Input to the study on the right of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making

Under Section III. B., on Creation of the National Disability Policy in Chile (pg. 35), the National Disability Policy was created through a joint effort, which included five representatives from disability organizations. The inclusion of these actors in the policy process is protected by Chilean law 20,422 (2010) regarding norms about equal opportunities and social inclusion for people with disabilities. **This law indicates fundamental principles such as “participation and social dialogue” and that individuals with disabilities, their families and relevant organizations should have an active role in the development of respective public policies.** This law is based on principals of independent living, universal accessibility, universal design, intersectorality, participation and social dialogue. Moreover, law 20,422 indicates that individuals covered by the National Disability Policy will have the right to file before the General Comptroller of the Republic if they experience an obstruction to their rights.

Section III. C. Highlights implementing, monitoring and evaluating the National Disability Policy as public policy is part of a process that involves review, monitoring and evaluation in order to provide feedback to stakeholders on their progress, difficulties and lessons learned. To that end, SENADIS provides technical advice to the Interministerial Committee in preparation of the National Disability Policy and the periodic evaluation of all actions and social services performed by various state agencies that are intended to directly or indirectly affect opportunities, social inclusion, **participation and accessibility of individuals with disabilities**. Thus, SENADIS functions as a monitoring and periodic evaluation of actions implemented in the disability field which include: b) Keep civil society and representatives of disability organizations informed of advances, achievements and lessons learned during the implementation process and execution of the policy.

Section III. D. on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), acknowledges Chile’s ratification of the CRPD in 2008 as a milestone for promoting positive change for disability issues at a global level. This development had an effect on how persons with disabilities participate in monitoring the implementation of the CRPD as upon ratifying the CRPD, Chilean law 20,422 was enacted based on a universal framework of culture and respect for human rights for individuals with disabilities. Moreover, the National Disability Policy indicates that the CRPD induced a change on how the state viewed the subject, from the traditional view of assistance to a people-cantered approach, respecting their rights and promoting their independence and autonomy.

Moreover, the importance that people with disabilities participate in the policy process is underscored by their absence in the labor force in Chile. Statistical analysis of the CASEN household survey showed that 95 percent of people with disabilities were employable provided their degree of disability which distinguished them as independent, mild or moderate. However, the participation rate of people with disabilities, 26 percent, was less and half the participation rate among individuals who were not disabled, 59%. These numbers support the case that individuals with disabilities are an underutilized segment of the labor force in Chile (p. 39).

In conclusion, policymakers were provided various recommendations to increase the rights and utilization of people with disabilities in Chile. Among those are:

Include people with disabilities and experts when creating respective employment policy, and require its implementation in government agencies. Chile’s National Disability Policy should include these various perspectives and take steps to implement respective work plans for individuals with disabilities into all government departments.

Partner with the local community to integrate disabled youth into the workforce. (p. 40)

Lange, A. (2014). *Public Policy Lessons from Chile: Individuals with Disabilities – An Untapped Talent Pool* (2nd ed., Vol. 19, pp. 29 – 41). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Public Policy Review. 1083-7523 [ISSN]