

Fact Sheet 12: The right to work is a human right⁴³

The right to work is a fundamental human right.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights recognises that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

The right to work is essential for realising other human rights and forms an inherent part of human dignity.

Work usually provides a livelihood to the person and her or his family and contributes to the person's development and recognition within the community.

The human right to work has been codified in several international legal instruments.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the right of everyone to just and favourable conditions of work and safe working conditions.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) sets out the right to work of persons with disabilities in article 27. The Convention obligates nations to recognise the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others. It states that the right of persons with disabilities to work includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights the focus of government efforts is to provide support for people with disability to be included in the open labour market. The High Commissioner states:

“... efforts often focus on creating jobs or training opportunities in separate settings and fail to respect the principle of inclusion provided for in the Convention. It is imperative that States parties move away from sheltered employment schemes and promote equal access for persons with disabilities in the open labour market.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (December 2012). Thematic study on the work and employment of persons with disabilities

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