibility to encourage and assist disabled persons to lead useful and meaningful lives. This is not to be done as an act of charity but because it is their right and because society as a whole can progress only if each of its members is given full recognition and respect for his or her own inherent dignity and worth.

I appeal to all governments, concerned organizations and individuals alike to contribute to the implementation of the world plan of action during this decade and beyond, and thereby demonstrate our commitment to the "full participation and equality" of persons with disabilities."

Released in New York, Geneva, and Vienna — April 19, 1983.



America's Goals\* for the  
**INTERNATIONAL DECADE  
OF DISABLED PERSONS  
1983 – 1992**

To foster public understanding  
full participation, and acceptance  
of disabled persons through:

- ✓ Expanded Educational Opportunity
- ✓ Improved Access to Housing, Buildings, and Transportation
- ✓ Expanded Employment Opportunity
- ✓ Expanded Participation in Recreational, Social, Religious and Cultural Activities
- ✓ Expanded and Strengthened Rehabilitation Programs and Facilities
- ✓ Purposeful Application of Biomedical Research Aimed at Conquering Major Disabling Conditions
- ✓ Reduction in the Incidence of Disability by Expanded Accident and Disease Prevention
- ✓ Increased Application of Technology to Minimize the Effects of Disability
- ✓ Expanded International Exchange of Information and Experience to Benefit All Disabled Persons

**THOSE ARE YOUR GOALS TOO!**  
*Isn't it time to get involved?*

\*U.S. Congress Resolution 39

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