

National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities-2011

(3rd December 2011)

The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Mukul Wasnik gave away awards to 45 awardees in eleven categories for their significant contribution towards the empowerment of persons with disabilities on the occasion of the International Day of Disabled persons here today. The event was organized by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The MOS in the Ministry Shri D. Napoleon and the Secretary of the Ministry were also present on the occasion. Shri Wasnik read out the speech of the President of India Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patil who could not attend the function. In her speech the President said that the key is the creation of conditions and structures of empowerment and experience has shown that when persons with disabilities are empowered to participate in the process of development on an equal basis with others, the entire community benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that Government and society at large include such persons in all developmental processes- from formulation of policies, programmes and projects, to their implementation and monitoring.

She said we, as a nation, are committed to the full empowerment of persons with disabilities. The signing and ratification by India of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which came into effect in 2008, symbolizes our resolve to move forward on the agenda to provide differently-abled citizens of our country, with an environment for their full development and equal participation in the life of the nation. Government, after consultation with stakeholders, is in the process of replacing the current Act that deals with issues related to persons with disabilities, with a more comprehensive new legislation.

The President further said that economic empowerment of person with disability needs focused attention. Government is mandated to provide reservation in employment to person with disabilities. All central Government ministries and organization under their control, must take immediate and comprehensive steps to ensure that this is effectively implemented in letter and spirit. Backlog of vacancies in all establishments in government sectors should be filled as early as possible. The private sector, as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility, can provide more employment to persons with disabilities, in such occupations where their skills can be utilized. I am proud that we have, here today amongst us, examples of employees with disabilities, who have shown a commendable performance. This shows that they can do it and they need to be applauded for this.