

**The Social Security System for People with Disabilities in China:
Current Situation and Development Strategy**

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This article is compiled and analysed mainly based on the data collected in the *Second National Survey on People with Disabilities* (Second Survey) in 2006 and relevant literature. It aims to reveal the current situation of social security for People with Disabilities (PWD) in China and the reasons behind it, and make recommendations on policies for setting up a comprehensive social security system for the PWD in China.

1. The Absence of Social Security System: Current Situation of PWD

PWD is a group of people who have special difficulties because of their physical disabilities or functional impairment. The importance of social security for PWD is emphasised in many countries not only because it is the foundation of the development of PWD, but also because it is considered as an important indicator of the economic and cultural success of a country. After keeping a constant and rapid economic growth for almost 30 years, China is now a member of middle-income countries in world. The government is now speeding up the establishment of social security system for residents in urban areas. Against such a background, the development of social security for PWD has become a primary indicator of social justice and development progress. Hence, developing services to PWD in China is an objective representation of development and progress of the country. The efforts of setting up a comprehensive social security net for PWD undoubtedly hold a special position in the whole social security system.

According to the Second Survey in 2006, an undeniable fact is found that there is a lack of social security for PWD in China.

First, the population of PWD is huge and the structure is complex. Their demands on social security are enormous. According to the survey, the population of all types of PWD in China is 82.96 million (6.34% of the total population). The number of households, which consists of one or more PWD, is 70.5 million. The total population of families with PWD is 260 million. In terms of types of disability, physical disability, hearing impairment, multi-disabilities and visual impairment are the top four. Among these four types of disabilities, 24.12 million (29.07%) are persons with physical disability, 20.04 million (24.16%) are persons with hearing impairment; 13.52 million (16.30%) are persons with multi-disabilities; 12.33 million (14.86%) are persons with visual impairment; 6.14 million (7.40%) are persons with mental illness; 5.54 million (6.68%) are persons with intellectual disability; 1.27 million (1.53%) are persons with speech disability. In terms of age, over 50% PWD are at their 60s or above. 3.87 million (4.66%) are persons between 0 to 14-years-old; 34.93 million (42.10%) between 15-59; and 44.16 million (53.24%) are at or above their 60, in particular, 37.55 million (45.26%) are at or above 65. In terms of region, PWD mainly live in rural area. 20.71 million (24.96%) live in cities and towns; 62.25 million (75.04%) live in villages. When a further analysis is conducted, a pattern of high rate in the western part and low rate in the eastern part is found. The average rate of PWD in the eastern region is 6.11%, whereas the rate in the central region is 6.46% and the rate in the western region is 6.67%. In terms of gender, 42.77 million (51.55%) PWD are male and 40.19 million (48.45%) PWD are female. In terms of education, 35.91 million (43.29%) are illiterate in the group age 15 or above. In terms of levels of disability, 24.57 million (29.62%) fall into levels 1 & 2 (severe disability); 58.39 million (70.38%) fall into levels 3 & 4 (moderate disability) and mild disability. From the information above, we understand that the PWD in China are not only huge and complex in population, but the majority of PWD are aged people, village people, illiterate, and people with multi-disabilities. These features objectively reflect the enormous needs of social security for PWD. If there is no corresponding social security system, most of the PWD and their families will face difficulties or seriously deteriorated living quality.

Second, the low income of PWD families highlights the poverty issue of PWD which pressingly requires assistance from social security system. It is found in the Second Survey that in 2005 the income per capita of families with PWD in China is ¥4,864 in urban area and ¥2,260 in rural area, whereas the national income per capita is ¥11,321 in urban area and ¥4,631 in rural area. The income per capita of families with PWD is less than half of the national income per capita. Among all families with PWD, the income per capita of 12.95% families in the rural area is less than ¥683. The income

per capita of 7.96% families in the rural area is between ¥684 to ¥944. In other words, over 20% families with PWD in the rural area are living in poverty. This information objectively reveals the causal link between disability and poverty. The income of families with PWD is adversely affected because the PWD has totally or partially lost his/her working ability and requires being cared for by a productive labourer. The direct consequence is that income of the family decreases. For PWD, poverty leads to low education, low rehabilitation rate and high costs of medical treatment and caring. If there is no intervention of social security factors, it is difficult to change the situation of families with PWD. For this reason, PWD is a group which imperatively needs our support. Without a comprehensive social security system, the lives of PWD and their families will be in a sad plight.

Third, following the vanishing of traditional welfare model, there is no effective channel for PWD to enjoy the success of economic growth of the country. In the era of planned economy, despite the extremely sluggish economic growth, PWD were ensured to have opportunities to enjoy the benefits of national growth under the protection of state and unit (collective). PWD in urban area were able to enjoy the benefits (including the internal protection offered by the state to PWD through various welfare factories and units). PWD's welfare in villages was protected by the organizations of collective economy. There were fixed channels for PWD to enjoy the success of growth. Since the economic reform, the government-operated welfare services for PWD in urban area have not been developed along with the development of the economy. Welfare enterprises have shrunk, because under market economy, no one would make allowance for them any longer. Welfare benefits are no longer provided. In rural villages, the collapse of collective distribution mechanism ended the original collective distribution channel of welfare benefits for PWD. After implementing the household responsibility system in agriculture, the duty free welfare policy for PWD was no longer a source of benefit because the state had stopped all kinds of duty and levy in agriculture. Hence, although the service to PWD in the new era has developed in certain aspects, as a whole, it is still lagging behind. For instance, according to the Second Survey, there is a significant gap between the basic needs of PWD and the services offered to PWD by the state or society. Percentages of PWD who have received medical treatment and medical assistance, financial assistance and support, rehabilitation training and service and provision of assistive device are 35.6%, 12.53%, 8.45% and 7.31% respectively among the total population of PWD in China. However, percentages of PWD who actually need the services of the four categories above are 72.78%, 67.78%, 27.69% and 38.56% respectively. Therefore, we understand that there is currently a

lack of channel for PWD to reasonably enjoy the success of growth. If we do not solve the problem of social security system, PWD will still be deprived of the success of growth or entirely denied the enjoyment of their shares of success.

Fourth, the social security for PWD is severely insufficient. According to the Second Survey, the illiteracy rate of PWD age 15 or above is 43.29%. It shows that the education benefit offered by the State is extremely unfair to PWD. Among the PWD in urban areas, only 2.75 million PWD (13.28% of urban PWD population) enjoy the minimum income protection. Percentages of PWD age 16 or above who have joined the social insurance schemes on pension, medical, work injury and unemployment are 27.87%, 36.83%, 1.11% and 1.35% respectively. Among the 62.25 million PWD in rural areas, only 3.19 million (5.12% of rural PWD population) enjoy the minimum income protection. Percentages of PWD age 16 or above who have joined the social insurance schemes on pension, medical, work injury and unemployment are 1.95%, 29.39%, 0.10% and 0.07% respectively. Further, except individual districts like Tianjin and Shanghai, the rehabilitation service for PWD is limited. It is quite unlikely to recover and improve the ability and production capacity of PWD through rehabilitation. The survey shows that the infrastructure for PWD has not been considered as an important issue. The premises and public facilities in most cities and towns often neglect the issue of accessibility. Arrangements and policies of granting welfare allowances and relevant subsidies to PWD are rare. The facts show that the social security offered by the state is extremely limited and insufficient. There is a huge gap between the current situation and the prevalent demand of social security for PWD.

Fifth, the lack of order in building social security system affects the healthy development of protection to PWD. Under the current development of social security system, the basic social security coverage is narrow and ineffective because there is a lack of coordination, planning and overall design. Under such circumstances, the PWD social security system is in risk of being torn apart. An orderly development of social security for PWD is therefore obstructed. For instance, without considering the disability of the recipient, the only factor taken into account under the original arrangement of the minimum income protection scheme is “the income per capita of the recipient family”. Under the equal distribution approach, the lives of recipient families, especially those with severe disability, can hardly be covered by the minimum income protection. In recent years, the egalitarian assistance approach has been changed by local governments into various assistance programmes, which are based on factors such as health conditions and age structure of

recipient families. These assistance programmes start to take the number of PWD and the extent of disability in recipient families under consideration. Although this is a kind of improvement, it may also damage the healthy development of social assistance system and welfare service to PWD. This is because no matter how the system works, social assistance system and welfare service to PWD are two separate things. The former is offered on the basis of income status and level of poverty of recipient families, while the latter is offered on the basis of health conditions. The former examines the income and asset of recipients, whereas the latter looks at the type and the extent of disability. Under the experience of overseas countries in developing social security systems, the social assistance programmes (in particular the minimum income protection scheme) cannot replace the welfare service to PWD. This is because social assistance programmes are offered to all eligible people who live in poverty. The recipients will enjoy similar assistance in order to achieve social fairness. However, the fairness pursued by welfare service to PWD is to ensure people with the same disability could enjoy comparable benefits. Therefore, the design and improvement mentioned above may damage the healthy development of social assistance programmes and welfare services to PWD. We should be aware of such a tendency. When the system is designed, the distribution of natural persons and the common needs of PWD should be thoroughly considered.

According to the analysis above, we understand that PWD is a group which specially required social security, yet little social security is provided for them. The economic success of China stuns the world, but our PWD still seriously lack social security. Such a reality means that PWD haven't yet reasonably enjoyed the success of economic growth.

2. Influence of multi-factors: reasons for the absence of social security for PWD

The background of absence of social security for PWD in China is: on one hand, high efficiency has overshadowed the needs of PWD in gaining social justice and sharing the success of economic growth, one the other hand, the constant rapid development in economy has not brought the same growth of social security and national welfare. Objectively speaking, there are various reasons for the absence of social security for PWD. However, the influence of traditional views, the underdevelopment of social security system, insufficient government funding and social resources, the absence of overall planning in

social security system and reasonable positioning for PWD benefits are the main reasons for the absence of social security system for PWD.

First, the traditional views on individual and family responsibility. In our traditional views, disability is the result of mischief of an individual and his/her family. Taking care of the PWD is a natural duty of the family. The social factor that leads to the disability is often ignored. It simply stresses on the duty and obligation of family members in taking care of the PWD, but ignores the public duty of the government and the social responsibility of modern society. Disability may be caused by hereditary factors, environmental behavioural factors or illness. For the persons with congenital disability, some are caused by hereditary factors and some by environmental behavioural factors. For the persons with acquired disability, most of them are caused by environmental behavioural factors or illness. Undoubtedly, factors which cause disability such as work injury, road accident, medical incident, environmental pollution, etc. should be classified under the scope of social factors and social responsibility. Since the economic reform in China, the risk of becoming disabled has increased. Population aging is a major factor. Work injury and road accident are also major social factors. For instance, in the 2006 Survey, percentage of physical disability due to work injury is 0.1224%, triple the rate of 1987. Percentage of physical disability due to road accident jumps from 0.0139% to 0.1046%, with an increase by 6 times. Regarding environmental pollution, the causes of disability also increase. According to the Chinese Surveillance Network of Birth Defect, the birth defect of new born babies in Shanxi is as high as 189.96 per 10,000 babies because of water and air pollution. Among these birth defect babies, 102.27 out of 10,000 have neural tube defect. These defect rates are double and four times of the national rates. Further, the birth defect rates at the 8 major coal mining districts in Shanxi are far higher than the average rate of the whole province. This shows that environmental pollution is a key factor to congenital disability. In addition to the disabilities caused by medical incidents and other social reasons, disabilities that are solely caused by social factors (without any individual or family responsibilities) in fact make up the majority of PWD. Therefore, if we continue maintaining the traditional view of individual and family responsibilities, obviously it is contrary to the actual composition of PWD and the causal reasons of PWD nowadays. Meanwhile, from the perspective of social justice, it is also unfair that the normal lives and works of other family members are undermined because of taking care of PWD. Welfare benefits of family members and the growth of benefits are also required to fit the Pareto's Law.

Second, the underdevelopment of social security system. We cannot deny that the social security reform and system development has lagged behind economic growth. On the one hand, there has been constant rapid economic growth for 30 years, and the growth still maintains in good direction. GDP has increased from ¥360 billion in the early years of economic reform to ¥23,000 billion in 2007. The national income has increased from ¥110 billion in the early years to over ¥5,000 billion in 2007. The significant growth in national income is the result of economic reform. On the other hand, most people in China still commonly lack social security. For instance, in 2006 the basic pension insurance covers 141.31 million workers (less than 20% of total working population). Basic medical insurance and village collaborative medical benefits cover about 750 million urban and rural residents (over 50% of national total population). Minimum income protection scheme covers less than 5% urban residents, and the scheme has just been set up in the rural area. Yet the annuities for 150 million aged people and disability benefits for 82 million PWD have not been put on the agenda. From the information above, we understand that the national welfare has not increased with economic development. In other words, the result of economic growth has not been effectively translated into national welfare. Under the macro-background of underdevelopment of social security system, the social security for PWD is unlikely to be developed as a higher priority.

Third, insufficient government funding and social resources. On the one hand, according to the Financial Committee of National Peoples' Congress, the funding for social security in 2006 is less than 12% of the total national expenditure. The funding is mainly used for the expenditure on pension insurance and the National Social Security Fund, a strategic reserve fund. Such a limited funding is not only insufficient in meeting the welfare protection of PWD, but is also insufficient for normal people or even healthy workers. The underdevelopment of social security system is closely related to the severely insufficient funding. Meanwhile, the funding for education from 1996 to 2006 has been constantly decreasing. The percentage has fallen from 20% to less than 11%. The funding for public health has also been decreasing. Now it only amounts to 3% of total expenditure, which is clearly lower than some developing countries. Under such circumstances, it is certainly unlikely to take the social security and related welfare needs of PWD under consideration. On the other hand, compared with the strong ability of appealing to the society for significant social resources for disability services overseas, the mobilisation of social resources in China is rather difficult. Although the urban and rural residents' wealth

have rapidly accumulated during the last 30 years under the economic reform, and more and more people are getting rich and considerable social resources are now stored in the society, there is no system or policy and practices to draw on the huge resources hidden in the society. Annual charity donation is less than ¥10 billion. Although the circulation size of welfare lottery has been expanded, quite a part of lottery fund is used as financial capital. Only a very limited portion is used for PWD. Hence, the insufficient government funding and social resources are the essential reasons of insufficient social security for PWD. Under the circumstance of severely insufficient social security, the problems of PWD become the pressure and responsibilities of individual and family.

Fourth, the absence of overall planning in social security system and reasonable positioning of PWD protection. The reform in China adopts a progressive approach. The reform of social security and system development has inevitably taken an approach of implementing pilot tests and gaining success in single items. Such an approach has already determined that the design of social security system would not be an integrated one. As such, the social security for PWD cannot be separately achieved. When we review the progress of social security reform in the last 20 years, although the achievement is immense, the lesson is still unforgotten. One of the major lessons is that the fragmentation of social security programmes and department lead to a fragmented and disordered social security system. For instance, work injury is a major cause of disability. However, there is no form of cooperation between work injury insurance and PWD service. Road accident is another major cause of disability, yet the compulsory insurance for transportation vehicles has neglected the rehabilitation of PWD. The establishment of medical protection system also ignores cooperation with the PWD welfare services. Under such circumstances, many PWD, who could have been recovered through medical treatment and rehabilitation, are not recovered. The minimum income protection scheme, which is mentioned above, has taken “disability” into account as a separate category for granting benefits. Although this is an improvement, it also reflects the absence of reasonable positioning of social security for PWD. Because of the absence of overall planning in social security and no reasonable positioning of social security for PWD, the effects of social security can hardly meet the PWD’s needs on social security.

3. Redress the defects: the development strategy of social security for PWD

Entering the 21st century, we can find that there has been fundamental change in the concept and attitude towards disability and PWD in many countries and regions. We now stress on equal opportunities for all. We advocate for the promotion, protection and assurance that PWD can sufficiently and equally enjoy all human rights and basic freedom. Together with respecting the inherent dignity of PWD, sharing the success of development with the PWD is now an international consensus. International disability services have also undergone a process from unitary to comprehensive, from bottom to top, from less systematic to systematic. Whether the social security system has effectively protected the equal rights and legitimate benefits of PWD, whether the system has protected full and practical participation of PWD in the society, and whether the system has promoted PWD to share in the success of economic and social development have become a very important indicator for the social and cultural advancement of a country or a region. In the early days, PWD were discriminated against, and later they were provided with medical treatment, rehabilitation and welfare benefits. and today, equal rights, social participation, sharing the success with PWD are advocated. The development of disability service has reflected the concept of equality and people-oriented. Hence, since a new era has come and the coverage of social security system is extending to urban residents, it is important for us to redress the underdevelopment of social security for PWD.

In searching for the way of developing social security for PWD, China’s specific national conditions should be respected on the one hand, and the objective pattern of social security for PWD should also be regarded. We should not one-sidedly stress on the pattern and ignore the constraint of national conditions, or distort the development pattern in the name of national conditions. Hence, when we are planning a social security system for PWD, it should be designed under a new concept on the basis of consented welfare issues. There should be an cooperation between the government and non-governmental organisations. General protection will form the base of the system and individual welfare programmes for PWD will be the core, with employment protection and other measures as supplements.

First, replace the traditional concept that PWD is the responsibility on individual and family with the new concept of sharing responsibilities between family/individual and the state/society. Meanwhile, the concept of equality, participation and sharing should be developed. On the one hand, as mentioned above, the reasons that cause disabilities are complex, and social factors have had significant influence.

Since social factors have continued to be the major causes to disability, the responsibility of helping PWD should rest on the state and the society. Our country stresses on the concept of “of the people, for the people” and advocates for the core values such as fairness, justice and sharing. Our culture is also influenced by other civilisations under globalisation. Under such circumstances, the state and society are destined to have obligations to ensure PWD the rights of equality, participation and sharing through social security system. Hence, the traditional concept that the responsibilities of PWD are solely shouldered by individual or families should be discarded. On the other hand, it is not a kind of special care or bestowing something to the PWD when the social security for PWD is set up under the concept of equality, participation and sharing. It is returning to the PWD their rights to enjoy fair social security and the rights of equality and social participation. Besides, the PWD are able to share the success of economic growth with other social groups with dignity and freedom. Equality is the cornerstone of developing service, in particular, social security for PWD. Participation is a way for PWD to exercise the right of equality and to share the success of economic growth. Sharing is the result of exercising the right and social participation. If such a concept is established, and the social security system for PWD is designed and assessed with this concept, a healthy and sustainable development of social security for PWD will be ensured.

Second, design China’s social security system as a whole, and give a reasonable position to the social security for PWD within the whole system. A well-structured social security system should clearly define all social security programmes and responsibility items. If there is not an integral design of the social security system, there will not be a reasonable position for PWD protection. Although the outline of China’s social security system is getting clearer, an integral design is still absent. Hence, in order to relieve all social security restrictions, it is important to build an integral social security system in China. The social security for PWD should include social insurance for PWD, social assistance for PWD, disability welfare and other special allowance policies. The social insurance for PWD and social assistance for PWD should be equally obtained through regular institutional arrangements like other groups. Disability welfare and other special allowances should be designed and developed into specialized independent structures such as PWD welfare allowance, rehabilitation, special education, PWD welfare facilities (including orphanage for disabled children), PWD social services, etc. It should reflect the characteristics of disabled-oriented and meeting the needs of PWD. Moreover, it should be an important channel for PWD to enjoy the success of economic growth. Therefore, here I propose a two-tier social security system for PWD. The first tier is the general social

security arrangement which is commonly applicable to PWD and other social groups. The second tier is the social security specially designed for PWD.

Third, insist on the combination of general arrangement and special arrangement, the combination of financial assistance and service assistance, the combination of living assistance and other assistance . Because of the special health condition of PWD, their needs cannot be satisfied if only general social security, financial assistance and living **assistance** are offered. There should be special social security, service assistance and other protective measures that are specially designed for PWD in order to help them realize the objectives of equality, participation and sharing. We emphasise on the combination of general arrangement and special arrangement, the combination of financial assistance and service assistance, the combination of living **assistance** and other **assistance** because PWD, like normal people, need pension insurance, medical insurance and social assistance, etc. These social security programmes are in common with the social security programmes of other social groups. Hence, PWD may apply for these protections through general social security channel. However, PWD also need other special social welfare and employment protection. For instance, people with functional impairment should be treated by specialized rehabilitation in order to maintain or improve the functions of the body. Some PWD may even regain the living ability like a normal person after rehabilitation. Therefore, providing rehabilitation to PWD has become a vital element of disability protection. Meanwhile, PWD require more special living care than normal people. It is found in the Second Survey that aging population is one major reason for the increase of PWD in China. In the survey, PWD age 60 or above made up 75.5% of the total new PWD population. That means the care of aged PWD is a rapidly increasing need of PWD. Due to the miniaturization of family size, the above need is increasingly unlikely to be shouldered by family members. Meanwhile, many PWD have work capacity, yet their employment rate is low. This is because if there is no strong institutional lead or restrictions, most of the units or employers are not willing to employ PWD. If a PWD who has work ability is not employed, he/she is quite unlikely to be covered by the social insurance programme. On the contrary, if a PWD is employed, he/she will be covered by the social insurance programme, through which the pension issue for PWD will be directly solved. We understand that the social security for PWD should not only involves living protection, but also employment protection. Special protection or disability welfare cannot be replaced. They are symbols of social justice. The issues of equality and fairness not only exist between PWD and the normal people, but also among the PWDs. It is not fair to the PWD, who have better family condition, being rejected the assistance offered by the state and society. Hence, the social

security for PWD should be considered and coordinated on the basis of the PWD’s special needs. The three combinations above should be adopted in order to enhance the consolidated effect of the system.

Fourth, multi-level social cooperation of government and non-governmental organizations. Undoubtedly, the government has the responsibility of setting up a social security system for the whole society. More public resources should be invested into the social security for PWD. However, no matter how wealthy the government is, it is unable to fully meet the social security needs of PWD, in particular, the welfare of PWD. Only through the mobilization of social resources and public participation, would the social security needs of PWD be satisfied. China should continuously promote and implement the right of equal education for PWD and employment ordinance for PWD. Through the enhancement education level and employment rate of PWD, the government should make sure that the funding is used for supporting the development of PWD welfare. The GDP of China in 2007 reaches ¥2300 billion or beyond and a revenue income of more than ¥0.5 billion. If only 1% of the total expenditure is funded to the social security for PWD, it will create an enormous effect for the welfare protection for PWD. Obviously 1% of total expenditure is the minimum level for a reasonable share for over 80 million PWD to enjoy the success of economic growth. Therefore, we should stress on continuing to pour more government funding directly into the welfare for PWD. It is a prerequisite of a social security system for PWD. However, according to the overseas experience, the government is unlikely to take the responsibility alone. There should be a related system to mobilize social resources in order to promote the development of social security for PWD. This includes launching campaigns to appeal legal persons and citizens to share the social responsibilities, to support the development of PWD-related charity business. All these activities should be included in the policy scope of social security system for PWD. We emphasize on the multi-level social characteristics because only the protection offered by the society can genuinely create and protect the fairness for PWD in order to achieve the objectives of equality, participation and sharing. Only a multi-level protection system or mechanism can meet the needs of various level and types of PWD. For example, a PWD who has work ability should be assisted in employment so that he/she will obtain the social insurance. For the PWD who can be recovered through medical treatment, they should get the rehabilitation so that they can be recovered from functional impairment and regain their normal ability. For the PWD who have psychological problems, they should be assisted with specialized psychological service. A multi-level mechanism should also support the families to care the PWD effectively. Such a service not only fits the reality of home care and the

traditional ethical standard, but also fully reflects the love and care of human beings. If the protection of PWD’s family can be combined with PWD welfare, it will definitely produce good effect on policy. Certainly the social security for PWD is not going to replace or undermine family protection. Proper family protection should be provided on the basis of not damaging the normal employment and life of other family members. This should be the mid-term and long-term objective of the social security system. Hence, the responsibilities of government and society should be further clarified with their roles in social security strengthened so that adjustment can be made within the existing system and policy accordingly. The state protection will then be combined with traditional family protection and community assistance. The social security for PWD will then be developed healthily and sustainably.

Fifth, expand and adjust the existing systems to protect the living of low income PWD. China is now a member of the middle income countries, and its financial standing is growing stronger. This means that we have already had the necessary base for developing social security for PWD. I propose to increase the direct funding of social security for PWD from the state treasury. During the Eleventh Five-year Plan, government funding as high as 1% total national expenditure should be sought for various welfare services to PWD. In addition, there should be funding for technological research that is specialized for PWD (for example, the research on artificial limbs), and privileged policies on manufacturing products for PWD, and direct support for developing rehabilitation services so as to encourage the society (community) to provide caring service to PWD. The welfare services to PWD can be developed more rapidly when a mechanism which combines government funding with social resources is set up. When more funding is poured in, the existing arrangements should also be adjusted as soon as possible. The existing arrangements include: combining with the work injury insurance for the expansion of rehabilitation; combining with the pension insurance for better protection for aged PWD, who are the majority of PWD; combining with the public health and welfare for women and children to reduce the number of defected children and assist them in regaining their abilities in living and work; combining with the social service and aged welfare to provide caring service to aged PWD. Due to the fragmented situation in social security in China, the coordination mechanism for the disabled under the State Council should consider coordinating the arrangements of relevant programmes. Regulating the system arrangements and policies are the prerequisite of gaining the maximum effect of social security for PWD and other related programmes. It is worthwhile to pay more efforts to work on it. Meanwhile, the priority areas of social security for PWD should be established, including

providing living protection to low income PWD and the education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. The government should include the PWD into the minimum income protection of urban area, and offer higher benefits to PWD. In addition to the minimum income protection, the government should provide special education and technical training to PWD. Assistive devices that help PWD to overcome their impairment and improve their abilities should be offered under special relief programmes or special allowance. Under the principle of equal employment, the government should ensure that the PWD employment policy is implemented. By encouraging the units and employers, a stable and harmonious employment relationship is built up. PWD will then be able to enjoy various social insurance rights as normal workers. The income protection should provide minimum living protection to PWD. Social insurance, which protects the basic living of workers, should extend the coverage to the majority of PWD. The government has to solve the problems of education and rehabilitation for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities should have equal opportunity for education. Public monies should be used to subsidise the rehabilitation of children with disabilities. This will be the most effective social security for PWD.

All in all, our concern on social security for PWD not only reflects the fairness and justice of a society, but also a concern to ourselves because as population is getting old, we ourselves may become disabled one day when we turn old. In the process of building a harmonious society, the social security for PWD is a significant indicator of a healthy and advance country. The growth of welfare should be in line with the growth of national economy. The social security for PWD should be considered as an issue with high importance. In the process of speeding up the coverage of social security to urban residents, the social security for PWD should be put on a more obvious position for consideration and should be implemented with effective measures.