



International Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities

Press Release: June 15, 1997

Public Education and New Technologies to be Two Forum Themes for June 20

Using public education programs to improve the image and status of people with disabilities, and an overview of the promise and problems of new technology are the two main themes of the Forum's closing day, June 20. Throughout the world disabled children and adults are presented in the mass media as exaggerated stereotypes, for example as pitiful & weak, or threatening & evil, or as saints and super-achievers. New and appropriate technologies, especially on the information highway or cyberspace, are enabling disabled children and adults to participate as equals in education, recreation and employment. Friday will take a closer look at these developments, especially from the viewpoints of disabled women who are communication or technology specialists.

Friday keynotes include: Rina Gill of UNICEF Bangladesh, Rachel Hurst of England and Salma Maqbool of Pakistan, all three of whom are leaders in public education about disability issues; and Katherine Seelman and Deborah Kaplan of the USA, both experts in adaptive technology.

Workshops

The six concurrent workshops will explore: the application of universal design, aimed at improving the environment for all groups; accessing the Internet; developing small budget media projects on disability issues; appropriate technologies & community based rehabilitation in developing countries & rural areas; disability culture & the arts; and outstanding projects involving work with the mass media. Workshop presenters are from: Brazil, the International Labor Organization, Bangladesh, Thailand, Uganda, UK, Mali, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Namibia and the USA.