**COUNTRY:** Republic of Türkiye

**FORUM:** Social Humanitarian Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)

**QUESTION OF:** Unemployment of People Who Have Physical and Mental Impairments

Being disabled is a human condition, not a disease. However, with the effect of social factors, disabled people are excluded from social life due to the incompatibility of education, transportation, physical environment and conditions, limited rehabilitation areas and barriers to their participation in employment. Approximately 15% of the world's population consists of people with disabilities. From past to present, the most widely used method in the employment of disabled people all over the world has been the "quota method", which expresses the obligation of compulsory employment and makes it compulsory to employ disabled people in a certain number or ratio. Thanks to this method, it has been observed that the number of disabled people working is increasing.

The purpose of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities is to promote and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to strengthen respect for human dignity. Article 27 of the Convention addresses employment and working conditions. Accordingly, States Parties acknowledge the right of disabled individuals to work under equal conditions, including the opportunity to freely choose or accept employment in an accessible and inclusive labor market. They have to protect against discrimination, ensure just working conditions, provide access to vocational guidance and training, promote employment opportunities and career advancement, and guarantee reasonable accommodation. Also, States Parties must protect individuals with disabilities from slavery, servitude, and forced labor on equal terms with others.

The Declaration of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations in 1975, emphasizes the protection of people with disabilities against discrimination and promote inclusivity within their communities. It states that persons with disabilities should have equal access to employment and education.

The ratio of the disabled population in the total population in Türkiye is 12.29%. Both international and national legal regulations about the rights of disabled people are applied in Turkey. Their rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye (1982). Various laws and international agreements, and efforts have been made to improve the existing difficult conditions of the disabled and to eliminate the inequality between the disabled and the non-disabled in terms of employment opportunities. In 2005, Türkiye implemented the Law on the Disabled, with the objective of promoting the active participation of individuals with disabilities in society.

Many non-governmental organizations in our country are also dealing with the issue. There are various examples of good practice in the employment of people with disabilities in Turkey. An example of this is the "Café Down" in Ankara, where individuals with Down syndrome are employed. A similar cafe is in Istanbul. The expenses are covered by the municipality and the income is used to pay the salaries of the disabled people working here. Increasing similar opportunities for people with disabilities can have positive effects on both the economy and their social integration with society.

Türkiye has witnessed positive developments for disadvantaged and disabled individuals through legal regulations, especially during the second half of the twentieth century. The importance of these issues has been increasingly understood by both international organizations and national governments. National and international social policies have empowered disadvantaged individuals, including those with disabilities. So that disabled individuals can lead fulfilling lives and enjoy fundamental human rights. It is crucial to enable their active participation in social life and ensure equal access to opportunities. This aligns with the constitutional priorities of modern states and promotes overall well-being and national values. In order for the citizens to benefit from the rights they have, different legal regulations have been made. In this direction, higher education facilitating the learning lives of students with disabilities, improving their academic environment in order to prepare them and ensure their full participation in the education and training processes. Institutions have been established to implement necessary measures and ensure that these rights are protected by legal regulations.

To address these challenges and promote inclusivity, various potential solutions can be explored. Most importantly, collaboration and partnership between public and private sector, non-governmental organizations and disabled representatives are important in order to increase the employment of disabled people. These stakeholders can come together to coordinate efforts on developing policies, directing resources and employing people with disabilities. Employers can be offered incentives to employ disabled workers. Measures such as tax advantages, incentive employment programs and financial supports can encourage employers to increase the employment of people with disabilities. In order to facilitate the participation of disabled people in business life, adaptations should be made in the workplaces. Measures such as disabled-friendly workplace arrangements, disabled ramps, disabled toilets, and making work equipment suitable for the disabled can be taken. Finally, adequate emphasis should be placed on the provision of career guidance for disabled individuals.

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