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DELEGATION: the State of Qatar

COMMITTEE: Social, Humanitarian, Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)

AGENDA ITEM: Unemployment of people with mental and physical impairment.

The stigma and misunderstandings surrounding people with disabilities are some of the underlying factors of the high unemployment rates. Another is the worry that they will lose their Social Security disability benefits. Whatever the cause, it is still difficult for people with disabilities to find and keep suitable jobs, and high rates of unemployment for people with disabilities remain a problem. This results in poor physical and mental health, social isolation, low self-esteem, and a lack of life satisfaction. Disability-related unemployment was 10.1% in 2021, roughly twice as high as the rate for people without disabilities. More than 11 million persons in the United States have major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, anxiety, or bipolar disorder, and 90% of them are unemployed, according to research on psychiatric disability. Additionally, 29% of employees with impairments worked part-time, compared to 16% of people without disabilities. (1) In fact, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities who are of working age is at least twice as high as the rate for people without disabilities6 in most affluent countries. Nearly 14 million more people would have been employed in 2021 if employees with disabilities had the same employment rate as those without a handicap. These figures provide credence to the persistent idea that employers continue to refuse to recruit people with impairments, which has critical negative effects on unemployment and poverty. Furthermore, there is a bidirectional relationship between mental health and unemployment. An important factor in being employable, getting a job, and keeping that employment is having good mental health. Stress brought on by unemployment has long-term physiological health repercussions as well as the potential to negatively impact people's mental health, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. (2) Employment rates for people with a serious mental illness are dismally low and getting worse, according to [a report from the National Alliance on Mental Illness](http://www.nami.org/work). Just 17.8 percent of people receiving public mental health services were employed in 2012 – down from 23 percent in 2003. (3) On March 3rd, 2023, the Supported Employment Training Program was conducted by Qatar Foundation’s Qatar Career Development Center which aimed at embracing best practices in the sector globally to the local context, career counseling services have been enhanced for students with mild and moderate learning difficulties. (4)

Governments have formed Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (the Strategy) to advance the achievement of outcomes in certain areas of the Strategy. (5) The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which went into effect in 2008, contains rules on work and employment that take this concern into account. (6) According to the UNCRPD, States Parties are required to: Recognize the equal right of people with disabilities to employment; safeguard and promote the realization of the right to employment; and take appropriate efforts, among other things, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, employ persons with disabilities in the public sector; promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programs, incentives and other measures. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by all UN Member States for the years 2015 to 2030 also reflect this concern. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include several objectives that specifically refer to people with disabilities. For example, Goal 4 on education and lifelong learning calls for ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the most vulnerable, including people with disabilities; Goal 8 on economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all calls for achieving full and productive employment and decent work for women and men with disabilities; and Goal 14 on gender equality and human rights. The European Commission approved the 2021–2030 Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in March 2021. The European Commission hopes to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Europe and around the world with this ten-year agenda. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 laid the groundwork for a barrier-free Europe and empowered people with disabilities to exercise their legal entitlements and fully engage in society and the economy. The new strategy builds on those accomplishments. Despite the advancements over the last ten years, people with disabilities still face many obstacles and are more likely to be poor and socially excluded. (7)

A medical Committee of Disability was established to examine the health, social, and family issues of people with disabilities, and Qatar had approved a national health policy that offered free health insurance for people with disabilities. (8) Discrimination against people with disabilities is illegal in Qatar. The following are a few of the rights and obligations imposed on people with disabilities:

* Rehabilitation
* Education
* Transportation
* Medical and social care
* Support services
* Access to public facilities
* Employment

According to the law, 2% of all positions in government organizations and public institutions must be reserved for people with disabilities. Additionally, hiring people with disabilities is required for private companies with at least 25 employees. Additionally, as we have mentioned before Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) successfully conducted the Supported Employment Training Program which aimed at enhancing career guidance services provision for students with mild and moderate learning challenges, was based on adapting international best practices in the field to the local context. The program was broken down into three main pillars: improving career guidance provision, promoting an inclusive employment culture, and mobilizing key stakeholders to bring meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities, especially those affected by neurodiverse and cognitive conditions. These pillars were aggregated into various training modules and workshops.

We believe that it’s extremely important to ensure that people with mental and physical impairments can get employed. We believe it would be beneficial to impose a quota system since it would create the opportunity to be hired. Additionally, it is also critical to educate the employees about the impairments that some people they are going to employ in order to ensure that they know how to treat them.

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