Abstract

In 2008, the overall status of Chinese persons with disabilities improved further over the preceding year. Household incomes for persons with disabilities saw a certain improvement, the housing area increased, and access to telephones and home appliances increased overall. The marital status of persons with disabilities remained basically stable, while the proportion undergoing rehabilitation, and participating in social insurance and community activities increased. The degree of satisfaction with community services and barrier-free facilities also saw an improvement, but the percentage of those in education remained low, and the urban unemployment registration rate saw a slight rise. Generally speaking, persons with disabilities made further progress towards becoming part of China’s prosperous society, but they still remain far below the average social level, and require special attention and support.1

Keywords: persons with disabilities; status of persons with disabilities; construction of an inclusive affluent society; monitoring progress towards prosperity

The second nationwide study of persons with disabilities in 2006 indicated that their status was undergoing rapid changes. The next ten years will be a crucial phase in the construction of a inclusive affluent society, and with China’s fast economic and social development, the status of persons with disabilities will also undergo sweeping changes. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities2 requests that “States Parties undertake to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the present Convention”.

1 The subject group members also include Guo Chunming, Zhu Chunlin, Yang Hong, Hu Zhongming, Zhang Lei, Wu Jilei, Liu Jufen, Chen Sanjun, Jia Tongjin and Chen Runjian.
In order to gain an effective understanding of the changes in status of Chinese persons with disabilities and to provide a reliable basis for their development, urgent improvements to the monitoring of the status of persons with disabilities are necessary. In 2006, the China Persons with Disabilities’ Federation launched a study and established a national observation system governing the status of persons with disabilities, and the National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the China Persons with Disabilities Federation, and the Office for the Second National Sample Study of Persons with Disabilities subsequently issued a joint Notice on Launching the Observation to National Status of Persons with Disabilities” in 2007, marking the official launch of this initiative.

The China Persons with Disabilities Federation, through the efforts of its branches at all levels and support from relevant units, successfully completed the 2008 annual study of the status of persons with disabilities, assembling a wealth of data information which has provided a reliable basis for understanding the degree of prosperity of persons with disabilities, and allowing the launch of improved initiatives targeting persons with disabilities.

I. Status of Chinese Persons with Disabilities in 2008

The 2008 annual disabilities status study was based on the 2007 annual study so as to provide ongoing tracking of persons with disabilities identified in the Second National Sample Study, covering persons with disabilities in 734 location in 734 counties, cities, and areas in 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities nationwide. The study ran from April 1, 2007 to April 1, 2008.

The main contents of the study were based on the prosperity indicator system for persons with disabilities and the major targets of the Second National Sample Study of Persons with Disabilities, including their life development and environmental status, covering their lives, rehabilitation, education, employment, community services, barrier-free environments, legal services, etc., and the changes thereto.

20,697 respondents were actually surveyed, comprising 10,724 men (accounting for 51.8% of the total), and 9973 women (48.2%). The sex ratio was 107.5. 4915 were urban residents, accounting for 23.7% of the total, and 15,782 were rural residents, accounting for 76.3%.