

Observance of White Cane Day & Launch of Video Documentary  
**“Beyond the Voice of Our Own”**

October 14, 2009

At  
**Pakistan National Council of Arts, Islamabad**



*Organized by*



**Special Talent Exchange Program**

*In Collaboration with*

**Sightsavers International Pakistan**

**&**

**Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability Thailand**

## Report

'People with visual impairment are able to go, to move, to be, and to compete with all others in society. The means by which this is done is that simple tool, the white cane. With the growing use of the white cane is an added element--the wish and the will to be free--the unquenchable spirit and the inextinguishable determination to be independent. With these their lives are changed, and the prospects for blind people become bright. That is what White Cane Safety Day is all about. Government is taking considerable measures in the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities; Issuance of special ID cards for disabled persons and national plan of action based on national policy 2002 are landmarks of the efforts, on this day we pledge the implantation of the policy', said Mr. Imtiaz Qazi, Federal Secretary Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, while addressing the event organized by STEP to mark the International White Cane safety Day on October 14, 2009 in Islamabad. The event held at Auditorium of Pakistan National Council of Arts was attended by about 500 people from all walks of life including representatives of disabled peoples organizations, development sector, government, universities and media.

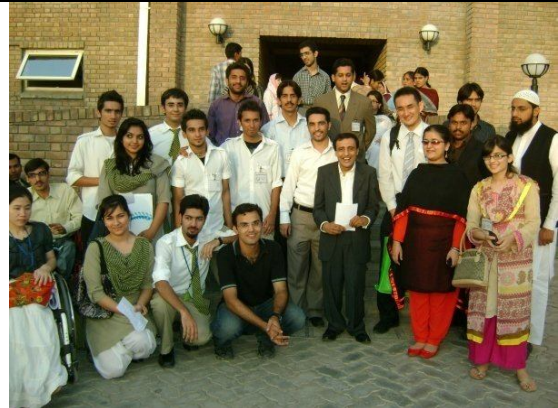
A video documentary on endeavours of STEP produced by NISTE (National Institute of Science and Technical Education) under the Story based Knowledge Management Project of APCD Thailand (Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability), was launched in conjunction with observance of International White Cane safety Day. The event was attended by more than 200 stakeholder including leading persons with disabilities. The program rundown is enclosed. The event was also attended by representatives of APCD Thailand. Ms. Manassawee Rawiwan, Information Support Officer, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability appreciated efforts of STEP and emphasized the importance of networking and collaboration among stakeholders at regional as well as national level.

Mr. Atif Sheikh, President of STEP, said in his welcome note that, STEP is a cross disability organization that has been working for the empowerment of the disabled persons through capacity building and advocacy since 1997. STEP is engaged in leadership, ICT and independent living training of disabled persons. In the preceding one decade of STEP's endeavors, more than 1000 disabled persons have been motivated and are living a better life. In the congratulatory remarks, Mr. Tsutomu Shimizu, Senior Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency mentioned that 'The growth and success of the disability movement, which has been well recognized internationally nowadays, is largely dependent

on good collaboration between the government, disabled people's organization, and other NGOs. Tireless efforts like this event must be able to contribute to the bigger and more powerful movement for the future of Pakistan. Regarding the documentary film of STEP, he expressed that JICA is delighted to extend special thanks to our major collaborator, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, the National Institute of Science and Technical Education or NISTE under the Ministry of Education, Sightsavers International Pakistan Office, and Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability or APCD. The film has included various important factors of social development, and we hope to disseminate good practices as much as possible through various channels like this film.

Mr. Niaz Ullah Khan, Country Director Sightsavers International Pakistan, said in the key note speech that, after having proper training, people using the white cane can enjoy greater mobility and safety by determining the location of curbs, steps, uneven pavement, and other physical obstacles in their path. The white cane has given them the freedom to travel independently to their schools and workplaces and to participate more fully in the life of their communities. It reminds us that the only barriers against people with disabilities are discriminatory attitudes and practices that our society has too often placed in their way. As we observe White Cane Safety Day, 2009, let us recall the history of the white cane, its emergence as a tool and a symbol through history; a staff of independence.

## Some Glimpses



## Press Coverage in Print Media

The News International, Friday, October 16, 2009

■ WHITE CANE DAY

# Organisations for the disabled to be involved in policy implementation

Our correspondent  
Islamabad

Organisations working for disabled persons will be involved in the consultative process for effective implementation of policies for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

This assurance was extended by Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education Intiaz Qazi while addressing a ceremony organised in connection with the observance of White Cane Day and launch of a video documentary titled 'Beyond the Voice of Our Own.'

The event was organized by Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP), which has, since 1997, been engaged in awareness-raising and information dissemination for mainstreaming of PWDs through creation of an inclusive and rights-based society. The documentary screened on the occasion portrayed the endeavours of STEP, and has been developed by the National Institute of Science and Technical Education in collaboration with Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education and Sightsavers International.

The event was also addressed by senior representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Tsutomu Shimizu, who appreciated the efforts being made by STEP to develop and promote the disability movement in Pakistan.

"The growth and success of the disability movement, which has been well-recognised internationally nowadays, is largely



ISLAMABAD: Participants of an awareness walk at Jinnah Avenue. — Online

dependent on good collaboration between the government, disabled people's organization, and other NGOs. Tireless efforts like this event must be able to contribute to the bigger and more powerful movement for the future of Pakistan," Shimizu stated.

Commenting on the documentary, Shimizu said, "It has included various important factors of social development, and we hope to disseminate good practices as much as possible through various channels like this film." In this regard, he informed that a disability-related project in Abbottabad, by the name of A STAR Project, has

been implemented for and by PWDs to promote their social participation.

Earlier, the president of STEP Atif Sheikh briefed the gathering about his cross-disability organisation, which is working for the empowerment of disabled persons through capacity building and advocacy. "STEP is engaged in leadership, ICT and independent living training of disabled persons. In the preceding one decade of STEP's endeavours, more than 1,000 disabled persons have been motivated and are living a better life," Atif stated.

To mark the International White Cane Safety Day, a special

ceremony was also organised by Pakistan Aman Party (PAP).

According to a press release, PAP Chairman Haji Mohammad Gulzar Awan while addressing the participants said that visually handicapped persons of our society had some rights over those who were blessed by Almighty Allah with sight. "They deserve our special attention and respect," he added saying we should not let them feel less respected and give them priority in lines and other fields of life. He said that a white cane in the hand of a person tells us that the person is the special one to whom we should behave very politely and generously.

Message of light



ISLAMABAD: Blind girls take part in an awareness walk to mark the White Cane Day. ONLINE

DAWN Islamabad, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2009

## Documentary on special persons

ISLAMABAD, Oct 14: Barriers, deprivation and discrimination against individuals with physical impairments cannot prohibit them from living independently just like other persons without disabilities; narrates a documentary which was launched here on Wednesday.

'Beyond the voice of our own' has been produced by NISTE in collaboration with Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP), a self-help group of special people, and Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability (APCD). It is an account of success stories and

part of story-based knowledge management of APCD. All the ten persons interviewed in the film are members of STEP. They suffer from some kind of disability but have proved themselves in their respective fields. They had not let their physical impairment become a hindrance in their way.

It suggests that physically challenged persons needed equal respect and free acceptance in society which could only be achieved when families together with the community are educated to accept such persons.—A Reporter

روزنامہ خبریں اسلام آباد (2) 16 اکتوبر 2009ء

## معذور افراد کے مسائل کم کرنے کیلئے ہنگامی اقدامات کی ضرورت ہے مقررین

معاشرے پر بوجھ سمجھنے کے بجائے سکھو فائدہ اٹھایا جائے ٹیپ کے زیر اہتمام تقویٰ خطاب

اسلام آباد (خبرنگار) سفید پتھری کے بین الاقوامی دن کے موقع پر نیشنل ٹیلنٹ ایکسچینج پروگرام (STEP) کے زیر اہتمام منعقدہ تقریب سے خطاب کرتے ہوئے مقررین نے معذور افراد کو معاشرے کا اہم فرد قرار دیتے ہوئے ان کے ساتھ بھی دوسرے عام افرادی طرح سلوک کرنے کا مطالبہ کیا ہے اور کہا کہ انہیں معاشرے پر بوجھ سمجھنے کی بجائے ان کی سکھو سے فائدہ اٹھایا جائے۔ گزشتہ روز پاکستان نیشنل کونسل آف دی آرٹس (پی این سی اے) میں منعقدہ تقریب کے لیے ایشیا پیسیفک سنٹر اور وزارت سماجی بہبود و خصوصی تعلیم کا تعاون شامل تھا تقریب میں ٹیپ کے چیئرمین عارف شیخ، وزارت

روزنامہ اذکار (2) 16 اکتوبر 2009ء

## خصوصی بچوں کے روشن مستقبل کیلئے سب کو کردار ادا کرنا ہوگا، امتیاز قاضی

وزارت سماجی بہبود خصوصی بچوں کی تعلیم و تربیت کیلئے اہم پروگرام ترتیب دے رہی ہے اسلام آباد (خبرنگار) وفاقی سیکرٹری وزارت سماجی بہبود خصوصی تعلیم امتیاز قاضی نے کہا کہ خصوصی بچے ہماری خصوصی توجہ کے مستحق ہوتے ہیں ان بچوں کی بہتری اور رہنمائی کیلئے ہمیں اپنی تمام تر خدمات احسن انداز میں ادا کرنی چاہئے ایسے بچوں کی بہتری اور ان کے روشن مستقبل کیلئے ہم سب کو اپنا کردار نبھانا ہے اور انہیں ادا کرنا ہے وزارت سماجی بہبود خصوصی تعلیم و تربیت اور بہتر نگہداشت کے حوالے سے انتہائی اہم پروگرام ترتیب دے رہی ہے جن کے مستقبل میں دور رس نتائج برآمد ہوں گے جبکہ ملک بھر میں ان بچوں کی بہتری کیلئے کئی اقدامات کے جاری ہیں۔

- Press Coverage in Electronic Media**
- PTV
  - SAMAA TV
  - ROHI TV

Observance of White Cane Day & Launch of Video Documentary  
**“Beyond the Voice of Our Own”**

**3pm-5pm, October 14 (Wed), 2009**

**At Pakistan National Council of Arts, Islamabad**

Plot No.5, F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan

<http://www.pnca.org.pk/>

**Chief Guest:**

Mr. Imtiaz Qazi

Federal Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education

**Program Rundown**

**1. Recitation from the Holly Quran**

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Mr. Aqeel Ahmad, Al-Maktoom Special Education Center Islamabad

**2. Welcome Note**

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Mr. Muhammad Atif Sheikh, President, Special Talent Exchange Program

**3. Key note speech**

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Mr. Niaz Ullah Khan, Country Director, Sightsavers International Pakistan

**4. Remark on White Cane Day**

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Dr. Arshad Ovais Qazi, Director (NR), Special Education, Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education

**5. Congratulatory address**

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Mr. Tsutomu Shimizu, Senior Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency

Ms. Manassawee Rawiwan, Information Support Officer, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability

**6. Screening of documentary**

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Mr. Shakil Arshad, Producer, National Institute of Science and Technical Education, Ministry of Education

**7. Address of the Chief Guest**

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Mr. Imtiaz Qazi, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education