

# *Much to Celebrate in Ecuador on Disability Awareness Day*

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Quito, December 3 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Developing nations rarely prioritize people with disabilities, but Ecuador is bucking this trend, not only creating robust policy to be used nationally, but a gold standard model to be exportable to other countries.

Ecuador presented a disability plan to the United Nations in September. On the International Day of Disabled Persons, recognized every December 3rd, Ecuador's achievements deserve to be celebrated, as well as looking at the small nation's challenges for the future.

Ecuador's roughly 400,000 people living with disabilities (among a population of some 15 million), certainly enjoy more equality and services eight years after the group was made one of the priorities of President Rafael Correa's Citizens' Revolution.

"In just 5 years, from 2008 to 2013, Ecuador has moved from being a state without a policy for people with disabilities and with isolated welfare proposals, to a country that offers a wide range of opportunities so that this priority group can be included in society in the best way possible, by giving this group an active role in the construction of the future," explain a group of expert authors in Government foreign relations journal "Lineasur."

Indeed, among Ecuador's disabled population, by 2013, 230,199 people had received assistance as a result of initial programs.

The Ecuadorian government is already assisting other countries, namely Uruguay and El Salvador, to implement similar schemes. The Ecuadorian government has also provided assistance to Peru, Jamaica and Haiti in disability.

The government's inclusive definition covers anyone in Ecuador with hearing, physical, mental, intellectual, language, psychological or visual disabilities.

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